

*Remarks for the
Inaugural Convocation for Dr. Lee G. Royce
March 21, 2003*

It has been said that the principle goal of education is to create people capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done – people who are creative, inventive and discoverers.

Dr. Royce, we are working toward that goal in Mississippi. We are working to ensure all Mississippians benefit from education, from the thrill of learning – whether it is as a preschooler learning the basics of language, or an adult learning a new trade.

The process of education begins at the earliest age, and the first day our children walk through the schoolhouse door isn't necessarily the beginning of the process. So much is tied into those early formative years – health issues, home issues, family issues.

But when a child walks into a school for the first time, that's where our work begins in earnest. That's where we start the process of investing in their promise and potential – in the hope they represent for a time yet to come.

And that process continues throughout life. It continues through high school and college.

More than ever before, it is continuing with adult learners, many of whom are learning new skills to improve their careers.

Simply, we are building our foundation as strong and secure as we can. We are all aware of the biblical proverb about building a house on sand.

We are building ours on the most stable rock we can, and that rock is education.

It's exciting to think about what we can do with education as a priority. There is no limit to what can happen. Horizons are broadened, the sky is the limit.

I understand the hard work it takes to go where others haven't, and I appreciate the challenges faced by students today.

We've chosen a path covered with challenges and surrounded by opportunity. How we walk that path and use our resources will determine our success for generations to come.

Our commitment is focused, but our aim is broad. Education is where we build our success, and we're going to do it.

We have the tools to get this work done. We have the people and the talent and the resources to get this work done.

There's an old saying that the challenges of hard work affect people in different ways – some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all.

Dr. Royce, you have come to Mississippi at an exciting time. We've turned up our sleeves taken on the challenge of hard work – the challenge of improving education for all Mississippians. Thank you for joining us in that work.

On behalf of the people of Mississippi, I'm proud to welcome you – and I'm looking forward to working with you. Congratulations on this day.