

Blackburn Middle School
Graduation for 6th Graders, Sponsored by Leadership Jackson
Thursday, May 10, 2001
8:15 a.m.

(Message: 10-15 minutes on the importance of education, tying in your background and education – “You can do anything you want.”)

Opening

- Good Morning
- (Kelly Riley will introduce you)
- (Waverly Ray story)

Main Points

1. Your Background
 - a. Born and raised in a small town.
 - b. First in your family to graduate from college
 - i. Northwest Community College
 - ii. Ole Miss
 - iii. Law School
 - c. Political career
 - i. Two-term State Senator
 - ii. Lieutenant Governor
 - iii. Governor
 - d. People who have made an impact on you and your life
 - i. Parents
 - ii. The community
 - iii. Waverly Ray

- e. You can become anyone you want or do anything you want
 - i. You must have the desire.
 - ii. You must have an education.
 - iii. You must believe in yourself.

- Note: Albert Einstein was labeled a “slow learner” because he could not utter a word until he was 4 years old.

2. Education

- a. Is our #1 priority
- b. Every success story in MS hinges on a quality education and education system
 - i. Education is the key!
- c. I will be relentless in my fight for education.
- d. We have worked hard this past year to make improvements in education.
 - i. Teacher Pay Raise to Southeastern average
 - 1. From 49th to 19th in the nation.
 - ii. Computers in the Classroom
 - 1. More than half way to our goal of placing an Internet-accessible computer in every classroom.
 - iii. National Board Certified Teachers
 - 1. Consistently ranking in Top 5%

2. Our teachers are committed to our students; our legislators should commit to our teachers and remove the 5% revenue growth stimulation for their pay raises.

Closing

- Mississippi's Image: Important how our neighbors, our nation and the world view us.
- Often we are concerned about our image in the state and what others outside our borders think of us
 - Be more concerned about our image of ourselves.
 - Being 48th, 49th and 50th, we sometimes tend to think it's true.
 - Our perception transcends our borders.
- The State of Mississippi should not accept mediocrity; we should not accept the status quo.
 - We should not accept the excuse that's "the way it has always been."
 - Change takes leadership, but it also takes people.
- We must "stretch" ourselves.
- Move to do more than ever before.
- The world is taking notice, and we must continue to spread the word about Mississippi.

- A place where our children can live, work and raise their families.
- Everyone plays a role in our state's success.
- We all have to work together to succeed, make changes and create progress.
- America's State of Promise