

*Remarks for the
Tougaloo College Commencement
May 16, 2003*

President Hogan, President Clinton, Mayor Johnson, members of the Board of Trustees, honored guests, graduates – thank you for the invitation to join you here this morning.

President Clinton, I want to share some things with you that everybody else here already knows. First, these young men and women graduating here today represent the best Mississippi has to offer – minds of intelligence, spirits of creativity, and dreams of greatness.

Second, they have opportunities to use their minds, unleash their spirits and realize their dreams here in Mississippi.

Those opportunities are available because we have made a commitment to them and to the people of this state to make the most of our promise and potential. We have dedicated ourselves to setting new standards in education and job creation, standards that other states will look to as standards of leadership.

During a national recession, we have invested in education first, investing 62 percent of our budget in kindergarten through higher education. We have raised teacher pay. We are the first state in the nation to place an Internet-accessible computer in every classroom.

During a national recession, we have created more than 52,000 new jobs at more than 2,200 new and expanded facilities. We have attracted nearly \$15 billion in capital investments.

During a national recession, we have chosen to invest in the minds, the spirits and the dreams of the young men and women graduating today from Tougaloo. We have chosen to invest in all our people, to build good schools, good jobs and good communities across the state.

It's an investment we made because the dividends are going to be tremendous – now and for generations to come.

To you, the newest graduates of Tougaloo College, stay focused on your dreams. Help us make them come true in Mississippi. Help us continue making a difference.

Congratulations, and may God bless you all.