

*Remarks to the
Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science
Graduation Ceremony
Saturday, May 26, 2001
2pm*

■ **Thank you**

- **Recognize Dr. Joe Portera (Executive Director of MSMS)**
- **Thank you for invitation to speak today**

■ **(Story about graduation speaker not intimidated by hour)**

■ **This is an exciting time**

- **Beginning a big transition today**
- **By making it to this point, though, you have proven capable**
- **Have shown talent for taking on challenges and coming out on top**

- **Fourteen years ago, Mississippi School for Math and Science started**
 - **Since then, almost 1,300 graduates**
 - **This school is setting the standard for schools nationwide**
 - **Dr. Portera, congratulations to you and your faculty for your tremendous work**

- **We all realize the importance of education**
 - **Especially important in today's world of high technology**
 - **Business looks for people with these skills**
 - **You are training them here**

- **I travel all over the state and the country talking to businessmen about coming to Mississippi**
 - **What are they looking for here?**
 - **An educated workforce**
 - **Education is the key to economic development**

- **We are working to strengthen education here in Mississippi**
 - **Teacher pay raise is vital part of making this happen**
 - **Must be able to recruit and retain best teachers**

- **There is an ad on television now, where a young boy talks about wanting to be a teacher**
 - **His father encourages him to be a doctor**
 - **Says doctors make lots of money and everyone looks up to them**

- **The boy's reply is "if it weren't for teachers, there wouldn't be any doctors"**
 - **We must respect those who teach with better pay**

- **Earlier I mentioned the technology that is so important in today's workplace**
 - **We're addressing that in Mississippi's schools**
 - **"Computers in the Classrooms" program**

- **Mississippi working to be first state in nation with internet-accessible computers in every public school classroom in the state**
 - **Halfway to that goal now**
 - **Finishing first phase of placing more than 6,000 computers**

- **By 2002, every public school student will have access to the internet because of the commitment we have made**

■ **The bottom line is, we are responsible for creating opportunities**

○ **We do that by investing in:**

- **Students**
- **Teachers**
- **Technology**

■ **When we create our own opportunity, we can also help determine the results of our work**

- **We've seen this already with the Nissan plant**
- **\$930 million investment in Mississippi**
- **4,000 new jobs**

■ **For now, though, for today – your focus is on the next step**

- **Choosing a college and a field of study**
- **Enjoy this time**

- **Soon enough, you will be thinking about the rest of your life and how you want to be remembered**
 - **Whatever you do, do it honestly and do it well**
 - **You have the skills and the talent**

- **George Washington Carver once said, “When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world.”**
 - **That is my charge to you today**
 - **Do the common things in an uncommon way**
 - **Make the most of your gifts and talents**

- **I am excited about the future of Mississippi**
 - **I am excited about the role you will play in taking Mississippi to new heights**
 - **I wish you the best**

