

# the Messenger

December 2000

## Message from the President

Another year has come and gone too quickly with many items remaining on our "to do" lists. This is a feeling shared by many at this time of year and unfortunately, as the years pass by, we never quite get used to the nagging burden of an unfinished agenda. There are always new priorities that move to the head of the list as replacements for items we must leave unattended. Some we move to the "to do later" list and some are removed from consideration.

Sometimes the challenges are self-imposed; other times they are thrust upon us as new opportunities.

Florida voters recently chose to limit members of the legislature to four successive House terms and two successive Senate terms, and the year 2000 was the first election year in which the impact of the new law was felt. Fifty-two seats in the House of Representatives and 11 in the Senate are open this year because members are forced to either seek another office or to return home as regular citizens and voters. Many other incumbent House members have chosen to leave office early, prior to the end of their eight-year window of opportunity, to run for Senate or Congress. The net result is that a majority of the House seats soon will be filled by new members. This was the

intent of Florida voters—fresh faces with new ideas.

The challenge presented to the Institute came when incoming House Speaker-designate Tom Feeny (R-Oviedo) asked JMI to assist in preparing a comprehensive legislative orientation program for the new members as well as for those returning. He had an early appreciation for the impact of such a tremendous turnover, and wanted to create a legislature that will be better



*Dr. William J. Bennett giving the 2000 Speakers' Banquet keynote address. See page 2.*

prepared and more knowledgeable than any in the past, right from the beginning. Rep. Feeny asked us to offer 10 days of panels and presentations by experts in the broad array of fields, topics, and issues to be discussed in committee and on the floor of the

next legislative session. These meetings will be in lieu of regular committee meetings during November, December, and January, and will allow members to study issues in detail. We have accepted this request with enthusiasm and have spent the past several months preparing.

One of the tasks embodied in the mission of the Institute is education. Often we seek to educate our readers and members on the topics of the day with a vision for the future. As this year ends and the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### INSIDE This Issue:

- **2000 Speakers' Banquet**  
PAGE 2
- **Small Business Welcome in Florida**  
PAGE 2
- **State Policy Network Honors Marshall**  
PAGE 3
- **JMI Meets with U.K. Reps**  
PAGE 3
- **Join The James Madison Institute**  
PAGE 4

# 2000 Speakers' Banquet

On Sunday evening, November 19, 2000, the Institute hosted the 2000 Speakers' Banquet at the Leon County Civic Center in Tallahassee. A sellout crowd of more than 500 persons, including most of the newly elected House members, joined to honor former speakers of the Florida House of Representatives and to provide a kickoff for the administration of Speaker-designate Tom Feeny, a long-time friend of JMI and a former board member. Former Speakers C. Farris Bryant, Doyle E. Conner Sr., Ralph H. Haben Jr., Mallory E. Horne (JMI's current board chairman), H. Lee Moffitt, James Harold Thompson, Donald L. Tucker, and T.K. Wetherell also were present to be honored.

Former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education Dr. William J. Bennett gave the principal address on "Ethics, Public Policy, and Education." The Secretary, author of the best-selling *The Book of*

*Virtues*, focused on the original Greek meaning of the word "ethos" from which our word "ethics" is drawn. The term, he said, was defined by Aristotle as meaning "the habits of creatures in a certain place." The concept of "habits" is the key to a proper understanding of ethics and ethical behavior, he said. It is not enough for persons to




**FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT: JMI President Ed Moore, former House Speakers H. Lee Moffitt, Donald L. Tucker, Ralph H. Haben Jr., keynote speaker Bill Bennett, and Speaker-designate Tom Feeny. BACK ROW, FROM LEFT: Former House Speakers T.K. Wetherell, Mallory E. Horne, C. Farris Bryant, Doyle E. Conner Sr., James Harold Thompson**

possess moral literacy and to know right from wrong. Rather, it is important that they form habits of right behavior as well. According to Bennett, our society's failure to do this both in our schools and in our public affairs has led to our setting a poor example for children, and we should not be surprised that they fail to do what is right. \*

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

new one begins, we have the chance to provide education of a different sort. We will be working with the future policymakers by providing them the chance to explore issues in a collegial setting and to expand the scope of their knowledge of ideas that will be, to a large extent, new to them. Legislators are sent to Tallahassee to represent the citizens to the best of their abilities. Our task, due to the foresight of Rep. Feeny, is to make sure they have the intellectual ammunition to do the job.

Our "to do" list at the Institute grew this year and with good reasons. The input, counsel, and financial support of our members make our efforts possible. We appreciate your support and ask that you continue to assist us as we work to make this a better Florida.

  
Edwin H. Moore  
President

## Small Business Welcome in Florida

Two recent reports indicate that small business is thriving in Florida.

The Council for Urban Economic Development, a national organization of economic developers, reports that Florida is among the top states for business start-up successes over the last three years. In the large metropolitan area category, Ft. Lauderdale ranks fifth in the nation for business start-ups, Miami ranks ninth and Orlando ranks 19<sup>th</sup>. For small metro areas, Naples leads Florida's rankings at third in the nation, followed by Lakeland/Winter Haven in eighth place.

A previous report by the Small Business Survival Committee in Washington released in May 1999 indicated that Florida

ranked seventh in the nation in its "small business survival index."

Here are the positives reported by the Committee: Florida has no personal income tax, no individual capital gains tax, nor supplemental death taxes. Unemployment taxes are comparatively low, and so are health insurance taxes and corporation taxes, and it is a right-to-work state.

The big negative? One word—crime. Florida is next to the worst in the nation on crime rates, 50<sup>th</sup> out of 51 including the worst, the District of Columbia. After that, sales taxes are comparatively high including the infamous "bed tax." Electric utility taxes are also high, as are workers' compensation charges and property taxes. \*

# State Policy Network Honors Marshall

Thomas A. Roe, South Carolina businessman and Heritage Foundation board member, was a leading force in establishing the State Policy Network (SPN), a loose confederation of free-market think tanks that have grown up in most states during the past 15 years. Recently, SPN initiated the Thomas A. Roe Award, which it bestows annually on a person who has contributed significantly to the field of state-level public policy.

Roe, who died in 1999, was revered by his colleagues as a senior statesman in the arena of public policy and he also generously supported several SPN members, including JMI. Roe himself received The Heritage Foundation's highest honor, the Clare Booth Luce Award.

The James Madison Institute's Founding Chairman Stan Marshall was the 2000 recipient of the prestigious Roe Award, along with William Mellor, president of the

Institute for Justice in Washington, D.C. In presenting the award

in St. Louis in September, Carl O. Helstrom III, chairman of the SPN board of directors, remarked that the secret to Marshall's success in building JMI into an enduring part of the fabric of Florida's civil society is to be found in a small book Marshall carried during his service in Europe during World War II, called *Strength for Service to God and Country*. "The big things of life have always been accomplished on the basis of faith," according to the daily devotional. "It is easy to take the role of the cynic. We must maintain our balance by the stabilizing force of an unshakable faith—faith in our country, faith in our God." \*



*SPN Board Chairman Carl O. Helstrom III and JMI Founding Chairman Stan Marshall*

## JMI Meets with U.K. Reps

Florida's public policy issues were the subject of a roundtable discussion with British Embassy representatives at Florida State University in Tallahassee on October 10. Minister and Deputy Head of Mission to the United States Michael A. Arthur and Vice-Consul Jo A. Le Good met with JMI, key staff of Gov. Jeb Bush's office, civic leaders, FSU administrators, and others to broaden the understanding of similarities and differences in the culture and economy of the United Kingdom and Florida. Issues discussed included education, trade, global communications, genetically modified products, strategic issues, Asia, bilateral trade relations, voting, and the economy. \*

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**January 29, 2001**  
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