

V. EVENTS AND KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson, United States House of Representatives, Dr Joseph Stevenson, Jackson State University, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Mr. John Oliver of National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, and the Conference Chairman, Dr. Ambrose Jearld, Jr. were among those welcoming the Conference participants and setting the tone for the Conference at a pre-Conference reception, Sunday evening.

Ms. DeLois A. Cutter, owner and President of Tal-Cut Company, was Keynote Speaker at lunch on Monday. Her presentation was on leadership and perseverance. Ms. Cutter, who has held a number of executive management positions with major corporations, stressed that “increased diversity is everyone's job.”

Dr. Ronald Mason, Jr., President of Jackson State University, was the Keynote Speaker at the Monday night banquet. The theme “expanding opportunities and building alliances,” he said, “could easily be both the history and mission of Jackson State University.” The development of JSU, “Mississippi's only urban university,” relied on alliances with government, neighborhoods, and churches. Dr. Mason talked about the unconscious racism in the United States, a racism driven by capitalism, of trying to emulate not just the ideas of the designers of our nation but also their ethnicity and social standing. We must understand, Dr. Mason said, that forming alliances and expanding opportunities is “not so much about doing favors for minorities” as it is “about human beings working together to put things back in balance.”

Dr. Darrell Jay Grimes, Dean, Institute of Marine Sciences, The University of Southern Mississippi, was Keynote Speaker at the luncheon on Tuesday. He said expanding opportunities for minorities in the oceanic and atmospheric sciences is a “most worthy goal.” He pointed to the continuing lack of minorities in these fields and the continuing need for minority role models. Dr. Grimes talked about both successful current projects and discoveries yet to be made, noting that money is indeed “the major solution to expanding opportunities.” He concluded that it is important “to figure out how to excite and engage young people,” particularly “under-represented young people,” into marine and atmospheric fields.

Programs of events are featured in Appendix B.