

## COLLEGE SAVINGS MONTH

WHEREAS: Georgia families recognize the responsibility and accept the challenge of providing our children with the education and skills that will enable them to complete successfully in the global economy of the twenty-first century; and

WHEREAS: The constantly rising costs of higher education continue to outpace inflation, and; without proper planning, those costs can jeopardize a family's ability to ensure their children have access to postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS: College is an investment that will pay off over a lifetime. There is an earnings gap between those with a high school diploma and those with a bachelor's degree or beyond that exceeds \$1 million; and

WHEREAS: Since 1992, the annual amount of student loan debt has risen from fifteen billion to more than forty eight billion dollars, leaving many college graduates with a large debt long after they have completed their education; and

WHEREAS: It is in the best interest of Georgia families to encourage saving for higher education expenses so that access to educational opportunities is enhanced for our children, grandchildren and others; and

WHEREAS: In accordance with state and federal law, the State of Georgia operates the Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan, a section 529 college savings plan that offers both state and federal tax advantages to encourage saving for the expense of a postsecondary education and to promote educational opportunity for all Georgians; now

THEREFORE: I, SONNY PERDUE, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim September 2004, as COLLEGE SAVINGS MONTH in Georgia and call upon all Georgians to join me in recognizing the value of higher education and to begin saving early and consistently for our children's future.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 1st day of September in the year of our Lord two thousand four.