

*Remarks for the  
American Legion Boys State  
June 8, 2003*

- Recognize Morgan Shands
  - Thank American Legion and volunteers
  - Spirit of volunteerism is important in Mississippi and America
  - Thanks for commitment of time and energy
  
- It is great to be here with you today
  - This is one of the best things about my job
  - Meeting with young people like you / representatives of our future
  
- I understand there's a mayor in the room here today from one of my favorite cities

- Would Mayor \_\_\_\_\_ and all the leaders from the City of Musgrove please stand?
  - Thanks for your leadership in a great city
- It's been said that youth is a period of missed opportunities
- Now more than ever, there are great opportunities here in Mississippi
  - Whatever you do in life, I hope you'll do it here
  - It's important to keep our best minds, to keep you, in Mississippi
- Clifton Taulbert story / dusty road

- It's an exciting time – and I want you to be a part of it
  - Mississippi is changing, and the rest of the world is taking notice.
  
- Everyone has an image of Mississippi in their mind
  - Each of us here has an image of state
  - People around the country have images of Mississippi as well
  
- Want to talk about a new and different image of Mississippi and your role in it
  - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - Competing in global marketplace

- Setting new standards in education and job creation
  
- It's not an easy time to be doing all this
  - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
  - More than 2 million Americans out of work
  - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs
  
- Have to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
  - Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
  - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented
  - Princeton Review: 12<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
  - Computers in the Classroom
  - Historic investment in education / first and at 62%
  
- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
  - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs
  - Jobs are opportunities for you
  
- Mississippi no longer depends solely on agriculture / low wage jobs
  - Aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people
  
- Growth over last three years
  - 2,200 new and expanded facilities
  - More than 53,000 new jobs
  - Total business investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion

- Putting people to work in highly skilled jobs with good pay
  - Nissan opens next Tuesday / only auto plant opening in America this year
  - \$1.5 billion investment by Nissan / 5,300 direct jobs
    - 26,000 jobs through suppliers and support industries
  
- When businesses read these industry publications, they see that Mississippi has something to offer
  - They realize the image has changed
  - They know there are opportunities here
  
- We're looking to the future of MS / where do we want to go?

- Good schools / good jobs / good communities
  
- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
  - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
  - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
  - It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state
  
- We're making a difference in Mississippi
  - I want you to help be a part of that effort



- Will Rogers once commented that “even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”
  - Mississippi’s on the right track – and you’re right there with us
  
- I want to ask you a few questions to help you think about what’s important in life
  - Name the five wealthiest people in the world
  - Name the last five Heisman winners
  - Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest
  - Name the last five Academy Award winners for best actor and best actress
  
- How did you do?

- Point is, none of us remember headliners of yesterday
- They may be the best in their fields, but...
  - Applause dies
  - Awards tarnish
  - We may have a new list of the wealthiest people tomorrow
- One more set of questions for you
  - Think of people in your life who have made you feel appreciated and special
  - Think of teachers who aided your journey through school
  - Name your first-grade teacher

- Easier? Simple lesson is that people who make the greatest difference in life are not the ones with most money, the most awards or the flashiest lifestyle
  - It's people who care, who nurture, who work to help make a difference
  
- Opportunity belongs to you to forget excuses and focus on solutions
  - Take calculated risks when the rewards are great
  
- I believe youth is not a time of life; it's a state of mind
  - Keep your minds full of youth and the energy that comes with it

- Keep your minds focused on doing great things
  
- Don't underestimate your gifts, your talents, or what you can do with your life
  - Don't underestimate what you can do in Mississippi
  
- Let's build our future together based on what our future can be
  - It's an exciting, daunting prospect, but you can do it