

A Proclamation
by
Governor Ronnie Musgrove

WHEREAS, government may be effective in serving the needs of its citizens, the soul of our state and its vitality as a place to live and work ultimately depend on the relationship of families, friends and neighbors. Strengthening those bonds is not as much in the hands of institutions or governments as it is in the hearts of our citizens- especially those who volunteer to help people of all ages, races and religions cope with illness, overcome hardship and barriers, adjust to social changes, and fulfill their potential. These volunteers are the unrecognized, unsung heroes of our society; and

WHEREAS, two such heroes in our state are Paul Varnado of Hattiesburg and Kimberly Dickard of Ridgeland, who were recently named Mississippi's top youth volunteers in the 2000 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program conducted in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals to honor outstanding community service by young people; and

WHEREAS, Paul Varnado, a sophomore at Hattiesburg High School, was honored for planning and building a playground for a daycare program serving needy children. After learning that the daycare center for disadvantaged children had to relocate to a site with no outdoor play area, Paul designed and built a new playground. Paul organized a volunteer work crew made of Boy Scouts, church and family members to clear the site and construct the new play area; and

WHEREAS, Kimberly Dickard an eighth-grader at Olde Towne Middle School, was recognized for founding "Students Erasing Crime," a volunteer student service organization. Kimberly sought out volunteers from every social group in the school. Kimberly and her group researched, wrote and presented anti-tobacco skits at school assembly and talked to local news media about anti-tobacco issues. Members of the S.E.C. also took an after-school course in peer mediation, learning how to bring the school's diverse social cliques together as they worked to achieve a common goal; and

WHEREAS, in light of numerous statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their communities than they once were, it's vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contributions that these young people have made. People of all ages need to think more about how we, as individual citizens, can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhood. Young volunteers like Mr. Paul Varnado and Ms. Kimberly Dickard are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, I heartily applaud Mr. Paul Varnado and Ms. Kimberly Dickard for their initiative in seeking to make their communities and our state a better place to live, and for the positive impact they have had on the lives of others. They have demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserve our sincere admiration and respect. Their actions show that young Americans can - and do- play important roles in their communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

Now, therefore, I, Ronnie Musgrove, Governor of the State of Mississippi, hereby commend Mr. Paul Varnado and Ms. Kimberly Dickard, and extend sincere congratulations on their accomplishments.

in the State of Mississippi.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, February 28, 2000, in the two hundred and twenty-fourth year of the United States of America.

RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR

Eric Clark
Secretary of State