

*Remarks to the  
USM Winter Commencement  
December 13, 2002*

- Recognize Shelby Thames
- Story of Jordan / 15-point buck / priorities
- Priorities for MS / jobs, security, health care, and education.
- Determined to make a difference in the educational system of this state
  - Teacher pay from 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>
  - Computers in the Classroom / NGA says first in nation / MS “at head of wave of technological innovation”
    - Setting the standard for others to follow
  - MS one of six states for “Following the Leaders” / No Child Left Behind
  - Leadership Summit / six priorities from early childhood to adult learning
- Keeping education a priority with a budget that puts Schools First / 62 percent
- Budget fully funds the teacher pay raise, restores the MAEP to FY04 funding level, and replaces one time money put into adequate education
- Brain trust focuses on stopping flow of best and brightest out of MS
  - 10 year commitment of \$200M matched by universities and colleges
  - Build MS’s intellectual capacity / research capabilities
  - Grants for graduate assistants to stay in MS / cultivate teachers
  - More momentum for economic development
- *We’ve invested hundreds of millions of dollars in buildings*
  - *Time to invest in people*
- Creating jobs is trademark of administration
  - Building a future through quality education is personal passion
- Commitment is focused, but aim is broad
  - Milton Berle: If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door
  - That’s what we’re doing in MS / turning obstacles into opportunities
- *Bottom line: We shortchange education, we shortchange our future*
- *Status quo won’t work for MS / we can and will do better*
- *Proud of your accomplishment / stay in MS and share talents*

