

Mississippi Bankers Association Annual Convention
Thursday, May 17, 2001
10:45 a.m.
Beau Rivage Resort & Casino

(Message: 20 minutes on the importance of education in creating better job opportunities for our children, our state and our future.)

Opening

- Good Morning
- (Page Ogden, MBA President will introduce you.)
- (Boy Singing in Choir Story –ready for change, beware of opportunities)

Main Points

1. Opportunities in Education
 - a. The cornerstone of our success.
 - b. Eight outstanding public universities.
 - c. Great community college system.
 - d. Exceptional K-12 education
 - i. National Board Certified Teachers.
 - ii. Teacher pay raise
 1. 49th to 19th in the nation.
 - a. Our teachers are committed to our children.
 - b. Legislators must commit to them and remove the 5% revenue growth stipulation.

- e. A state must have trained employees for potential new businesses.
 - i. Education is the key!
 - ii. High-tech companies must have high-tech employees.
 - iii. Computers in the Classroom Initiative
 - 1. Over halfway to our goal of placing an Internet-accessible computer in every classroom by 2002.
 - 2. Traveled the state Mon. and Tues. with Carolyn Shanks promoting this initiative and fund-raising efforts.
 - 3. This will make our students even more prepared for a technological based future.

(Story about kid in Hattiesburg asking you about budget cuts and education – Students are aware of what is going on in the government concerning their education – their future.)

2. Budget

- a. We must be responsible with the people's money.
- b.** Our budget must be honest, straightforward and fiscally sound

- c. Mississippi's families expect us to be disciplined and reasonable in how we spend their hard earned tax dollars.
- d. Education not prisons must be our state's priority.
- e. The state must ensure that kindergarten through University/Graduate level is adequately funded to provide an effective education to our students – our children.
- f. Our state's successes begin and end with education.
 - i. It is the cornerstone of all future successes.
- g. Anytime money is cut from our state's education budgets there is cause for concern because our past investment in education is what has allowed us success in areas such as economic growth.
- h. I believe we are going to have to take an honest look at our budget and put our priorities in order.
- i. If our state's \$3 billion budget was developed using honest numbers and with education as a priority, then we could meet every education need of our state.
- j. I will continue to work with the state legislature to develop a budget that is fiscally responsible using honest numbers,

but I will not agree with a budget that ignores education and is driven by building more private prisons when we have over 2,500 vacant beds.

3. Focusing on Higher Education

- a. The Nation and the world have noticed Mississippi's commitment to education.
- b. Mississippi has been chosen as the first state to hold a Leadership Summit on Higher Education by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.
- c. It is our responsibility, as a state to make sure that higher education meets the needs of the students and the people of Mississippi.
- d. The purpose of this summit is to outline what all of higher education – public and private, two-year and four-year institutions - can do to advance the competitiveness of our state and to improve the quality of life of our citizens.
- e. We can best do that by bringing together leaders of state government, the business community and higher education to work together to develop a vision for

Mississippi's future – economically, culturally, socially and educationally.

- f. We have developed a Steering Committee, which will be co-chaired by Aubrey Patterson, Chairman and CEO of Bancorp South and myself.
- g. By bringing together a variety of people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, we are ensuring that we cover every aspect of higher education and its importance in our state and nation.
- h. Throughout this administration we have developed public/private partnerships, which have proven to work and deliver successful outcomes.
- i. Mississippi can accomplish anything when leaders of business, government and education work together.
- j. This summit will determine how higher education can work more effectively to enhance economic development opportunities within the State of Mississippi.

Closing

- Mississippi is headed forward.
- It takes everyone working together to move our state forward – locally and statewide.

- We are not going to turn back the clocks and disrupt our progress.
- We want more great opportunities for the people of Mississippi.
- We want our children to have the opportunity to live, work and raise their families here.
- Everyone plays a role in our success.
- Working together we can and will make it happen.
- The people of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- The children of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- Our future depends on everyone working as a team in Mississippi.
- Making plans now for an even better Mississippi will ensure that future generations continue to succeed in our state.