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(Smith/Grossman)
June 13, 1991
Draft Four
SCHOLARS.TS

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1991
ROSE GARDEN

Lab Affairs
Dan
Cusco

Acknowledgements -- ladies and gentlemen, friends. Welcome to the White House -- and to an event that celebrates the highest scholastic honor a President can bestow. //

((First, I want to say there's no rule that says the person giving this speech has to be as smart as the students receiving the scholarships.)) //

((I wasn't the most brilliant student in America, but then I wasn't quite like George Burns. George once said, "Smartness runs in my family. When I went to school I was so smart my teacher was in my class for five years.")) //

Even at 95, George Burns would salute the Presidential Scholarship Program, now 27 years old. / Today, I would like to discuss how education can -- and must -- help prepare America's children to serve the nation, and the world. //

Let me begin by asking you to look at yourselves. What do you see? You see some of our best and brightest young people. You see living educational success stories. You see our hope for an exciting, rich future. //

You come from every sort of background -- every race and creed. You live in all fifty states, the District of Columbia,

Puerto Rico

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U.S. territories, and in other lands. But as Americans, you revere learning, achievement -- and the hope that both create.

California's ^{MARISA} Maria DeSalles (Dee-SALZ) realizes that. She is the first woman in her family to earn an undergraduate degree.

// So does Jonathan Sievers (Seevers) -- born on Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands. He is the third member of his family commended as a Presidential scholar -- that's really remarkable. Jonathan

thanks his parents -- let me use his words -- for "making me practice and for leaving the fish alone." // Then, there's

another, Kai Ng (Key Eng) of Illinois. Coming here from in 1974, she learned English from her sister and Sesame Street. //

Funny: That's the same place I'm trying to learn computer programming.//

Education traditionally has served as the ladder that enables individual Americans to reach beyond the clouds. Every time someone succeeds in going further, higher -- we all reap the benefits.

Aimee Crago (eh-may cray-go), a Presidential scholar from Louisiana, has written: "I think that in order to be the person one wants to be, one needs to have a knowledge of all the people one could be, and education provides this knowledge." /

It has become something of a cliché to say that knowledge is power -- but it is. Knowledge, imagination, ambition: these form the pillars for our future. Education can help us keep our competitive edge and imaginative fires -- here and abroad. It gives us the means to raise our standard of living and improve

EXPECTS TO BE

Jim Manning
WHC PC

(?)

Key Eng

SEE Jena Sibagin

the quality of our lives. It can lead us into a new Golden Age of information, understanding, and technology.

America has no natural resource more precious than its intellectual resources. // That is why, recently, I announced our America 2000 Education Strategy -- a pioneering movement to make -- and keep -- American education number one. //

For today's students, we must make existing schools better and more accountable. For tomorrow's students, the next generation -- we must create new generations of American schools. For all of us -- for the adults who think our school days are over -- we've got to become a Nation of scholars -- recognize that learning is a lifetime process. Finally, outside our schools, we must cultivate communities where learning can occur. //

Our education strategy realizes that education can help us practically. For over 200 years, America's genius has created the wireless and model T and integrated circuits. ((I'm reminded of the man who was asked what he would take if his house was on fire and he could remove only one thing. // He answered, "I would take the fire.")) // American scholarship works. //

Yet education must also shape us morally -- providing the grounding ideas and values crucial to democracy. // I have said that in America, the definition of a successful life must include serving others. But you cannot serve if you cannot read. You cannot serve if you cannot think. You cannot serve if you cannot separate good from bad, true from false, practical from dreamy.

Just as many have labored to share their knowledge with you -- parents, teachers, administrators, friends -- you must follow suit. // Give of yourselves -- as a tutor in a prison, at a local school, in a homeless center. You will share something far more profound than little scraps of information. You will share a way at looking at the world -- and at looking at oneself.//

You are today's trailblazers and leaders. What you learn today and in years to come will help us make the 21st Century the next American Century. It won't be easy. ((I recall once how, marking an examination paper shortly before Christmas, the noted scholar William Lyon Phelps came across a note. The note read, "God only knows the answer to this question. Merry Christmas." / Phelps returned the paper with the annotation, "God gets an A. You get an F. Happy New Year."))

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speech

You can't bluff your way through the future. You have to face it squarely -- and take it on. You will encounter roadblocks, but you will overcome them. You will conquer through resilience / scholarship / and above all, the example of your lives. //

As you do, think of those who deserve our thanks. People like ^{Governor Eggleston} ~~___~~, Chairman of the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars. / And the Commission sponsors. / And let me salute the Commission members who chose you 141 honorees from among America's high-school graduates. // ^{138 of 141 will be in DC} ~~graduates~~ _{Seniors} //

But also remember the teachers who inspired you -- the friends or adults who counseled you, supported you, gave you the

confidence to achieve great things. // Kathryn Cunningham, a
Scholar from Vermont, has said, "I thank my parents for their
advice that achievements mean nothing if they don't help anyone
else." All your parents ought to be proud. While this is your
day, it's also theirs. //

To every Presidential Scholar, my heart-felt congratulations
-- and in closing, a challenge. // Let us not only move mankind
into the future. Let us better it, ennoble it. Make the best of
the special blessings bestowed upon you. God bless you, and your
wonderful families. And God bless the United States of America.

#

Curt

REMARKS: PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS
WHITE HOUSE ROSE GARDEN
TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 1989
2:30 P.M.

SECRETARY CAVAZOS, RONNA ROMNEY, MEMBERS OF THE
COMMISSION, SPONSORS AND SELECTED GUESTS, DISTINGUISHED
TEACHERS, PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS.

LET ME WELCOME YOU TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

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*of a Nation are
the trustees of*

YOU KNOW, THAT GREAT ENGLISH LEADER, BENJAMIN
DISRAELI, ONCE SAID, "YOUTH ~~IS THE TRUSTEE OF~~
POSTERITY." AND THE POET JAMES LOWELL WAS MOVED TO
WRITE, "IF YOUTH BE A DEFECT, IT IS ONE WE OUTGROW ONLY
TOO SOON."

WELL, AS THIS YEAR'S PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS, YOU
REMAIN THE TRUSTEES OF OUR POSTERITY.

AND I HOPE YOU'LL ACCEPT SOME COUNSEL FROM ONE WHO'S A LITTLE LONG IN THE TOOTH: IF YOUTH IS A DEFECT, TREASURE IT AS MANY YEARS AS YOU CAN.

WE MEET HERE ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM. AND TO HONOR SOME OF THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST STUDENTS IN AMERICAN EDUCATION.

THIS MARKS THE HIGHEST SCHOLASTIC HONOR THAT A PRESIDENT CAN BESTOW -- AND I AM HONORED TO BESTOW IT.

FOR WHILE ALREADY YOU HAVE DONE MUCH, I KNOW YOU WILL DO MORE. AND NOT FOR YOURSELVES ALONE -- BUT FOR NATION, AND NEIGHBOR: LEARNING, CARING, HELPING EDUCATION LEAD THE WAY.

I BELIEVE IN EDUCATION. AND SO DO YOU -- FOR THE EVIDENCE IS YOUR LIVES. YOU COME FROM BACKGROUNDS OF EVERY RACE AND CREED. AND FROM ALL FIFTY STATES, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, U.S. TERRITORIES AND FAMILIES LIVING ABROAD.

AND YOU'VE EXCELLED IN THE CLASSROOM, AND OUTSIDE IT:
THROUGH LEADERSHIP, CHARACTER, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE.

YOU KNOW, AS I DO, HOW EDUCATION CAN UNLEASH YOUR
TALENTS. TAKE PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR EBEN HEWITT OF
MUNCIE, INDIANA. HE STARTED A SHAKESPEARE CLUB AT HIS
HIGH SCHOOL. OR ANOTHER SCHOLAR, CLARITY HAYNES OF
WASHINGTON, D.C.'S DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS.
SHE IS FLUENT IN PORTUGUESE AND SPANISH [PAUSE] . . .

I'M JEALOUS. SOME PEOPLE SAY I'M NOT EVEN FLUENT IN
ENGLISH.

EDUCATION CAN BE THE GREAT UPLIFTER --
INDIVIDUALLY, AND FOR AMERICA. PERHAPS MEATH BOWEN, A
PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR FROM ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, PUT IT
BEST: "AN EDUCATED PERSON," SHE SAID, "HAS CHOICES,
ALTERNATIVES, AND CAN EXERCISE FREEDOM OF MIND IN ALL
AREAS OF LIFE."

NOW, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: IT WON'T BE EASY. AND YOU'RE RIGHT: THERE'LL BE ROADBLOCKS ALONG THE WAY. I'M REMINDED OF HOW ONCE, MARKING AN EXAMINATION PAPER WRITTEN SHORTLY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, THE NOTED SCHOLAR WILLIAM LYON PHELPS CAME ACROSS THIS NOTE: "GOD ONLY KNOWS THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION. MERRY CHRISTMAS." PHELPS RETURNED THE PAPER WITH THE ANNOTATION: "GOD GETS AN A. YOU GET AN F. HAPPY NEW YEAR."

ROADBLOCKS? YOU BET. BUT YOU CAN OVERCOME THEM. AND AS YOU DO, REMEMBER THAT AN EDUCATED PERSON ALSO HAS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. I HAVE SAID THAT IN AMERICA, THE DEFINITION OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE MUST INCLUDE SERVING OTHERS. WELL, THAT GOES DOUBLE FOR AMERICA'S BEST. MANY HAVE LABORED TO SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE WITH YOU. YOU CAN GIVE THEM NO GREATER GIFT THAN TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHERS.

IN THAT SPIRIT, A NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAVE BROUGHT YOU HERE, AND THEY DESERVE OUR THANKS. LIKE RONNA ROMNEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE WHITE HOUSE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS. AND THE COMMISSION SPONSORS. AND LET ME SALUTE THE 47 COMMISSION MEMBERS WHO CHOSE YOU 141 HONOREES FROM AMERICA'S HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATES. BUT MOST OF ALL, I WANT TO THANK -- AND ASK YOU TO THANK -- ALL OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO FORM THE FABRIC OF YOUR LIFE.

TODAY, AND IN THE YEARS TO COME, REMEMBER THAT FAVORITE TEACHER -- THE HISTORY INSTRUCTOR WHO WAS A FRIEND, AND MENTOR; THE BIOLOGY TEACHER WHO DID THE IMPOSSIBLE -- HELPED YOU DISSECT A FROG. REMEMBER THAT CARING GUIDANCE COUNSELOR. OR THE FOOTBALL COACH WHO GAVE OF HIS TIME, AND OF HIMSELF. AND REMEMBER THOSE WHO LOVE YOU MOST, AND WHO POINT YOU TOWARD THE STARS: WHAT SCHOLAR CHRISTINE OH OF BELLVILLE, GEORGIA, HAS CALLED "THE BACKBONE OF MY SUCCESS." YOUR FAMILY.

MY FRIENDS, THIS IS YOUR DAY. BUT IT IS ALSO THEIR DAY. SO LET ME CLOSE WITH A STORY YOUR FAMILY MIGHT APPRECIATE: ABOUT LEARNING, AND TEACHING, AND SCHOLARS OF ALL AGES.

THE STORY GOES THAT PHYSICIST JAMES FRANCK WAS PROFESSOR AT GOTTINGEN UNIVERSITY IN GERMANY WHEN ROBERT OPPENHEIMER, THEN ONLY 23, WAS BEING EXAMINED FOR HIS DOCTORATE.

ON EMERGING FROM THE ORAL EXAM, FRANCK REMARKED: "I GOT OUT OF THERE JUST IN TIME. HE WAS BEGINNING TO ASK ME QUESTIONS."

IN COMING YEARS, YOU'LL ASK MANY QUESTIONS. QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR FAITH AND FUTURE, PROBLEMS AND PRIORITIES, ABOUT WHAT WE CAN BECOME, AND WHY WE ARE HERE.

EDUCATION CAN PROVIDE SOME ANSWERS. AND SO CAN THE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN IT, AND YOU: YOUR LIFE-LONG LOCAL MINISTER, THE FATHER WHO TRUDGED HIS SON TO LITTLE LEAGUE, THE MOTHER WHO TOILED NIGHT AND DAY SO THAT HER DAUGHTER COULD GO TO COLLEGE.

TRUST THESE PEOPLE. MAKE THEM PROUD. HONOR THEM BY THE LIVES YOU LEAD. AND AS YOU DO, REMEMBER HOW THEIR VALUES, WHICH ARE EDUCATION'S VALUES, CAN MAKE OURS A BETTER, RICHER, MORE DECENT WORLD.

TO EVERY PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR -- MY HEART-FELT CONGRATULATIONS. AND TO ALL OF YOU HERE -- THANK YOU FOR COMING TO THE WHITE HOUSE, GOD BLESS YOU, AND GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

#

Presidential Scholar Quotes

Marisa DeSales (Dee-Salz) -- California

"If as a teacher I can get people--kids and parents--excited about learning and discovering, I will feel successful."

Alison Stuebe (stew-bee) -- New York

"I gradually became convinced that one of the biggest problems teachers face today is the responsibility to be everything from pediatrician to pedagogue on an ever-shrinking budget."

Almee Crago (eh-may cray-go) -- Louisiana

"I think that in order to be the person one wants to be, one needs to have a knowledge of all the people one could be, and education provides this knowledge."

Jim Funk -- Oklahoma

"... a good teacher does more than teach a course. A good teacher influences my development, causes me to somehow grow as a person and not just expand my knowledge."

Heather Versaw (verse-aw) -- Colorado

"In general, if parents place a high priority on education and participate in their children's schooling, their children will learn the value of working for an education."



THE WHITE HOUSE
COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS
ROOM 2189
400 MARYLAND AVENUE, S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL

TO: Jennifer Grossman
Speechwriting

FROM: Judy Siders
Assistant Director

DATE: June 12, 1991

PAGES: 5, including cover

91 JUN 12 P2:35

Dear Jennifer:

Following is information about the Presidential Scholars Program and suggested background information about and quotes from this year's Presidential Scholars.

I hope this helps you out. Please let me know if I can do anything further. My direct line is 401-2910. Thanks.

Talking Points

1991 Presidential Scholars Program

- * Begun in 1964 by Executive Order 11155 of President Lyndon Johnson, the Presidential Scholars Program is administered out by the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars.
- * The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars is a group of 30 eminent private citizens appointed by the President. This year it is chaired by Governor John Engler of Michigan.
- * The purpose of the program is to identify our country's most outstanding high school seniors and recognize them during National Recognition Week in Washington, D.C., each June.
- * In 1991, 139 of the 141 invited Presidential Scholars will be in Washington June 15 to 20 to attend receptions, luncheons and seminars in their honor. The Medallion Ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House at is the highlight of the week.
- * Of the 141 Presidential Scholars, 121 were selected on the basis of their academic achievement, leadership skills, community service and high moral character. An additional 20 were selected on the basis of their outstanding accomplishments in the arts.
- * In 1983, the Presidential Scholars Program was expanded to include the recognition of Distinguished Teachers. A Distinguished Teacher is the educator named by a Presidential Scholar as having had the most influence on his or her academic or artistic achievement.
- * The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation will present each Presidential Scholar a gift of \$1,000 at a recognition reception to be used to pursue an educational dream.

For more information, contact Judy Siders (401-2910) or Deelling Teng (401-3758).

Selection Process

1991 Presidential Scholars Program

- * In January, approximately 1,500 high school seniors were identified by a computer search as Presidential Scholars Semifinalists on the basis of their high scores on either the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) of the College Board or the ACT Assessment of the American College Testing Program. These 1,500 students were sent candidacy materials inviting them to participate in the program.
- * In March, a review committee of 18 financial aid and admissions officers met in Washington, D.C., to review the candidacy materials of the Semifinalists. They selected 500 Finalists from that pool.
- * In April, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars convened in Washington, D.C., to select the 141 Presidential Scholars using the same candidacy materials.
- * On April 30, the White House notified the Presidential Scholars of their selection by mailgram.
- * The Commission selects one male and one female from each state, including the District of Columbia, Americans living abroad and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. An additional 15 are selected at-large to bring the total to 121. Up to 20 more students are selected as Presidential Scholars in the Arts.
- * The nominating agency for the Presidential Scholars in the Arts is the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts of Miami, FL.

1991 Presidential Scholars Program

Presidential Scholars Quotes

Chad Christophersen -- Indiana

"I thank my parents for the advice, the encouragement, the late nights, the listening, the jumpshots, the second chances, the laughs and the love."

Sumit Basu (Soo-mit Bass-u) -- Iowa

"I thank my parents for tolerating and encouraging my tireless curiosity. Because of their belief in learning, I have never been afraid to ask a question."

Tracy Edlger (Edi-gher) -- Nebraska

"I'd like to thank my parents for always making the family a top priority and for reading to us."

Kathryn Cunningham -- Vermont

"I thank my parents for their advice that achievements mean nothing if they don't help anyone else."

David Pearah (Pare-uh) -- Illinois

"Thanks to my mom for turning off the t.v. and ejecting me from the phone, and my dad for the lunches he made for me everyday, saving me five minutes for myself."

1991 Presidential Scholars Program

Facts About Selected Scholars

Jonathan Sievers (Seevers) -- Americans Abroad

Jonathan was born on Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands, which is a one-square mile island in the Central Pacific. He is the third sibling in his family to be chosen a Presidential Scholar, and thanks his parents for "making me practice and for leaving the fish alone."

Nephi Allred (Nee-figh) -- Utah

Nephi's mother was a Presidential Scholar in 1965, the second year of the program. She received her Presidential Scholars Medallion directly from President Johnson.

Kal Ng (Kye Ing) -- Illinois

Kal and her family immigrated to the United States in 1974, knowing no English on their arrival. She learned the English language from her sister and "Sesame Street."

Peter Fort -- Vermont

Peter and his family immigrated to the United States in 1987 from Czechoslovakia. He knew no English upon arrival, but within two years was selected to attend Governor's Institute on International Affairs and will attend Harvard University to major in International relations.

Marisa DeSalles (DeeSalz) -- California

Marisa plans to attend Spelman College and expects to be the first woman in her family to earn an undergraduate degree.

Prior settlement rights. accordance with this proclamation. Persons having prior settlement rights or preferences, as above defined, will be allowed to make entry in conformity with existing law and regulations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this tenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and sixteen,
[SEAL.] and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and fortieth.

By the President:
ROBERT LANSING
Secretary of State.

WOODROW WILSON

1916-PR-1335

May 30, 1916.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
A PROCLAMATION.

Flag day. Celebration of anniversary of adopting United States flag. My Fellow Countrymen: Many circumstances have recently conspired to turn our thoughts to a critical examination of the conditions of our national life, of the influences which have seemed to threaten to divide us in interest and sympathy, of forces within and forces without that seemed likely to draw us away from the happy traditions of united purpose and action of which we have been so proud. It has therefore seemed to me fitting that I should call your attention to the approach of the anniversary of the day upon which the flag of the United States was adopted by the Congress as the emblem of the Union, and to suggest to you that it should this year and in the years to come be given special significance as a day of renewal and reminder, a day upon which we should direct our minds with a special desire of renewal to thoughts of the ideals and principles of which we have sought to make our great Government the embodiment.

General observance with patriotic exercises requested. I therefore suggest and request that throughout the nation and if possible in every community the fourteenth day of June be observed as FLAG DAY with special patriotic exercises, at which means shall be taken to give significant expression to our thoughtful love of America, our comprehension of the great mission of liberty and justice to which we have devoted ourselves as a people, our pride in the history and our enthusiasm for the political programme of the nation, our determination to make it greater and purer with each generation, and our resolution to demonstrate to all the world its vital union in sentiment and purpose, accepting only those as true compatriots who feel as we do compulsion of this supreme allegiance. Let us on that day rededicate ourselves to the nation, "one and inseparable", from which every thought that is not worthy of our fathers' first vows of independence, liberty, and right shall be excluded and in which we shall stand with united hearts, for an America which no man can corrupt, no influence draw away from its ideals, no force divide against itself,—a nation signally distinguished among all the nations of mankind for its clear, individual conception alike of its duties and its privileges, its obligations and its rights.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington this thirtieth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and sixteen,
[SEAL.] and of the independence of the United States of America the one hundred and fortieth.

By the President:
ROBERT LANSING,
Secretary of State.

WOODROW WILSON



THE WHITE HOUSE
COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS
ROOM 2189
400 MARYLAND AVENUE, S.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL

TO: Jennifer Grossman
Speechwriting

FROM: Judy Siders
Assistant Director

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1991 Presidential Scholars Program

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COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL

TO: Jennifer Grossman
Speech Writing

FROM: Judy Siders
Assistant Director

DATE: June 12, 1991

PAGES: 2, including cover

Dear Jennifer:

Following please find a listing of a number of quotes by scholars regarding education. I hope that at least one of these is suitable to your purpose. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions. 401-2910

(Smith/Grossman)
June 12, 1991
Draft Two
SCHOLARS

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1991
ROSE GARDEN

___, ladies and gentlemen, friends. Welcome to the White House -- and to an event which celebrates the highest scholastic honor a President can bestow. //

((First, I want to say there's no rule that says the person giving this speech has to be as smart as the students receiving the scholarships.)) //

((I wasn't the most brilliant student in America, but then I wasn't quite like George Burns. George once said, "Smartness runs in my family. When I went to school I was so smart my teacher was in my class for five years.")) //

Even at 95, George Burns would salute the Presidential Scholarship Program, now 27 years old. / It has been said, "Give me the children until they are seven, and you may have them afterward." Today, I would like to discuss how education can -- and must -- help prepare America's children to serve the Nation, and the world. //

Let me ask you to look to your left and right. What do you see? You see the best and brightest -- examples of how education can enrich us personally. // You come from backgrounds of every race and creed -- and from all fifty States, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, and families living abroad. You know

how education is our most enduring legacy -- vital to everything we are, and can become. //

__ realized that. He started a __, and wants to be a lawyer. So does __ -- she __. Then, there's __. She is fluent in __ and __. // I'm jealous. // Some say English is my only foreign language. //

Education is a private bequest. Yet it can also enrich us nationally. __, a Presidential scholar from __, has written: ". / He knows how education can keep America competitive, raise our standard of living, and improve our quality of life -- presaging a new Golden Age of information, understanding, and technology. //

America has no natural resource more precious than its intellectual resources. // That is why, recently, I announced our America 2000 Education Strategy -- a pioneering movement to make -- and keep -- American education No. 1. // For today's students, we must make existing schools better and more accountable. For tomorrow's students, the next generation -- we must create new generations of American schools. For all of us -- for the adults who think our school days are over -- we've got to become a Nation of scholars -- recognize that learning is a lifetime process. Finally, outside our schools, we must cultivate communities where learning can occur. //

Our education strategy realizes that education can help us practically. For over 200 years, America's genius has created the wireless and model T and integrated circuits. ((I'm reminded

of the man who was asked what he would take if his house was on fire and he could remove only one thing. // "I would take the fire," he replied.)) // American scholarship works. //

Yet education must also shape us morally -- providing the grounding ideas and values so crucial to democracy. It must aid us, too, nobly and selflessly. // I have said that in America, the definition of a successful life must include serving others. Just as many have labored to share their knowledge with you -- parents, teachers, administrators, friends -- you must follow suit. // Give of yourselves -- as a tutor, at a homeless center. Shoulder the duties and responsibilities of sharing your knowledge with others -- as Americans always have / as Americans always will. //

You are the trailblazers of today who must be the leaders of tomorrow -- using lessons learned to mold the next American Century. It won't be easy. ((I recall once how, marking an examination paper shortly before Christmas, the noted scholar William Lyon Phelps came across a note. The note read, "God only knows the answer to this question. Merry Christmas."" / Phelps returned the paper with the annotation, "God gets an A. You get an F. Happy New Year.")) Roadblocks, yes. But you will overcome them -- through the resilience / scholarship / above all, example of your lives. //

As you do, think of those who deserve our thanks. People like __, chairman of the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars. / And the Commission sponsors. / And let me salute

the __ Commissioner members who chose you __ honorees from among America's high-school graduates. // Most of all, remember those who brought you into life -- who bequeathed their love. Remember the teacher who inspired you -- the priest who counseled you -- the parents who are as proud of you as any President could ever be. // This is your day. It is also theirs. //

To every Presidential Scholarship, my heart-felt congratulations -- and in closing, a challenge. // Let us not only move mankind into the future. Let us better it, reinvent it. Already, you have done much. Together, we must do more. God bless you, and your wonderful families. And God bless the United States of America.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 19, 1991

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS MEDALLION CEREMONY

The South Lawn

2:35 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Welcome. Good to see all of you. Welcome. Well, please be seated. It's a delight to have you all here at the White House. May I salute the Chairman, my old friend John Engler, who also doubles as the Governor from Michigan -- an awesome assignment, but has found time like all of our committee to give to this worthwhile program, and I'm very grateful to you, John. And then, of course, on my right here, Secretary Lamar Alexander, our new Secretary of Education, a former governor who's really bringing a new drive and a new focus on our program, America 2000, which I think has a real shot now at revolutionizing education in this country. And we need it. We need to start from scratch and take a new look. So I salute both of them.

I particularly want to thank the members of the commission and the corporate sponsors, and all of you, thank you for coming. Welcome to the White House, and to an event that bestows the highest scholastic honor that a president can bestow.

First, I want to say that there's absolutely no rule here that says that the person giving the speech has to be as smart as the students receiving the scholarships. (Laughter.) Thank heavens. (Laughter.)

Which reminds me of what George Burns once said: "Smartness runs in my family. When I went to school I was so smart my teacher was in my class for five years." (Laughter.) Well, even at 95 -- and he was here the other day -- George Burns would salute this program -- the Presidential Scholarship Program, now 27 years old. And today, I would like to discuss, briefly, how education can -- and must -- help prepare America's children to serve the nation and the world.

Let me begin by asking you to look at yourselves and say, what do you see? You see some of our best and brightest young people. You see living educational success stories. You see our hope for an exciting and rich future.

You come from every sort of background -- every race and creed. You live in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and in other lands. But as Americans, you revere learning, achievement, and the hope that both create.

California's Marisa DeSalles realizes all of that. And she expects to be the first woman in her -- where is she? Now, we've got to salute some of these folks, if I'm going to be talking about you. Okay. (Applause.) She expects to be the first woman in her family to earn an undergraduate degree. And so does Jonathan Sievers. No, no? Okay, the guy didn't make it. We'll I'll talk about him anyway. There he is. Good. (Applause.) Good.

He was born in Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands, and he is the third sibling in his family commended as a presidential scholar -- and that is really remarkable. (Applause.) And he knows who to thank. He thanks his parents. And let me just say how he phrased it, for "making me practice and for leaving the fish alone."

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(Laughter.) You have to be from Kwajalein, like I was once, to understand this inside joke. (Laughter.) Then, there's another, Kai Ng of Illinois. Kai, where are you? Right there. (Applause.) Coming here from Hong Kong in 1974, she learned English from her sister and Sesame Street. She can tell you how you can do it. That's the same place I'm trying to learn how to run a computer. (Laughter.)

Now, education traditionally has served as the ladder that enables individual Americans to reach beyond the clouds. And every time someone succeeds in going further -- higher -- we all reap initiatives. And we all reap the benefits.

Aimee Crago, a presidential scholar from Louisiana. She's here with us. Aimee, now, we don't want to embarrass you, but stand up. (Applause.) And if you don't mind my quoting you, "I think that in order to be the person one wants to be, one needs to have a knowledge of all the people one could be, and education provides this knowledge."

It's become something of a cliché to say that knowledge is power, but it really is. And knowledge, imagination, ambition: these form the pillars of our future. Education can help us keep our competitive edge and imaginative fires -- here and abroad. It gives us the means to raise our standards -- the standards of living to improve the quality of our lives. It can lead us into a new golden age of information, understanding and technology.

America has no natural resource more precious than its intellectual resources. And that's why, recently, I announced this program I referred to earlier, called America 2000. It's an education strategy. It is, really -- look at the details -- it's a pioneering crusade to make and keep American education number one.

For today's students, we must make existing schools not only better, but more accountable. For tomorrow's students, the next generation, we must create a new generation of American schools. And for all of us -- for the adults who think our school days are over -- we've got to become a nation of students, recognizing that learning is a lifelong process. Finally, outside our schools, we must make our communities places where learning can occur.

Our education strategy realizes that education can help us practically. For over 200 years, America's genius has created innovations like the wireless, the Model T, and integrated circuits. I'm reminded of the man who was asked what he would take if his house was on fire and he could only remove one thing. He answered, "I would take the fire." American scholarship works. (Laughter.)

Yet education must also shape us morally -- providing the grounding ideas and values crucial to democracy. I have said -- and I really believe this -- that in America, the definition of a successful life must include serving others. But you cannot serve if you can't think. You cannot serve if you can't separate good from bad, true from false, practical from dreamy.

Just as many have labored to share their knowledge with you -- parents and teachers and administrators and friends -- you must follow suit. Give of yourselves -- as a tutor in a prison, at a local school, in a homeless center. You will share something far more profound than little scraps of information. You will share a way of looking at the world and, in the process, of looking at yourself.

So this may be hard to put in focus, but you are today's trailblazers and leaders. What you learn today and in years to come will help us make the 21st century the next American century. It won't be easy. I recall once, marvelous story, of a professor who left Yale just before I got there, he was marking an examination paper shortly before Christmas -- and for those of my generation, I'm talking about William Lyon Phelps -- and the noted scholar that he was came across a note. The note read, "God only knows the answer to

this question. Merry Christmas." The guy handed his paper in like that. Phelps returned the paper with an annotation, "God gets an A. You get an F. Happy New Year." (Laughter.) True story.

I guess what I'm saying is, you can't bluff your way through the future. And you have to face it squarely and take it on. And you will encounter obstacles, but you will overcome them. And you will conquer through resilience, through scholarship and, above all, the example of your lives.

And as you do, think of those in this program again who deserve our thanks. Our governor here, Governor John Engler, who is Chairman of this White House Commission. Think of the Commission sponsors who enable you to do this. And let me salute the Commission members who choose 141 honorees from among all of America's high school seniors.

But also remember the teachers who inspired you, the friends or adults who counseled you, supported you, gave you the confidence to achieve great things. Kathryn Cunningham, a Scholar from Vermont, has said, "I thank my parents for their advice that achievements mean nothing if they don't help anyone else." All your parents ought to be proud. While this is your day, I kind of think it's also theirs.

And to every Presidential Scholar, my heartfelt congratulations. And in closing, a challenge: Let us not only move mankind into the future, let us better it, ennoble it. Make the best of the special blessings bestowed upon you. God bless you all and your wonderful families. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you and congratulations to all of you. (Applause.)

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2:45 P.M. EDT