

Top of the Class
Jones Junior College
Thursday, May 4, 2000
8:30 a.m.

They have asked that you speak about education and the future job prospects for graduating high school seniors. 15 minutes max.
This is a group of approximately 90 valedictorians and salutatorians from 45 high schools in the WDAM viewing area (primarily South Mississippi). WDAM highlights the students on 30-second commercials throughout May and June.

Stand up straight and speak in low tones.

I. Greeting

Good Morning.

- I would like to thank Randy Swan and Jim Cameron for inviting me to be here this morning, and I want to commend WDAM, Jones County Junior College and the other sponsors of Top of the Class. They know the importance of taking the time to highlight outstanding students in Mississippi and for realizing the importance of putting a spotlight on education.

(Story about high school)

II. Message

- **Education**

- Campaign, Inaugural Address, State of the State Address – Raising teacher pay was the most critical issue facing the people of Mississippi.
- Signed the bill
- 5%
- Commitment to our teachers (trying to recruit teachers and keep them teaching in Mississippi)
- Commitment to our children (preparing them for the future)
- Must provide the children of Mississippi with the tools they will need to succeed in today's marketplace

- **Technology**

- Today's marketplace is changing at such a fast rate.
- The number of web sites today compared to 1993

- Classroom Technology Task Force – place an Internet-accessible computer in every classroom by the end of 2002
- We are equipping our students

- **Continuing Your Education**

- (insert Grisham story)
- Whatever school you choose or major you choose, it is our hope that you will want to establish your career and family in Mississippi.
- We are working hard to make sure that the opportunities for competitive salaried jobs are available so that our students can and will choose to make Mississippi their home for life.
- In order to do that we know that we must have a new Economic Development Plan for our state.

- **New Economic Development Plan**

- We need a coherent agenda for advancing our state economically
- Currently have out-dated plans
- Writing the plan for economic growth (team effort)
- **You may ask the question, why is an Economic Development Plan important?**
 - A new Economic Development Plan, brings with it new business and industry to our state.
 - With those new businesses and industry come more jobs, and better paying jobs, for the people of Mississippi.
 - Keep Mississippians working, building their lives and building their families in Mississippi.
 - Quality of life

III. Closing

- We are charged with the responsibility of setting the stage for Mississippi's future.
- Making a Mississippi that is better than today's Mississippi.
- I wish you the best of luck as you take the next important step in your life, and I congratulate you on your accomplishments.
- I also challenge you to make a difference in Mississippi's future.

Thank you.