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9-29-1962

Robert F. Kennedy to Verner S. Holmes (29 September 1962)

Verner S. Holmes

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CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS

DL=Day Letter

NL=Night Letter

LT=International Letter Telegram

1201 (4-60)

The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is LOCAL TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is LOCAL TIME at point of destination

WUB440NS LLD238 LLZ4

LLZ4 GOVT PD=TDNS PWS WASHINGTON DC 19 NFT=

DR VERNER SMITH HOLMES, REPORT DELIVERY=

210 NORTH FRONT ST MCCOMB MISS=

I HAVE TODAY SENT THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM TO EUCLID RAY JOBE,
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING: "THE PURPOSE OF THIS
TELEGRAM IS TO INFORM YOU AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI OF THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW
ON THE LEGAL POSITION IN THE MEREDITH CASE. THE OFFICIALS (C
OF THE UNIVERSITY, INCLUDING THE REGISTRAR, HAVE BEEN ORDERED

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TO MAKE THE ORDERS OF THESE COURTS EFFECTIVE. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT A REFUSAL BY THE OFFICIALS OF THE UNIVERSITY IN OXFORD TO REGISTER MEREDITH IN OXFORD TOMORROW WOULD BE IN VIOLATION OF THE ORDERS OF THE DISTRICT COURT AND OF THE COURT OF APPEALS. IT IS ALSO OUR VIEW THAT ANY ORDERS OR OTHER STEPS BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES INTENDED TO PREVENT THE OFFICIALS OF THE UNIVERSITY AT OXFORD FROM REGISTERING MEREDITH IN THE REGULAR COURSE WOULD BE IN VIOLATION OF THE ORDERS OF THE DISTRICT COURT, THE COURT OF APPEALS AND THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES. I RESPECT THE STATE

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OF MISSISSIPPI WHOSE CITIZENS HAVE MADE MANY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY, AND THE GREAT UNIVERSITY WHICH YOU ARE PRIVILEGED TO SERVE. HISTORICALLY, AMERICAN CITIZENS HAVE FREELY AND FREQUENTLY DISAGREED WITH OR DISAPPROVED OF LAWS AND COURT DECISIONS BUT HAVE OBEYED THEM NEVERTHELESS. THE FEDERAL COURTS HAVE SPOKEN UNEQUIVOCABLY ON THIS MATTER. ALL OF US AS CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OBEY THE LAW AND I AS ATTORNEY GENERAL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ENFORCE THE LAW. I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL ACT IN SUCH A WAY NOT ONLY AS TO PRESERVE ORDER BUT

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BY BOTH THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI AND THE COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT TO ACCEPT AND RETAIN MEREDITH AS A STUDENT THIS SEMESTER AT THE UNIVERSITY. ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ARE COVERED BY THESE ORDERS. THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES IS PREVENTED BY THESE ORDERS AND BY AN ADDITIONAL ORDER OF JUSTICE BLACK OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, WHICH HAS THE CONCURRENCE OF EACH JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT, FROM TAKING ANY STEPS TO HINDER COMPLIANCE WITH THE ORDERS. WE HAVE COOPERATED AND WILL CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH GOVERNOR BARNETT AND OTHER STATE OFFICIALS IN MAKING EVERY EFFORT

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

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TO AVOID LAW ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS. IT IS OUR PURPOSE TO SEE THAT THE ORDERS OF THE COURT ARE COMPLIED WITH PEACEFULLY. HOWEVER, I AM INFORMED THAT MEREDITH HAS BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN ANY COMMITMENT FROM YOU OR THE BOARD THAT HE WILL BE REGISTERED IN JACKSON WITHOUT EVASION OR DELAY IF HE GOES THERE IN RESPONSE TO YOUR TELEGRAM. I HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING ANY SUCH COMMITMENT AS WELL. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS MEREDITH'S INTENTION TO PROCEED TOMORROW TO OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI, TO REGISTER, ALONG WITH OTHER NEW AND TRANSFER STUDENTS. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE ACTION

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AS TO ASSIST IN MEETING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES.

SINCERELY,

ROBERT F. KENNEDY ATTORNEY GENERAL.