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**OA/ID Number:** 13806  
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National Teacher of the Year 4/7/92 [OA 7571] [3]

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what the young man of that story did -- and we're here today to honor him as the 1992 Teacher of the Year -- Thomas Fleming.

Tom is a hero -- a man of strength, courage and great heart. For the last 20 years, as lead teacher in the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Program, he's taught history, government and geography to youths aged 12-16. But he teaches much more. To kids who've had the hope drained out of them by a vicious cycle of abuse, neglect, failure, drugs, and crime -- he gives life-training. Here's what he says: "Knowledge is power -- the more you know, the more you're worth." And he urges these suspicious, disillusioned kids to believe that "Self-esteem follows performance." In these throw-away kids he instills pride.

Tom doesn't want the moon for his kids. He wants something more important -- a future. In his classroom, it will be a future forged out of new personal responsibility; enthusiasm for learning; and hope. Some of his kids have gone on to respected civic and religious positions -- one even took over Tom's original inner-city youth ministry. And one, "Saturday Night Live" comedian A. Whitney Brown, spoke for many when, 20 years after being in his classroom, he dedicated his book to Tom for the difference this man had<sup>s</sup> made in his life.

I have a feeling this crystal apple isn't as important to Tom as his other rewards -- seeing the first spark of light in a kid's eye -- or even just having a kid who'd never been able to read ask him to bring a book from the public library. But the apple does symbolize the respect in which Tom's country holds

(Hinchliffe/Nix)  
March 30, 1992 10 a.m.  
TEACHER Draft One

**PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 1992  
ROSE GARDEN**

*11:15 a.m.*

Thank you, and welcome to the Rose Garden. [ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS]  
We're here to salute and thanks<sup>J</sup> the thousands of outstanding men and women who educate this nation's kids. There's no calling greater than a teacher's, because there's nothing more precious than what they touch -- the minds of our youth. The Talmud says teachers are our "protectors".<sup>Ⓟ</sup> That's true. By teaching our kids what we've learned, and by teaching them to dream, teachers protect the treasures of our past and the promise of our future.

I want to tell you about a Detroit kid who was told he was a slow learner. He had a rough youth. When he dropped out of high school he couldn't read, write or spell. For five years in the Army he thought about wanting to take charge of his life, so when he was discharged he went to night school for two years to earn his high school diploma. Then he went for 7 more years to a Bible College, while working as a minister to kids in the ghetto. Here he found he had the power to touch and change lives. So he decided to become a teacher. He began by working with forgotten kids at a state institution for juvenile offenders.

Kahlil Gibran says: "Whoever would be a teacher of men let him begin by teaching himself before teaching others; and let him set an example before teaching by word." That's exactly what the young man of that story did -- and we're here today to honor him as the 1992 Teacher of the Year -- Thomas Fleming.

Tom is a hero -- a man of strength, courage and great heart. For the last 20 years, as lead teacher in the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Program, he's taught history, government and geography to youths aged 12-16. But he teaches much more. To kids who've had the hope beaten out of them by a vicious cycle of abuse, neglect, failure, drugs, crime -- he gives life-training. "Knowledge is power: the more you know, the more you're worth," he says, and he urges these suspicious, disillusioned kids to believe that "Self-esteem follows performance." In these beaten-down kids he instills pride. <sup>Physical connection</sup> ~~Principal Paul Helber says~~ Tom never lays a hand on them except to <sup>give them a friendly</sup> ~~pat~~ them on the back.

Tom doesn't want the moon for his kids. He wants something more important -- a future. In his classroom, it will be a future forged out of new personal responsibility; enthusiasm for learning; and hope. Some of his kids have gone on to respected civic and religious positions -- one even took over Tom's original inner-city youth ministry. And one, "Saturday Night Live" comedian A. Whitney Brown, spoke for <sup>many</sup> ~~all~~ when he dedicated his book to Tom for making a difference in his life.

<sup>?</sup> <sup>cheek</sup> I have a feeling this crystal apple isn't as important to Tom as his other rewards -- like the first spark of light in a kid's eye; or seeing a <sup>classroom</sup> ~~group's~~ hunger for answers; or even just having a kid who <sup>before had</sup> ~~never~~ been able to read ask him to bring a book from the public library. But the apple does symbolize the respect in which Tom's country holds him. And the apple reminds us of his message -- not only is education important, but special

education is important -- because every life can be redeemed -- every life counts. As Tom says, his conviction that all students can succeed helps him to keep hope alive.

Every day, on the most intense and personal level, Tom sees the heart of the problems we face -- the breakdown of families; the loss of traditional values; an environment that breeds crime, substance abuse, unemployment, and hopelessness. But he knows that good teachers will help us find a solution -- for with every student you teach -- you shape a future, you touch a lifetime.

But teachers can't exist in isolation. Our tremendous respect for them, and the utter conviction that education holds the key for our country's future, urged us to develop America 2000 -- our revolutionary blueprint for educational excellence. I'm absolutely committed to change, beginning with break-the-mold ideas like New American Schools and a range of educational choice that includes empowerment for teachers. Our plan is innovative; it's exciting; <sup>and</sup> it's uniting this country ~~it will work.~~

Tom and the thousands of men and women like him show the excellence that will help us meet America 2000's ambitious goals. Changing our schools is too important to wait -- or to waste -- a generation. We know we've got to be competitive in a changing world. Our economic health -- our economic survival -- depend on how we educate ourselves to face the challenges out there.

We've requested over \$2 billion in Federal spending on math and science education in next year's budget: \$768 million of that for pre-college. That's an increase of 123% in the last 3 years.

*Overall  
ed  
spending*

The Federal Government can do a lot -- but we can't do it all. Teachers know that real excellence demands commitment from everyone in every community as we work to create a new generation of American schools. It demands talented men and women giving time to become tutors, mentors and classroom assistants. It demands businesses, churches and synagogues, and civic groups forming partnerships to support local schools. It demands every citizen helping his or her community develop a plan of action based on our new Declaration of Educational Rights -- America 2000. Together, we will reinvent the American school community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across this country.

And at the heart of this shining new school will be -- as always -- the teacher. A hero to our youngest generation said it best. Last week at the Oscars, filmmaker George Lucas said "all of us who make motion pictures are teachers, teachers with very loud voices, but we will never match the power of the teacher who is able to whisper in a student's ear."

On behalf of all Americans who've had the rare and priceless privilege of having a fine teacher whisper in their ear -- congratulations, Tom. I know how proud your <sup>grandparents</sup> grandmother would be. God bless you, all. Tom.

# # #

*More dramatic conclusion*



# National Teacher of the Year Program

April 1, 1992


**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

**202/456-6218**

**5 Pages**

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Michelle Nix  
The White House

**FROM:** Jon  Guam, Director

**SUBJECT:** Information on National Teachers of the Year

Attached is a list of the previous national teachers and some demographic information. Please let me know if you need any additional information. Thanks.



# National Teachers of the Year

1952-1992

- 1992 **Thomas E. Fleming** - Special Education  
Washtenaw Intermediate School District, Ann Arbor, Michigan
- 1991 **Rae Ellen McKee** - Remedial Reading  
Slanesville Elementary School, Slanesville, West Virginia
- 1990 **Janis Gabay** - English  
Junipero Serra High School, San Diego, California
- 1989 **Mary V. Bicouvaris** - Government/International Relations  
Bethel High School, Hampton, Virginia
- 1988 **Terry Weeks** - Social Studies  
Central Middle School, Murfreesboro, Tennessee
- 1987 **Donna H. Oliver** - Biology  
Hugh M. Cummings High School, Burlington, North Carolina
- 1986 **Guy R. Doud** - Language Arts  
Brainerd Senior High School, Brainerd, Minnesota
- 1985 **Therese Knecht Dozier** - World History  
Irmo High School, Columbia, South Carolina
- 1984 **Sherleen Sisney** - History, Economics and Political Science  
Ballard High School, Louisville, Kentucky
- 1983 **LeRoy E. Hay, Ph.D.** - English  
Manchester High School, Manchester, Connecticut
- 1982 **Bruce E. Brombacher** - Mathematics  
Jones Junior High School, Upper Arlington, Ohio
- 1981 **Jay Sommer** - Foreign Languages  
New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle, New York

- 1980**      **Beverly J. Bimes-Michalak - English**  
Hazelwood East High School, St. Louis, Missouri
- 1979**      **Marilyn W. Black - Elementary Art**  
Bernice A. Ray School, Hanover, New Hampshire
- 1978**      **Elaine Barbour - Sixth Grade**  
Coal Creek Elementary, Montrose, Colorado
- 1977**      **Myrra L. Lee - Social Living**  
Helix High School, La Mesa, California
- 1976**      **Ruby Murchison - Social Studies**  
Washington Drive Junior High, Fayetteville, North Carolina
- 1975**      **Robert G. Heyer - Science**  
Johanna Junior High School, St. Paul, Minnesota
- 1974**      **Vivian Tom - Social Studies**  
Lincoln High School, Yonkers, New York
- 1973**      **John A. Ensworth - Sixth Grade**  
Kenwood School, Bend, Oregon
- 1972**      **James M. Rogers - American History and Black Studies**  
Durham High School, Durham, North Carolina
- 1971**      **Martha M. Stringfellow - First Grade**  
Lewisville Elementary, Chester County, South Carolina
- 1970**      **Johnnie T. Dennis - Physics and Math Analysis**  
Walla Walla High School, Walla Walla, Washington
- 1969**      **Barbara Goleman - Language Arts**  
Miami Jackson High School, Miami, Florida
- 1968**      **David E. Graf - Vocational Education and Industrial Arts**  
Sandwich Community High School, Sandwich, Illinois
- 1967**      **Roger Tenney - Music**  
Owatonna Junior-Senior High School, Owatonna, Minnesota
- 1966**      **Mona Dayton - First Grade**  
Walter Douglas Elementary School, Tucson, Arizona

- 1965**      **Richard E. Klinck - Sixth Grade**  
**Reed Street Elementary, Wheat Ridge, Colorado**
- 1964**      **Lawana Trout - English**  
**Charles Page High School, Sand Springs, Oklahoma**
- 1963**      **Elmon Ousley - Speech, American Government**  
**Bellevue Senior High School, Bellevue, Washington**
- 1962**      **Marjorie French - Mathematics**  
**Topeka High School, Topeka, Kansas**
- 1961**      **Helen Adams - Kindergarten**  
**Cumberland Public School, Cumberland, Wisconsin**
- 1960**      **Hazel B. Davenport - First Grade**  
**Central Elementary School, Beckley, West Virginia**
- 1959**      **Edna Donley - Mathematics and Speech**  
**Alva High School, Alva, Oklahoma**
- 1958**      **Jean Listebarger Humphrey - Second Grade**  
**Edwards Elementary, Ames, Iowa**
- 1957**      **Eugene G. Bizzell - Speech, English and Debate**  
**A.N. McCallum High School, Austin, Texas**
- Mary F. Schartz - Third Grade**  
**Bristol Elementary, Kansas City, Missouri**
- 1956**      **Richard Nelson - Science**  
**Flathead County High School, Kalispell, Montana**
- 1955**      **Margaret Perry - Fourth Grade**  
**Monmouth Elementary, Monmouth, Oregon**
- 1954**      **Willard Wideberg - Seventh Grade**  
**DeKalb Junior High School, DeKalb, Illinois**
- 1953**      **Dorothy Hamilton - Social Studies**  
**Milford High School, Milford, Connecticut**
- 1952**      **Geraldine Jones - First Grade**  
**Hope Public School, Santa Barbara, California**

(Hinchliffe/Nix)  
March 30, 1992 10 a.m.  
TEACHER Draft One

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I want to share a story -- about a Detroit kid brought up by his grandparents. Told he was a slow learner, he had a rough time growing up. When he dropped out of high school he couldn't read, write or spell. Then, in the Army, he wanted to read the Bible but couldn't -- he didn't know how. From that moment, he thought about what it would really mean to take charge of his life.

So when he was discharged he went to night school for two years to earn his high school diploma. Then he went for 7 more years to a Bible College, while working as a minister to kids in the ghetto. Here he found he had the power to touch and change lives. He decided to become a teacher. He began by working with forgotten kids at a state institution for juvenile offenders.

There's an old saying: "Whoever would be a teacher of men, let him begin by teaching himself before teaching others -- and let him set an example before teaching by word." That's exactly

what the young man of that story did -- and we're here today to honor him as the 1992 Teacher of the Year -- Thomas Fleming.

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But teachers can't exist in isolation. Our tremendous respect for them, and the utter conviction that education is the key to our country's future, urged us to develop America 2000: our revolutionary blueprint for educational excellence. In it, we call for Flexibility for Teachers and Principles, allowing the waiving of regulations affecting more than 70 federal programs and \$11 billion. We call for \$545 million to create the first Break-the-Mold American Schools. We call for World Class Standards and Voluntary National Exams. We call for Parental Choice of Schools -- public, private, religious. Our plan is innovative; it's exciting; it's uniting this country -- and it will work.

In America 2000, we also call for ambitious goals -- Tom and the thousands of men and women like him will help us meet them. Changing our schools is too important to wait -- or to waste -- a generation. We know we've got to be competitive in a changing world. We set our goals for the year 2000 because we know that

our economic health -- our economic survival -- depend on how we educate ourselves to face the challenges of a new century.

Teachers know that real excellence demands commitment from everyone in every community as we work to create a new generation of American schools. It demands that talented men and women give time to become tutors and mentors. It demands that businesses, churches and synagogues, and civic groups form partnerships to support local schools. It demands that every citizen helping his or her community develop a plan of action based on America 2000: our new Declaration of Educational Rights. Together, we will reinvent the American school community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across this country.

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Tom -- on behalf of all Americans who've had the rare and priceless privilege of having a fine teacher whisper in their ear -- congratulations. As your wife, Diane, says: there's no distinction between who you are and what you do -- you've woven *your* the values *into your* of ~~your~~ life into your *teaching* work. Your grandparents Carrie and Gordon must be so proud. } God bless you, Tom.

# # #

TEACHER OF THE YEAR QUESTIONS:

- Tom: (does he know he's won?) *yes 3 weeks ago*
  - a specific teacher touched/changed his life?
  - ✓ --how old went into service, what branch
  - ✓ --where grew up; what age dropped out
  - what was it like being a drop out
  - why decided to teach/go back to school?
  - ✓ --any teacher help him turn his life around?
  - ✓ --any anecdotes/stories from his teaching experience?
  - ✓ --how became involved in Juvenile Detention teaching?
  - ✓ --what does he think is greatest problem facing teachers and kids today?
  - ✓ --what does he want to try to do as Teacher of the Year?
  - his own family (wife, children, etc.)

--General:

--will all four finalists be there? *no*

✓ --Copies of previous years' speeches

*only Tom*

*Head worked years*  
*Pat O'Connell*

• Names/Numbers of friends

(313) 662-9890  
*Deb Hanowitz*  
 (517) 851-8519

• First National Teacher

1951 ~~Teacher~~ *Appointed & by whom*

*Whitney Brown*

• Student who became TV comedian

• Does Fleming support America 2000

*Teachers don't endorse*

(313) 971-1390  
*Ann Klein*  
 771-22400

• Mike Emlaw, Superintendent of Washaw

313 994-8100

ext. x 1300

*Barbara*

To Michele  
Date 4/1 Time 1130

**WHILE YOU WERE OUT**

M. Barbara S Dillon  
of \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 313-954-8100 ext. 1300  
Area Code Number Extension

TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL
CALLED TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN
WANTS TO SEE YOU	URGENT
RETURNED YOUR CALL	

Message \_\_\_\_\_  
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Operator George



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# National Teacher of the Year Program

April 2, 1992

**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

**202/456-6218**

**3 Pages**

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Michell Nix  
The White House

**FROM:** Jon Quam, Director

**SUBJECT:** Article on Thomas Fleming

Per your request.

Please give me a call if you need additional information. Thanks.

The Ann Arbor News  
Sept. 8, 1991, p. B1 + B4

LOC

# A NATURAL TEACHER

## Finalist for state teacher of the year has spent 20 years with delinquents

By DAVE WILKINS  
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Tom Fleming circles the large rectangular table in the center of the small classroom.

He leans over one student to point out a detail in a textbook; he leans on another who isn't much interested in the morning's assignment.

It is Fleming's 20th year as a teacher here, at the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Center.

His lesson during third period Wednesday was disjointed and rambling — part teaching, part preaching, part plain talk: A brief overview of U.S. history from the Great Depression to Pearl Harbor. A chat over a fight that escalated from a dodgeball game the night before. A discussion of the causes of homelessness. A mini-sermon on responsibility.

Tall and white-haired, he circles — checking students' progress on the assignment, offering insights, making connections — and the lesson take its own shape.

Fleming reminds his students they must date all their papers. "I want you to know every day you're in jail," he says. "When you're back in your own school, I want you to say, 'I'll be good, I'll be good, I'll be good.'"

Eight or 10 incarcerated teen-agers sit around the table: A bright, personable 14-year-old girl who reads novels and can easily handle the

will be here for a week, others for months. Some return again and again.

It's like a one-room schoolhouse for delinquents, with kids at drastically different stages academically, emotionally, and socially — with teachers who can never be sure how much of a difference they make.

"I know I'm not going to have you long," Fleming tells his students. "I'm just trying to get you in touch with what you can do. . . . But this is a 50-50 proposition. I cannot teach you if you don't want to learn."

Later, after the class is over and the students are off having lunch, Fleming says: "I don't know how you (meet their diverse needs) academically. I do know how important it is to affirm that child — letting that kid have some success in school, letting them have a good day."

### Troubled roads

Perhaps Tom Fleming gets through to troubled young people because he has traveled many of their roads: abandonment, poverty, racism, difficulty in school.

At the same time, he knows the strength of a nurturing hand. Fleming was raised by hard-working grandparents whom he cherished. Even today, long after they've passed away, Fleming asks that they be mentioned here: Gordon and Carrie Bell Sparks.

When he was 11 or 12, he told his grandmother he would one day buy the couple a home

**'I don't know how you (meet their diverse needs) academically. I do know how important it is to affirm that child — letting that kid have some success in school.'**

— Tom Fleming

**'Maybe part of it has to do with his own sense of wonder. He's a person who's always learning, buying books, reading books, talking to people, searching for answers, trying to see**

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work of an 11th-grader. A student with a visual disability that makes reading and writing a struggle. A 16-year-old boy caught, when he's outside these walls, in a tug-of-war between his success as a drug dealer and the traditional values he confronts at home.

"Nobody wants to touch these kids," says Dale Rice, a special education professor at Eastern Michigan University who has known Fleming since 1965. "They've become so hardened over the years, there's just no way to get through.

"Tom gets through. He relishes it." For that, Fleming is one of 14 finalists for Michigan Teacher of the Year 1991-92. The winner is scheduled to be announced later this month.

Some of his students are neglected, some have learning disabilities, some can't read, some are repeat offenders. Some are 12 years old, others are 16. Many have never known success in school. Some

things in a new way.'

— The Rev. Larry Greenfield

a home.

"She said, 'Yeah, boy,' and rubbed my head," he says. "But that promise stayed in my heart."

After Fleming's birth in Redding, Pa., in 1933, his mother left him with her parents, one of three black families in their Detroit neighborhood. She said she would be back for him when she could afford to raise a child.

He saw her once when he was 9 or 10 years old and again as a young adult.

Fleming never knew his father.

A "bad-ass kid" in a tough Detroit neighborhood, Fleming spent sixth grade in the equivalent of a reform school and ran with a rough crowd in high school: "I'd walk into school and somebody would say 'Hello, Sambo' or 'Hello, Hershey Bar,' and I'd fire 'em up."

He lied about his age to get into the National

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See TEACHER, B4

# Juvenile detention center teacher makes a difference

EACHER, from B1

d in 1949 and became a member of the 1279th Combat Engineers, ultimately serving with the occupation troops in Germany in the early 1950s.

After his hitch, he returned to the old neighborhood and took up with the old crowd. In a week, they were jailed for a break-in at a local theater. Fleming wasn't involved; still unsure if his friends were.

When he was released the next day, Fleming decided he was better off in the military and re-enlisted. About the same time, he saw another for the second time.

He gave me a white cross and told me to hold it all the time, because I'd be blessed," Fleming remembers.

When he was in Chaumont, France, driving a cement truck on an Army construction project that was building airstrips. He was making money to a bank back home, and working most nights.

After one round of carousing in Paris with buddies, Fleming reached a turning point. "I didn't know until I got back to the base that I realized I'd broken the cross," he says. "I felt really damned my soul."

## 1 and politics

Straight, he sought help from a man named David who worked in the motor pool and was routinely chastised for reading the Testament. The man told Fleming to put trust in Jesus.

When Fleming lost interest in drinking and praying on the barrack's concrete floor, he too was chastised: "While I was working, they'd throw combat boots at me."

When he returned from overseas in 1955, took the money he had saved from his military pay and went to his grandparents the home he had inherited as a boy. He went to night school, earned a high school equivalency diploma, and, in 1957, enrolled at Detroit Bible College, now William Tyndale College.

"I wanted to read the Bible," he says.

'These are kids who are wary of people. They've been burned and they're not going to just let anybody into their lives. Tom can win them over in a very honest way.'

— Dale Rice, EMU professor

"That's why I went back to school. . . . My basic goal was just to learn to read the Bible."

While earning a bachelor's degree in religious education during the late '50s and early '60s, he combined his two loves — the church and working with young people — by serving as youth director at churches in northwest Detroit.

But later, while he was a graduate student at Eastern Michigan University, Fleming questioned the political relevance of the church. A "coffeehouse revolutionary" was born.

He was involved in the formation of the Black Student Union at Eastern and affiliated with the Black Panthers. In 1970, he participated in the first Black Action Movement march at the University of Michigan.

"When I enrolled in graduate school, I was disappointed with the politics of the religious community," Fleming wrote in the application his employer, the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, submitted to the Teacher of the Year program.

"I had met Dr. Martin Luther King during one of his visits to Detroit, and agreed with his assessment that the church 'was called to be the light of the world, and now is the tall-light. . . . I discovered black history and read almost day and night: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Lerone Bennett, Langston Hughes, W.E.B. DuBois, and John Hope Franklin."

In the late 1970s, Fleming received "a second touch from God." Today, he is associate

minister at the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor and less than a year away from being ordained.

"That would be confirmation in a sense," says the Rev. Larry Greenfield, interim minister at First Baptist. "I dare anybody to claim that this isn't already a full-fledged minister of God."

## Making a difference

In 1968, Fleming completed his master's degree in special education and took his first professional job teaching at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School in Whitmore Lake.

It didn't last long.

When two of Maxey's teen-age inmates were transferred to a mental facility in Traverse City, Fleming and another teacher, Anna Klein, complained, saying the boys were tough to handle but they were bright and did not belong in a mental institution.

One of the boys, Fleming says, "was just a satirist. The staff would say something to him and he'd come back with something smart and it'd piss off the staff. . . . He was sharp."

But the protests from Fleming and Klein were ignored.

"We were told it wasn't our business," Fleming says. "But I made it my business."

The two teachers went to Traverse City, retrieved the two boys and returned them to Maxey. Fleming ultimately lost his job over it. The teen-ager with a gift for satire was A.

Whitney Brown, today a writer and performer on television's "Saturday Night Live." He dedicated his 1989 book, "The Big Picture," "to Anna Klein and Tom Fleming, two teachers who made a difference."

## The natural

Last week, the detention center was full, with 27 juveniles. Fleming and the other two teachers who work there — Pat O'Connell and Deb Hanewich-Duranczyk — expect to see 200 to 250 students come through its "revolving door" this school year.

But Fleming shows no sign of tiring, of succumbing to the frustration of the work he has done for two decades.

The Rev. Greenfield says it's a "combination of passion, commitment and ability that makes this character so unusual."

"Maybe part of it has to do with his own sense of wonder," Greenfield says. "He's a person who's always learning, buying books, reading books, talking to people, searching for answers, trying to see things in a new way. . . ."

"There is a child in Tom Fleming. . . . There's an awe, an openness."

EMU's Rice explains it similarly.

"These are kids who are wary of people," he says. "They've been burned and they're not going to just let anybody into their lives."

"Tom can win them over in a very honest way. . . . He's a very honest person. It's not something he developed over the years — it's almost as if he was born with it. It's not something you learn from a college textbook. It's almost an art."

"You let your guard down around him. . . . You feel safe, you can trust him completely. Kids feel safe with him."

"It's not a technique. It's not a calculated part of him," he says. "It's natural. You talk about the natural in baseball. He's the natural with delinquent kids."



# National Teacher of the Year Program

April 2, 1992

**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

**202/456-1647**

**2 Pages**

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Jane Leonard  
Mark Lapedis

**FROM:** Jon Quam, Director

**SUBJECT:** DC, MD, VA, Chiefs and State Teachers of the Year  
Talking points

Per your request. We'll have the completed list of invitees by COB tomorrow. I will need instructions as to who and where the apple should be delivered. It is extremely fragile so care must be taken. I'll wait to hear from you.

Talking points as relates to presentation:

- The classroom teacher is the backbone of the American educational system.
- No one person has a greater impact on the education of a child than does the teacher who creates the primary learning and instructional environment.
- The apple is the traditional symbol of teaching and the crystal represents the clarity and purity of vision and commitment that teachers of great quality possess.
- It is the mission of the National Teacher of the Year Program to recognize and honor the contributions of the American classroom teacher.
- The Program is the oldest and most prestigious awards program to focus public attention on excellence in teaching. Now celebrating its 41st year, the National Teacher of the Year Program is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

Let me know if you need more.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 6, 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR MICHELLE NIX

FROM: JANE BARNETT LEONARD *ML for JBL*

SUBJECT: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S  
REMARKS DURING THE CEREMONY FOR THE  
NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

To date, the following will be in attendance at the Ceremony for the National Teacher of the Year in the Rose Garden on Tuesday, April 7, 1992 at 11:15 a.m. and should be considered for acknowledgements in the President's remarks.

Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander *intro*

*Diane, Malcom, Josephine  
Rosinski*

Dr. Robert Schiller - Superintendent of Public Instruction, Michigan State Department of Education

Michael Emlaw, Superintendent, Washtenaw Intermediate School District

Gordon Ambach - Executive Director, Council of Chief State School Officers

26 students from Jefferson Junior High School, Washington, D.C. (background info. attached)

30 students from Saint Rita's School, Alexandria, Virginia

I will forward any other names as they become available. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at x7845.

JEFFERSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
8TH AND H STREETS, S.W.  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20024

April 3, 1992

Mr. Marc Lapidés  
Office of Public Relations  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Lapidés:

On behalf of Jefferson Junior High School, I wish to thank you for your kind invitation for our school to participate in your Teacher of The Year Ceremonies on April 7, 1992.

Jefferson Junior High School is in an alliance with the Communication Satellite Corporation (COMSAT) to develop a School of Distinction focused on mathematics and science. Section 8-207 is one of 10 sections (groups) in the Math/Science "School Within A School" which started in 1990. They are all Honor Roll Students and 95% of them have already successfully completed Algebra I, Geometry and are now taking Algebra II and Chemistry in the 8th grade. They are engaged in many activities that show how exceptional achievement in math and science and future careers in math and science are continuously linked.

They are active in all aspects of the school and community.

We have enclosed a listing of the students in section 8-207 who will be attending. If you have further need for information, please contact Mrs. E. Louise White on (202) 724-4422.

Sincerely,

*Vera M. White*

Vera M. White  
Principal

cc: Robert Hunter

(Hinchliffe/Nix)  
April 6, 1992 10:00 a.m.  
TEACHER Draft Three

**PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 1992 11:15 A.M.  
ROSE GARDEN**

Thank you and welcome to the Rose Garden. [ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS]  
We're here to salute and thank the thousands of outstanding men and women who educate this nation's children. There's no calling greater than a teacher's, because there's nothing more precious than what they touch -- the minds of our youth. The Talmud says teachers are our "protectors." That's true. By teaching our kids what we've learned, and by teaching them to dream, teachers protect the treasures of our past and the promise of our future.

Today, I want to share with you a story -- about a Detroit kid brought up by his grandparents. He struggled in school -- was labeled a slow learner. When he dropped out of high school, he couldn't read or write or spell. He didn't think that mattered. But one day it did. His faith became tremendously important to him and he wanted to read the Bible, but he couldn't -- he didn't know how. From that moment, he thought about what it would really mean to take charge of his life.

That moment changed his life. Five years after he dropped out, he enrolled in night school to learn how to read -- and earn his high school diploma. He went on to Bible College, while working as a minister to kids like himself in northwest Detroit. Here he found he had the power to touch and change lives. He decided to become a teacher, and worked with forgotten kids at a state institution for juvenile offenders.

There's an old saying: "Whoever would be a teacher of men, let him begin by teaching himself before teaching others -- and let him set an example before teaching by word." That's exactly what the young man of that story did -- and we're here today to honor him as the 1992 Teacher of the Year -- Thomas Fleming.

Tom is a hero -- a man of strength, courage and great heart. For the last 20 years, as lead teacher in the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Program, he's taught history, government and geography to youths aged 12-16. But he teaches much more. To kids who've had the hope drained out of them by a vicious cycle of abuse, neglect, failure, drugs, and crime -- he gives life-training. Here's what he says to them: "Knowledge is power -- the more you know, the more you're worth." And in these "throw-away" kids he instills pride.

Tom doesn't want the moon for his kids. He wants something more important -- a future. In his classroom, it will be a future forged out of new personal responsibility -- enthusiasm for learning -- and hope. Some of his kids have gone on to respected civic and religious positions -- one even rebuilt Tom's original youth club as a ministry of his own. And one, "Saturday Night Live" comedian A. Whitney Brown, spoke for many when, more than 20 years after being in his classroom, he dedicated his book to Tom and to his colleague Anne Klein, who's also here today, calling them "two teachers who made a difference." \\\

I have a feeling this crystal apple isn't as important to Tom as his other rewards -- seeing the first spark of light in a

kid's eye -- or even just having a kid, who never before had been able to read, ask him for a book from the public library. But the apple does symbolize the respect with which Tom's country views him. And the apple reminds us of Tom's message: education is important because every life can be redeemed -- every life counts.

Whether you're concerned about the big issues that shape our world -- or about the values close to home, education is a fundamental part of the three precious legacies Americans take to heart: Strong families. Good jobs. A world at peace.

Every day, on the most intense and personal level, Tom Fleming sees the heart of the problems we face -- the breakdown of families -- the loss of traditional values -- the lure of crime and substance abuse -- the dead-end of unemployment and hopelessness. But he knows that good teachers will help us find a solution -- for with every student you teach -- you shape a future, you touch a lifetime.

But teachers can't exist in isolation. Our tremendous respect for them, and our utter conviction that education is the key to our country's future, led us to develop America 2000: our revolutionary blueprint for educational reform. It will lead us to reach our six National Education Goals: adopted more than two years ago in an extraordinary nonpartisan, federal-state partnership by the nation's governors and this administration.

Let me remind you of these six goals, which will propel this nation forward into excellence. By the year 2000 -- Our children

will start school ready to learn. America's students will achieve at least a 90% high school graduation rate. They will demonstrate competence in five core subjects measured against world-class standards. By the year 2000, our children will be first in the world in science and math. Our adults will be literate and able to compete in the work force. And finally, our schools will be safe, disciplined, and drug-free. \\

Teachers are at the heart of America 2000 -- which will help us achieve these goals through its emphasis on four transforming ideas. First, Flexibility for Teachers and Principals -- freedom from the web of federal regulations that impose a one-size-fits-all solution on our schools. Second, a Generation of New American Schools -- teachers are part of this exciting break-the-mold experiment in what education can be. Third, World Class Standards and Voluntary National Exams -- teachers are leading the way in defining standards, creating curriculum frameworks and developing exams to help us raise our sights and measure our performance. Fourth and finally, Parental Choice of Schools -- public, private, religious. We also want parents to be involved -- that's why we must work hard to give all families choice in deciding where their kids go to school. Our plan is innovative; it's exciting; it's uniting this country -- and it will work. \\

Changing our schools is too important to wait -- or to waste -- a generation. That's why education is one of the five urgent reform challenges I've been talking about. We know we've got to be competitive in a changing world. We can't go on sending our

children into the working world under-educated and ill-equipped -  
- and expect the business community to spend billions teaching  
new workers what they should have learned in school. Status quo  
schools won't carry us into the next century. We set our goals  
for the year 2000 because we know our economic health -- our  
economic survival -- depend on how we educate ourselves to face  
the challenges a new century will bring.

Tom and the thousands of men and women like him will help us  
meet those challenges. Teachers know that real excellence demands  
commitment from everyone in every community as we work to create  
communities where learning can happen. It demands that talented  
men and women give time to become tutors and mentors. It demands  
that businesses, churches and synagogues, and civic groups join  
together to support local schools. It demands that every citizen  
help his community develop a plan of action based on America 2000  
-- and help the nation reach the National Education Goals.  
Together, we will reinvent the American school community by  
community, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across this country.

And at the heart of this shining new school will be -- as  
always -- the teacher. Last week at the Oscars, filmmaker George  
Lucas might have captured it best, when he thanked the teachers  
of his childhood. He said: "all of us ... are teachers,  
teachers with very loud voices, but we will never match the power  
of the teacher who is able to whisper in a student's ear."

Tom -- on behalf of all Americans who've had the rare and  
priceless privilege of having a fine teacher whisper in their ear

-- congratulations. You teach the one lesson that matters most. There's no distinction between who you are and what you do -- you've woven the values of your life into your work. Thank you, Tom -- and may God bless you.

And now I have something special for you. The apple is the traditional symbol of teaching -- and crystal represents the clarity of vision and commitment that great teachers possess. On behalf of a grateful and admiring nation, Tom -- congratulations.

# # # # #



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

April 3, 1992

MEMORANDUM TO RAE NELSON

FROM: STEPHEN I. DANZANSKY

SUBJECT: Comments on Upcoming Education Speeches:  
April 7 -- Washington  
April 14 -- Detroit

What follows are the Secretary's personal comments on three speeches -- Teacher of the Year, American Business Conference (April 7) and the Detroit Speech (April 14):

I. Teacher of the Year

"Teachers are at the heart of AMERICA 2000. First, Tom, we want to give teachers and principals more flexibility in their classrooms from the web of federal regulations that impose a one-size-fits-all solution on our schools. Second, teachers in hundreds of schools are part of the exciting effort to create the first wave of an entire generation of break-the-mold new American Schools that meet the needs of today's children. Teachers know best how to create the best schools in the world for our children. Third, teachers in mathematics and in sciences and history and in other critical subjects are leading the way in defining world-class academic standards, creating new state curriculum frameworks and establishing a system of voluntary national exams -- to help us raise our sights and measure our performance. We want teachers to be deeply involved -- as they are in Detroit -- in creating new school options, new choices for parents -- we especially must work hard to give middle and low income families more of the same school choices that families with money already have.

We know that these major changes in our education system will require new opportunities for teacher retraining -- that's why we have focused the more than \$2 billion the federal government spends on math and science education on teacher retraining. That's why I have proposed that Congress help states create Governors' Academies for Teachers of math, science, English, history and geography."

II. American Business Conference

(Note: It is important to mention Jim Jones, the former Democratic Congressman and President of the American Stock Exchange and member of the New American Schools Development Corporation Board. )

*H. Whitney  
to attend*

(Hinchliffe/Nix)  
April 6, 1992 1 p.m.  
TEACHER Draft Four

**PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 1992 11:15 A.M.  
ROSE GARDEN**

Thank you, Lamar. Welcome to the Rose Garden, everybody --  
in addition to our Secretary of Education, I'm glad to see  
[ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS]

We're all here today to salute and thank the thousands of  
outstanding men and women who educate this nation's children.  
There's no calling greater than a teacher's, because there's  
nothing more precious than what they touch -- the minds of our  
youth. \\

The Talmud says teachers are our "protectors." That's true.  
By teaching our kids what we've learned -- and by teaching them  
to dream -- teachers protect the treasures of our past and the  
promise of our future. \\

Today, I want to share with you a story -- about a Detroit  
kid brought up by his grandparents, Gordon and Carrie Bell  
+ Sparks. He struggled in school -- was labeled a slow learner.

When he dropped out of high school, he couldn't read or  
write or spell. He didn't think that mattered. But one day it  
did. His faith became tremendously important to him and he  
wanted to read the Bible, but he couldn't -- he didn't know how.

From that moment, he thought about what it would really mean  
to take charge of his life. \

That moment changed his life. Five years after he dropped  
out, he enrolled in night school to learn how to read his Bible -

- and earn his high school diploma. He went on to Bible College, while working as a minister to kids like himself in northwest Detroit. Here he found he had the power to touch and change lives. He decided to become a teacher, and worked with forgotten kids at a state institution for juvenile offenders.

There's an old saying: "Whoever would be a teacher of men, let him begin by teaching himself before teaching others -- and let him set an example before teaching by word." \\ That's exactly what the young man of that story did -- and we're here today to honor him as the 1992 Teacher of the Year -- Thomas Fleming. \\

Tom is a hero -- a man of strength, courage and great heart. For the last 20 years, as lead teacher in the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Program, he's taught history, government and geography to youths aged 12-16.

But he teaches much more. To kids who've had the hope drained out of them by a vicious cycle of abuse, neglect, failure, drugs, and crime -- he gives life-training. Here's what he says to them: "Knowledge is power -- the more you know, the more you're worth."

In these "throw-away" kids he instills pride. \\

Tom doesn't want the moon for his kids. He wants something more important -- a future. In his classroom, it will be a future forged out of new personal responsibility -- enthusiasm for learning -- and hope.

Some of his kids have gone on to respected civic and

religious positions -- one even rebuilt Tom's original youth club as a ministry of his own. And one of his kids, "Saturday Night Live" comedian A. Whitney Brown, spoke for many others when, more than 20 years after being in his classroom, he dedicated his book "The Big Picture" to Tom and to his colleague Anne Klein, who's also here today. He called them "two teachers who made a difference." \\\

I have a feeling this crystal apple isn't as important to Tom as his other rewards -- seeing the first spark of light in a kid's eye -- or even just having a kid, who never before had been able to read, ask him for a book from the public library.

But the apple does symbolize the respect with which Tom's country views him. And the apple reminds us of Tom's message: education is important because every life can be redeemed -- every life counts. \\\

Whether you're concerned about the big issues that shape our world -- or about the values close to home, education is a fundamental part of the three precious legacies Americans take to heart: Strong families. Good jobs. A world at peace.

Every day, on the most intense and personal level, Tom Fleming sees the heart of the problems we face: the breakdown of families -- the loss of traditional values -- the lure of crime and substance abuse -- the dead-end of unemployment and hopelessness. But he knows that good teachers will help us find a solution -- for with every student you teach -- you shape a future, you touch a lifetime. \\\

But teachers can't exist in isolation. Our tremendous respect for them, and our utter conviction that education is the key to our country's future, led us to develop America 2000 -- our revolutionary blueprint for educational reform.

It will lead us to reach our six National Education Goals: adopted more than two years ago in an extraordinary nonpartisan, federal-state partnership by the nation's governors and this administration.

Let me remind you of these six goals, which will propel this nation forward into excellence. By the year 2000 -- ~~Our~~ children will start school ready to learn. \ America's students will achieve at least a 90% high school graduation rate. \ They will demonstrate competence in five core subjects measured against world-class standards. \

By the year 2000, our children will be first in the world in science and math. \ Our adults will be literate and able to compete in the work force. \ And finally, our schools will be safe, disciplined, and drug-free. \ \ \

We'll achieve these goals by advancing four transforming ideas at the heart of America 2000. First, Flexibility for Teachers and Principals -- freedom from the web of federal regulations that impose a one-size-fits-all solution on our schools. \

Second, a Generation of New American Schools -- teachers are critical to this exciting break-the-mold experiment in what education can be. \ Third, World Class Standards and Voluntary

National Exams -- again, teachers are leading the way in defining standards, creating curriculum frameworks and developing exams to help us raise our sights and measure our performance. \

Fourth and finally, Parental Choice of Schools -- public, private, religious. \\  
 \

Our plan is innovative; it's exciting; it's uniting this country -- and it will work. \\\

Changing our schools is too important to wait -- or to waste -- a generation. That's why education is one of the five urgent reform challenges I've been talking about. We know we've got to be competitive in a changing world. We can't go on sending our children into the working world under-educated and ill-equipped - - and expect the business community to spend billions teaching new workers what they should have learned in school.

Status quo schools won't carry us into the next century. We set our goals for the year 2000 because we know our economic health -- our economic survival -- depends on how we educate ourselves to face the challenges a new century will bring.

Tom and the thousands of men and women like him will help us meet those challenges. Teachers know that real excellence demands commitment from everyone in every community as we work to create communities where learning can happen.

It demands that talented men and women give time to become tutors and mentors. It demands that businesses, churches and synagogues, and civic groups join together to support local schools. It demands that every citizen help his community

develop a plan of action based on America 2000 -- and help the nation reach the National Education Goals. Together, we will reinvent the American school community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across this country. \\

And at the heart of this shining new school will be -- as always -- the teacher. Last week at the Oscars, filmmaker George Lucas might have captured it best, when he thanked the teachers of his childhood. He said: "all of us ... are teachers, teachers with very loud voices, but we will never match the power of the teacher who is able to whisper in a student's ear."

Tom -- on behalf of all Americans who've had the rare and priceless privilege of having a fine teacher whisper in their ear -- congratulations. You teach the one lesson that matters most. There's no distinction between who you are and what you do -- you've woven the values of your life into your work. Thank you, Tom -- and may God bless you. \\

And now I have something special for you. The apple is the traditional symbol of teaching -- and crystal represents the clarity of vision and commitment that great teachers possess. On behalf of a grateful and admiring nation, Tom -- congratulations.

# # # # #

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 7, 1992

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
IN HONORING TEACHER OF THE YEAR THOMAS FLEMING

The Rose Garden

11:22 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lamar, and welcome, everybody, to the Rose Garden. In addition to our outstanding Secretary Lamar Alexander, we have with us Gordon Ambach of the Council of Chief State School Officers; Superintendent Schiller and Michael Emlaw from Michigan; the kids here from Jefferson Junior High and St. Rita's School; and of course, the folks that I just had the pleasure of meeting in the Oval Office, Tom, Diane and Malcolm Fleming, and Diane's mother, Josephine Rosinski.

Why don't you all stand up so they can officially welcome you. (Applause.)

Thank you. Now, we're all here today to salute and thank the thousands of outstanding men and women who educate this nation's children. There's no calling greater than a teacher's because there is nothing more precious than what they touch -- the minds of our youth.

The Talmud says teachers are our "protectors" -- and that's true. By teaching our kids what we've learned and by teaching them to dream, teachers protect the treasures of our past and the promise of our future.

Today I want to share a story about a Detroit kid brought up by his grandparents, Gordon and Carrie Bell Starks. He struggled in school, was labeled a slow learner. And when he dropped out of high school he couldn't read or write or spell. He didn't think that mattered, but one day it did. His faith became tremendously important to him. And he wanted to read the Bible, but he couldn't -- didn't know how.

From that moment, he thought about what it would really mean to take charge of his life. And that moment changed his life. And five years later, after he dropped out, he enrolled in night school to learn how to read his Bible and earn his high school diploma. He went on to Bible College while working as a minister to kids like himself in northwest Detroit. And here he found he had the power to touch and to change lives.

He decided to become a teacher and worked with forgotten kids at a state institution for juvenile offenders. And there's an old saying, "Whoever would be a teacher of men, let him begin by teaching himself before teaching others, and let him set an example before teaching by word." And that's exactly what the young man of this story did. And we're here today to honor him as the 1992 Teacher of the Year -- Thomas Fleming. (Applause.)

He's a hero -- a man of great strength, of courage and great heart. And for the last 20 years as lead teacher in the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Program, he's taught history, government, and also geography to kids in the 12-16 age bracket. But he teaches much, much more.

MORE

To kids who had the hope drained out of them by a vicious cycle of abuse, neglect, failure, drugs, crime, he gives life training. And here's what he says to them: "Knowledge is power. The more you know the more you're worth." In these throw-away kids he installs pride.

Tom doesn't want the moon for his kids; he want's something more important -- a future. And in his classroom it will be a future forged out of new personal responsibility, enthusiasm and learning and, yes, hope.

Some of his kids have gone on to respected civic and religious positions. One even rebuilt Tom's original youth club as a ministry of his own. And one of his kids, "Saturday Night Live" comedian, A. Whitney Brown, is here with us today.

Whitney, please stand up, and welcome. (Applause.) And I'm glad you didn't bring Dana Carvey. (Laughter.)

No, but this guy spoke for many of Tom's kids when, more than 20 years after being taught in his classroom, he dedicated his book, *The Big Picture*, to Tom and to his colleague Anne Klein, who is also here today. And he called them, "two teachers who made a difference.

Well, I have a feeling this crystal apple over here isn't as important to Tom as his other rewards -- seeing the first spark of light in a kid's eye, or even just having a kid who never before had been able to read ask him for a book from the public library. But the apple does symbolize the respect with which Tom's country views him. And the apple reminds us of Tom's message: Education is important because every life can be redeemed; every life counts.

Whether you're concerned about the big issues that shape our world or about the values close to home, education is a fundamental part of the three precious legacies Americans take to heart: strong families, good jobs, a world at peace. Every day on the most intense and personal level, Tom Fleming sees the heart of the problems we face: the breakdown of families, the loss of traditional values, the lure of crime and substance abuse, the dead end of unemployment and hopelessness.

But he knows that good teachers will help us find a solution. For with every student you teach you shape a future and you touch a lifetime. But teachers cannot exist in isolation. Our tremendous respect for them and our utter conviction that education is the key to our country's future led us to develop *America 2000*, a revolutionary blueprint for educational reform.

It will lead us to achieve our six national education goals, adopted, as you may remember, more than two years ago in an extraordinary nonpartisan federal-state partnership by the nation's governors and by this administration. And let me remind you just briefly of these six goals which will propel this nation forward into excellence.

By the year 2000 our children will start school ready to learn; America's students will achieve at least a 90-percent high school graduation rate; they will demonstrate competence in five core subjects measured against world-class standards. And by the year 2000 our children will be the first in science and math; our adults will be literate and able to compete in the work force; and sixth, finally, our schools will be safe, disciplined and drug-free.

We'll achieve these goals by advancing four transforming ideas at the heart of *America 2000*. First, flexibility for teachers and principals. Freedom from the web of federal regulations that

impose a "one size fits all" solution to our schools. Second, a generation of new American schools. Teachers are critical to this exciting break-the-mold experiment in what education can be.

And third, world-class standards and voluntary national exams. Again, teachers are leading the way in defining standards, creating curriculum frameworks, developing exams to help us raise our sights and measure our performance. And fourth and finally, parental choice of schools -- public, private, religious.

Now, our plan is innovative. It is exciting. It is uniting this country and it will work. Changing our schools is too important to wait or to waste a generation. And that's why education is one of the five urgent reform challenges that I've been talking about. We know we've got to be competitive in a changing world. We can't go on sending our children into the working world under-educated and ill-equipped and expect the business community to spend billions teaching new workers what they should have learned in school. Status quo schools simply will not carry us into the next century.

We set our goals for the year 2000 because we know our economic health, our economic survival depends on how we educate ourselves to face the challenges a new century will bring. Tom and the thousands of men and women like him will help us meet those challenges.

Teachers know that real excellence demands commitment from everyone in every community as we work to create communities where learning can happen. It demands that talented men and women give time to become tutors and mentors. It demands that businesses, churches and synagogues and civic groups join together to support local schools. It demands that every citizen help his community develop a plan of action based on America 2000 and help the nation reach these national education goals.

Together, we literally will reinvent the American school community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across this country. And at the heart of this shining new school will be, as always, the teacher.

Last week at the Oscars, George Lucas, filmmaker, might have captured it best when he thanked the teachers of his childhood. And he said, "All of us are teachers, teachers with very loud voices. But we will never match the power of the teacher who is able to whisper in a student's ear."

And so, Tom, on behalf of all Americans who have had the rare and priceless privilege of having a fine teacher whisper in their ear, congratulations. You teach the one lesson that matters the most: there's no distinction between who you are and what you do. You've woven the values of your life into your work. And thank you, sir. And may God bless you.

And now I have something special for you. This apple is the traditional symbol of teaching, and crystal represents the clarity of vision and commitment to the great teachers -- that the great teachers possess. And so, on behalf of a grateful nation, an admiring nation, with great pride in you, sir, congratulations.

Now, may I hand you this apple? (Applause.)

MR. FLEMING: Thank you very much. Mr. President, I accept this honor on behalf of the teachers of America, with your recognition of our commitment to teach every young person the challenges that they will need for the future. May God's strength be with you and His guidance as you lead our great nation. Thank you. (Applause.)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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Embargoed for Release  
Until 9:00 A.M. EST  
Saturday, April 4, 1992

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

THE PRESIDENT: American democracy was launched from great ideas which grew out of great debate. Our Founding Fathers believed in the fundamentals: faith, family and freedom. And they were determined to build prosperity. More than 200 years later, by holding firmly to our principles, America has changed the world. Henry Luce called the 20th century the American Century.

If we are to ensure that the next century is also the American Century, we must meet five great challenges: education reform, legal reform, health care reform, international competitiveness and market expansion and governmental reform.

The latest unemployment figures were released Friday. They held steady at 7.3 percent. But unemployment is still too high. Too many Americans are out of work. To get this economy rolling again, faster and stronger, Congress should have passed our economic action plan. But they reverted to form, tried to raise taxes and increase government spending. We can no longer afford this kind of business as usual. We need to reform Congress. And that is my focus today.

G. K. Chesterton said, "We cannot discuss reform without reference to form." In the face of overwhelming evidence that change is necessary, Congress has kept reform on the back burner. It is up to us to turn up the heat. If we are to improve education, health care, our legal system; if we are to reduce red tape and regulation; if we are to make our country competitive and get this horrendous deficit down, we must reform the congressional process itself.

It is true that one-party rule in Congress is a big part of the problem. But the larger issue is a systemic problem, the 284 congressional committees and subcommittees, the almost 40,000 Legislative Branch employees and staff, the \$2.5 billion of taxpayer financing overlaid with \$117 million reelection war chest and special interest campaign contributions for incumbents. Such a system cannot promote reform and change; instead it aggressively protects the status quo.

I know that the federal government cannot be run just like IBM or the local convenience store. But government today is a \$1.5-trillion enterprise and programs that have outlived their function have not outlived their funding. We can and we must improve governments responsiveness.

What merely hampered us in the past will gridlock us in the future. Our ability to compete demands that Congress enact the reforms I have proposed. The set of actions I have proposed, when taken together, will help make government respond to the people. Government for the people, as our founders envisioned.

First, Congress should govern itself by the laws it imposes on everyone else. No more special treatment.

Second, Congress should reform its operations and procedures.

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Third, we must make sweeping campaign finance reforms.

Fourth, we need to change how Congress spends the people's money.

And fifth, we must revise and eliminate government regulations that impede our ability to compete, and we must accelerate regulations that enhance our competitive edge.

Sixth, we must limit congressional terms. The cycle of virtually guaranteed reelection through the built-in advantages of incumbency must be broken.

And finally, the Congress of the future should be a citizen Congress, not a career Congress.

These reforms, taken together, can renew our faith in government, restore the principles of our founders, and help guarantee for children a new American Century.

The choice is clear: On the one side stand the defenders of the status quo; on the other, the forces of change. And now that we've changed the world, we must make the choice to change America.

Thank you, and may God bless the United States of America.

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