

*Remarks for the  
Gertrude Ford Performing Arts Center Gala  
March 28, 2003*

Thank you, Morgan. It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here with each of you tonight, to formally accept The Gertrude Ford Center for the Performing Arts on behalf of the State of Mississippi.

This fantastic facility will not only benefit the students of Ole Miss, but it will benefit the entire state as we become a beacon of light for the arts all across the South.

*It is a pleasure to be here tonight, to celebrate the opening of this beautiful center for the performing arts – and the anticipation of the events to come in this space.*

*This will be a showplace for Mississippi, and a destination for talent from around the world.*

*This is a state-of-the-art facility – unique in its design, unparalleled in its quality, and unequaled in its commitment to the arts.*

*As a society, we have a strong responsibility to the arts. They evoke our most creative thoughts and ideas, from every corner of our state and our world, regardless of race, wealth, or religion.*

*Here in this place, on this stage, there now exists a venue for the arts to thrive and flourish. On behalf of the people of Mississippi, I am proud to be here as we open our doors to the world of the arts, and welcome it to this campus.*

It is now my pleasure to introduce our next two performers.

He has performed leading roles with major metropolitan opera companies across the country, and is an active concert soloist in the Pacific Northwest.

She has starred in many of our favorite musicals for prestigious regional theaters, and recently toured nationally with “A Christmas Carol.”

Both of these performers are graduates of the Ole Miss Department of Music.

Accompanied by the University Wind Ensemble, conducted by Dr. David Willson, and directed by Julia Aubrey, please welcome Ms. Bonnie Borst and Mr. Wesley Rogers as they perform Carol Bayer Sager’s “The Prayer.”