

*Remarks for the
Groundbreaking for USM's International Center
November 7, 2002*

(recognize Dr. Hudson, President Thames,
Bryce Griffis)

It's great to be here with you, as Mississippi continues its work of opening up to the world. We're moving ahead and we're moving quickly – and this groundbreaking here today is further evidence of that.

We're making great progress in education. Our test scores are up. More of our students are graduating from high school and going to college. We're taking a leadership role among the states with our work from pre-school to higher education.

By the end of the year, we'll have an Internet-accessible computer in every public school classroom – not just schools wired for the Internet, but computers connected in every classroom.

There's a difference between being wired and being connected – and Mississippi's students are connected.

This new International Center will strengthen that connection, building on a foundation that grows stronger each day. Every student that comes through this building will gain new skills, skills that hopefully will be put to use growing Mississippi.

Mississippi's competing on a higher level than ever before, opening its doors and sharing its opportunities with the rest of the world. This Center will offer another opportunity for students at the University of Southern Mississippi to learn, grow and contribute to the promise of our state.

It's been said that education is the ability to meet life's situations. The work that will take place here in this Center, the work that is taking place across Mississippi now, is about getting people ready to meet life's situations.

We're prepared. We're on the right track.

Thank you.