

*Remarks for the
Launching of the Mississippi State Quarter
October 22, 2002*

Thank you, Maggie, and let me take a minute to recognize you for the work you do to improve the lives of Mississippi's children through your "Wednesday's Child" segment. You have been a tremendous catalyst in the adoption of over a thousand children – what a great gift to those children, and what a great service to the future of our state.

Treasurer Bennett, Governor Winter, Dr. Johnson, Director Fore – it is a pleasure to be here with you on this special day, a day more than two years in the making. I'm proud of the Mississippi quarter and the beautiful image it presents for our state.

I also want to thank Darrell Beeson for being here today, representing the Mississippi Numismatic Association, and John Maxwell for helping keep our history alive through the eyes of William Faulkner.

And, of course, Raphael Semmes, Jewel Bass and Jesse Robinson – thank you for your talent, for keeping it here in Mississippi, and for your gifts of music here today.

This quarter is just another in a line of positive images about Mississippi. Across the country and around the world, the good news of Mississippi is being shared.

People are hearing about our success in education, where we're raising teacher pay from 49th to 19th in the nation and every public school classroom is being equipped with an Internet-accessible computer.

They're hearing about the commitment we're making to these children here with us today, and thousands more like them across the state.

They're hearing about our competitiveness in the global marketplace and our emergence as a great place to do business – a fact borne out by the investments of companies like Nissan, Whirlpool, Northrop Grumman and so many others who realize that Mississippi is open for business.

And with the launch of the Mississippi state quarter, people won't just be hearing about the image of the magnolia state anymore. They'll be holding it in their hands, spending it, collecting it and admiring it.

One of my great hopes for this quarter is that Americans and others around the world will use it as a beginning to learn more about Mississippi, about our history, our people and our opportunities.

The learning opportunities around this event are significant enough that I have issued an official proclamation for this day, which reads as follows:

(read proclamation)

At this time, I'd like to present this proclamation to Dr. Johnson.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Henrietta Holsman Fore, the 37th Director of the U. S. Mint. Created by Congress in 1792, the Mint is the world's largest manufacturer of coins, medals and coin-based consumer products. The Mint created 24 billion coins in Fiscal Year 2001, and is one of the most technologically advanced enterprises in the nation.

Director Fore has an extensive background in both the public and private sectors. She has served with the U. S. Agency for International Development and as founder and chair of the United States-Asia Environmental Partnership. She has specialized in international business and finance, trade and economic policy, technology cooperation, and environmental policy reform.

Director Fore, we are proud to welcome you to Mississippi – the Magnolia State.

It's been said that history is never history when you're living through it; but, I want all Mississippians – particularly these young students here with us today – to understand that history is being made today as we launch this coin.

Millions of people will look at this coin and see a new image of Mississippi. They will take the time to learn more about us – about our history and our hope; about our promise and our potential. That's a good thing for all of us.

Maggie, thank you again for your role in today's celebration, and I also want to thank Libby Hartfield and the staff of the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science for their help in putting this event together.

And, I want to very publicly thank BancorpSouth for their role as the "partner bank" in making this day possible. I'd like to ask Jim Kelley, President and Chief Operating Officer of BancorpSouth, to make a few remarks. Jim?

Thank you, Jim. As we close, I'd like to invite the school children in the audience to get in line to receive a Mississippi Commemorative Quarter. Thank you all for being here with us today.