

**Remarks Made at UT/Vanderbilt Football Game
Legislative Luncheon
by Katherine Greenberg, Senate President
November 24, 2001**

I am really honored to be here with you today and to have this opportunity to speak.

About five years ago while I was in Chile, sharing my educational approach at Universidad Catolica del Maule, I was invited to visit a farming community in a very remote part of central Chile. We traveled for four hours on dirt roads to a four room school house and clinic. Families lived on small farms hidden from the road.

As we ate a picnic lunch, I was told a part of their story I shall never forget: Just down the hill from our table was a small river. Once upon a time, there had been gold in the river. Whenever the harvest wasn't good enough to feed the families, they could go to the river, take a few grains of gold, and travel to town to buy food. The gold had helped these farming families for as long as anyone could remember. Then the world changed and, due to forces beyond their control, there was no more gold in the river. And the community was in such crisis that many were planning to give up and move away from the land they loved.

The story of these people has become an important lesson for me and my students. Until recently, I had no idea that the story of "no more gold in the river" would speak to the situation at UT.

I came here 21 years ago—having just graduated from Vanderbilt (of all places!) During this time, we have had some good years and some bad--when we had to take some gold from the river to make ends meet. But this year we are reaching the point where there is no more gold in the river.

Yes, we are working to reallocate 4-6% of our budget as mandated by the General Assembly. We are not cutting fluff, we are cutting stuff. For example, I am told that we can no longer provide real meat for students learning to be meat inspectors. Instead, they look at videos. If this continues, I am thinking of becoming a vegetarian. We are not cutting fluff, we are cutting stuff.

Yes, it has been inspirational to see faculty rallying together to keep quality at UT high by working for the common good—but Tennessee university faculty salaries, unlike those in **ANY** other southeastern state, have actually declined in the past five years when adjusted for inflation. And full professors are paid significantly less than in neighboring states. We have cut stuff, not fluff. Many faculty members stay because of a commitment to the citizens of Tennessee. But as faculty members fear they can no longer do the job they love the way it should be done, a rising number are leaving. And now, the academic world is beginning to learn that we have no more gold in the river. It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract the best to UT.

BUT, it doesn't have to be this way. Unlike the families in that remote part of Chile, Tennessee can put the gold back in the river. The citizens of Tennessee can support our lawmakers in finding a way to adequately fund education—for our children, for the future of Tennessee.