

A Proclamation
By
Governor Ronnie Musgrove

WHEREAS, the first American Art form, the blues, the most influential form of American music, with its impact heard around the world in rock and roll, jazz, rhythm and blues, country, and even classical music; was born in the State of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the blues is both a state and national historic treasure, which needs to be preserved, studied, and documented for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the blues is an important documentation of African-American culture in the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, the various forms of the blues document twentieth-century Mississippi history in the areas of race relations, pop culture, and the migration of Mississippi from a rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrialized State; and

WHEREAS, the blues is the most celebrated form of American music, with hundreds of festivals held and millions of new or reissued blues albums sold each year in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the blues and blues musicians from Mississippi, whether old or new, male or female, are recognized and revered worldwide as unique and important ambassadors of the United States and its music; and

WHEREAS, it is important to educate the young people of Mississippi to understand that the music that they listen to today has its roots and traditions in the blues; and

WHEREAS, there are many living legends of the blues in Mississippi who need to be recognized and to have their story captured and preserved for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the year 2003 is the centennial anniversary of when W. C. Handy, a classically-trained musician, heard the blues for the first time, in a train station in Clarksdale, Mississippi, thus enabling him to compose the first blues music to be distributed throughout the United States, which led to his being named “Father of the Blues;”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ronnie Musgrove, Governor of the State of Mississippi, hereby proclaim 2003 as the

YEAR OF THE BLUES

in the State of Mississippi and hereby call upon our citizens to observe the “Year of the Blues” with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and educational programs.

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 24, 2003, in the two hundred and twenty-sixth year of the United States of America.

RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR