

*Remarks for the
American Legion Girls State
June 8, 2003*

- Recognize Kathy Dungan, Director of Girls State
 - Thank ladies of American Legion Auxiliary for volunteering time to help with Girls State
 - Spirit of volunteerism is important in Mississippi and America
 - Thanks for commitment of time and energy

- It is great to be here with you today
 - This is one of the best things about my job
 - Meeting with young people like you / representatives of our future

- It's been said that youth is a period of missed opportunities
 - Now more than ever, there are great opportunities here in Mississippi
 - Whatever you do in life, I hope you'll do it here
 - It's important to keep our best minds, to keep you, in Mississippi

- Clifton Taulbert story / dusty road

- It's an exciting time – and I want you to be a part of it
 - Mississippi is changing, and the rest of the world is taking notice.

- Everyone has an image of Mississippi in their mind
 - Each of us here has an image of state
 - People around the country have images of Mississippi as well

- Want to talk about a new and different image of Mississippi and your role in it
 - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - Competing in global marketplace
 - Setting new standards in education and job creation

- It's not an easy time to be doing all this
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - More than 2 million Americans out of work
 - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Have to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
 - Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Princeton Review: 12th best testing system in nation
 - Computers in the Classroom
 - Historic investment in education / first and at 62%

- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
 - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
 - Business means jobs
 - Jobs are opportunities for you

- Mississippi no longer depends solely on agriculture / low wage jobs
 - Aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people

- Growth over last three years
 - 2,200 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 53,000 new jobs
 - Total business investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion

- Putting people to work in highly skilled jobs with good pay
 - Nissan opens next Tuesday / only auto plant opening in America this year
 - \$1.5 billion investment by Nissan / 5,300 direct jobs
 - 26,000 jobs through suppliers and support industries

- When businesses read these industry publications, they see that Mississippi has something to offer
 - They realize the image has changed
 - They know there are opportunities here

- We're looking to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
 - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
 - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
 - It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state

- We're making a difference in Mississippi
 - I want you to help be a part of that effort

- Will Rogers once commented that “even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”
 - Mississippi’s on the right track – and you’re right there with us

- I want to ask you a few questions to help you think about what’s important in life
 - Name the five wealthiest people in the world
 - Name the last five Heisman winners
 - Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest
 - Name the last five Academy Award winners for best actor and best actress

- How did you do?
 - Point is, none of us remember headliners of yesterday
 - They may be the best in their fields, but...
 - Applause dies
 - Awards tarnish
 - We may have a new list of the wealthiest people tomorrow

- One more set of questions for you
 - Think of people in your life who have made you feel appreciated and special
 - Think of teachers who aided your journey through school
 - Name your first-grade teacher

- Easier? Simple lesson is that people who make the greatest difference in life are not the ones with most money, the most awards or the flashiest lifestyle
 - It’s people who care, who nurture, who work to help make a difference

- Opportunity belongs to you to forget excuses and focus on solutions
 - Take calculated risks when the rewards are great

- I believe youth is not a time of life; it’s a state of mind
 - Keep your minds full of youth and the energy that comes with it
 - Keep your minds focused on doing great things

- Don’t underestimate your gifts, your talents, or what you can do with your life
 - Don’t underestimate what you can do in Mississippi

- Let’s build our future together based on what our future can be
 - It’s an exciting, daunting prospect, but you can do it