



The Congressional Award

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Mississippi State University honored for Congressional Award Partnership



Washington, D.C. (January 27, 2010) – Members of the Mississippi Congressional Delegation, along with special guest **Governor Haley Barbour**, gathered at the Phoenix Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. for a dinner celebrating **Mississippi State University's** support of the Congressional Award program—Congress' only award for youth.

Through a partnership between the Congressional Award and the University's Extension Service 4-H Program, MSU has encouraged hundreds of youth from across the state to take the Congressional Award challenge. Under the leadership of **MSU President Dr. Mark Keenum**, the University offers scholarships of \$1,000, \$750 and \$500 to students who have earned Gold, Silver or Bronze Congressional Award Medals, respectively. This makes Mississippi State the first collegiate institution to offer scholarships to Congressional Award medalists.

This year's annual Mississippi Congressional Award Dinner was co-chaired and attended by **Senator Thad Cochran, Senator Roger Wicker, Representative Gene Taylor, Representative Gregg Harper** and **Representative Travis Childers**. Also in attendance was MSU graduate and **U.S. Representative Marsha Blackburn** of Tennessee to help present a special award to Dr. Keenum for his leadership.

For more than 30 years, the Congressional Award has recognized thousands of young Americans committed to serving their country and improving themselves, representing over 4 million hours of public service and 2 million hours of physical fitness activities.

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The Congressional Award, a public-private partnership, established by Congress in 1979 under Public Law 96-114, is a non-competitive program open to young people ages 14-23, regardless of mental or physical challenges, or socioeconomic status. The Congressional Award Foundation teaches participants to set and achieve personally challenging goals that build character, and foster community service, personal development, and citizenship.