

For Immediate Release

March 21, 2003

Contact: John Sewell

601-359-2916

Governor's Achievement Awards Recognize Excellence in Business and Education

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove presented awards today in recognition of achievement in the business and education arenas. The Governor's Achievement Awards were established in November 2001 to recognize the outstanding efforts of Mississippians in business and education.

“The high standards set by those we honor today are a reflection of the high standards we are setting as a state,” Musgrove said. “They are standards of excellence and performance, combined with a commitment to turning obstacles into opportunities.”

The Governor's Business Achievement Award for Large Business was presented to Baptist Health Systems of Jackson. The Governor's Business Achievement Award for Small Business was presented to A-1 Pallet Company of Jackson.

The Governor's Education Achievement Award for Higher Education was presented to the Mississippi Writing / Thinking Institute of Mississippi State University. The Governor's Education Achievement Award for K-12 was presented to Magnolia Park Elementary School in Ocean Springs.

Award recipients are nominated through the Governor's Office. An independent panel of judges reviews the nominations and selects the award recipients.

Musgrove cited the gains made in business and education since he took office in January 2000. In that time, the state has seen the establishment or expansion of more than 2,100 facilities, the creation of over 50,000 new jobs, and a total business investment in excess of \$14.1 billion.

In education, teacher pay is on the rise, moving from 49th to 19th in the nation; Mississippi is the first state in the nation with an Internet-accessible computer in every one of its 32,354 public school classrooms; the state is ranked 6th in the nation in the number of Nationally Board Certified Teachers; and the Princeton Review has ranked the state's testing system as 6th best in America.

###