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Contact: Tommiea P. Jackson

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Administration Tower, Second Floor
Post Office Box 17490
Jackson, MS 39217
Fax: (601) 979-5833
Phone: (601) 979-2950
(601) 979-2272
Cellular: (601) 503-5749
Web: www.jsums.edu
Email: tommiea.p.jackson@jsums.edu

JSU's Walking Wednesdays a Success

(JACKSON, Miss.) — Gov. Haley Barbour and Mississippi's first lady Marsha Barbour led a group of more than 250 Jackson State students, faculty, staff and friends Oct. 3 as the university kicked off "Walking Wednesdays," a weekly program to encourage Jacksonians to live healthier lives.

The walkers took their first steps after Mrs. Barbour repeated her famous line, "Let's go walkin' Mississippi!" taken from the campaign her husband kicked off one year ago to promote exercise and fitness.

"I'm very glad Jackson State is taking a leading role," said Gov. Barbour. "It doesn't have to be grueling, demanding exercise, just walking."

President Ronald Mason Jr., out of the country, shared his hopes, via a prerecorded statement, that all Mississippians would make small efforts to "get moving."

"Health issues are not a secret in our state," he said.

After completing the brief walk around the campus, Alice McGowan was pleased. "The turnout was wonderful," said McGowan, director of the Lottie Thornton Early Childhood Center, which sponsored the event with the College of Education and Human Development. "Our president, the governor, everyone is really supportive of what we're doing."

Sonya Parks was just one of the students who plans to be a regular participant in Walking Wednesdays.

"I have a goal to lose weight, but I usually don't have time to exercise," says the senior elementary education major from Morton, Miss. "This is a good opportunity to do it. Besides, it is more fun with a group of people."

Each participant received water, a healthy snack and a pedometer to track his or her steps. For more information about JSU's Walking Wednesdays, call 601-979-2400. To learn more about Barbour's "Let's Go Walkin' Mississippi" campaign, visit <http://www.letsgowalkinms.com/>.

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photo: <http://www.jsums.edu/~announcements/WalkingWednesday1.jpg>

Gov. Haley Barbour and first lady Marsha Barbour join in Jackson State University's Walking Wednesdays kickoff. Enjoying the walk around the campus are Dr. Rodney Washington, far left, interim chair early and childhood education and Alice McGowan, director of the Lottie Thornton Early Childhood Center.

About Jackson State University

Jackson State University, founded in 1877, is a historically black, high research activity university located in Jackson, the capital city of the state of Mississippi. Jackson State's nurturing academic environment challenges individuals to change lives through teaching, research and service. Officially designated as Mississippi's Urban University, Jackson State continues to enhance the state, nation and world through comprehensive economic development, health-care, technological and educational initiatives. The only university in the Jackson metropolitan area, Jackson State is located near downtown, with three satellite campuses throughout the city. For more information, visit www.jsums.edu.