

Governor Ronnie Musgrove
Mississippi Arts Commission
Whole Schools Institute
July 14, 2000

Talking Points

- When my wife, Melanie, got in yesterday from attending the Whole Schools Institute, I couldn't get a word in edgewise. For Melanie, teaching is a passion. She has left the classroom, for a brief time she insists, to serve as Mississippi's First Lady. I am very proud of her. She is using her intelligence, graciousness and many talents to serve her state well. But, let me tell you, she'd rather be with you, using what she has learned here this week to teach children.
- The arts have always been a link between knowledge and spirit. Through the Whole Schools Institute, teachers are learning how to take lessons from the pages of textbooks and get their students involved in the learning process by using the arts.
- I understand that this faculty is extremely impressed by teachers in Mississippi. I have heard that many of you have commented that our teachers seem more committed and more dedicated than many teachers you see across the nation.

- You are right. Our teachers love what they do. They have to.
In Mississippi you don't become a teacher for the money, state of the art school buildings or fringe benefits. The teachers in this room are teaching because they love children and want to help make them better people.
- Because I am married to a dedicated school teacher, I know of teachers' frustrations. That's why I am determined to see teacher salaries raised in Mississippi. It's past time.
- I also want to see more teachers have the opportunity to learn how to use the arts in their curriculum. We must find a way to fund not only higher salaries, but also training and support for you, the teachers, who face tremendous challenges every day.
- I am grateful to the Arts Commission for having the vision to bring you all together so you have the tools you need to create Whole Schools across this state.