

*Remarks to the  
State Games of Mississippi  
June 15, 2001*

Thank you! What a great night – and what a great thrill to be here for the opening of the State Games of Mississippi!

Let me start by congratulating April Luke, Executive Director for the State Games, and her staff for a tremendous job in putting this year's games together.

And of course, the City of Meridian and all the sponsors who help make these games possible.

I am proud to have the chance to welcome you all to this year's games. The State Games represent more than just sports – they represent a commitment to physical fitness and the benefits of good health and competition.

In our family, it is our children who are into sports. My son, Jordan, plays basketball, and my daughter, Carmen Rae, plays football for her junior high team. And believe me, she's tough out there – what a great example.

The athletes here tonight represent every corner of our great state. To them, I want to say – we are proud of the work you have done to make it to this point – a lot of effort has gone into your training and it will be exciting to watch your performances.

It's been said that all glory comes from daring to begin. These athletes – from the youngest to the oldest – have all dared to begin.

You have dared to dream about being a part of these games – about the competition, the drama, the excitement of giving your all against another athlete. And, you've dreamed about the glory.

These games represent the best of the human spirit – the drive to win, the fire of competition, the thrill of reaching goals set months and years before.

Over the next two weekends, we will see tremendous competition in a variety of sports – from baseball to bowling, from soccer to stickball, from gymnastics to judo.

And when the games are over, these athletes gathered here tonight will all return home as winners. Some of them will be wearing medals, but all who compete are winners.

The driving force behind athletic competition is to challenge your limits both on and off the field of competition.

General George Patton once said, “If a man does his best, what else is there?”

Man, woman or child; young or old; black or white; it doesn't matter. Just do your best, and you will have done it all.

To the athletes gathered here tonight, I salute you and encourage you to challenge your limits. Push the envelope. Think big, believe big, act big, and the results will be big.

As the games begin, I wish you all a safe,  
fun and exciting competition.

Thank you.