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(Smith/Blessey)
April 26, 1990
7 A.M.
HOMA

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OKLAHOMA FOUNDATION
TULSA, OKLAHOMA
FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1990
6:53 P.M.

Governor Bellmon, Senator Boren, members of the Foundation, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen. Good evening, and thank you for that introduction -- and for your generous reception.

Exactly one century ago this week, Oklahoma became a territory. Tonight, in this State of open hearts and open skies, Barbara and I are delighted to be with you. //

Earlier today, I gave the Commencement Speech at Oklahoma State University. // They'll never forgive me in Norman. // ((After all, the musical Oklahoma says "the farmer and the cowman should be friends." It doesn't say a thing about the Sooners and the Cowboys.)) //

((So this evening, let me briefly address an issue that can unite these warring schools. A subject that's nonpartisan -- bi-partisan -- that eclipses ideology or alma mater. // No, not education. Fishing)) //

((Will Rogers was known for saying, "I never met a man I didn't like." It's been said that I never met a fish I didn't like. // Of course, after some of my recent vacations, there are some who say I never met a fish, period)) //

((That's where Senator Boren came into the picture. "Come out to Lake Eufaula [U-FALL-a]," he said. So I have, and already

I can tell my luck is changing. // The bad news is that I didn't catch anything. The good news is that Oklahoma fish are too polite to laugh.)) //

Tonight, I want to discuss another non-partisan issue that's far from a laughing matter. The education that is our most enduring legacy, vital to everything we are and can become. // The great preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, once said, "There are only two bequests we can hope to give our children -- one of these is roots; the other, wings." He knew -- as we do -- that education can ensure the roots of learning -- and help our wings soar high. //

Yet today the facts are clear -- and they don't make for pleasant reading. A too high drop-out rate. Erratic standards. Too little parental involvement. Too little accountability -- by teachers, and students. Our schools are wracked by drug use and trafficking. Our kids are ill-equipped to read or write. Let's be honest: Our educational system isn't making the grade. //

Five years ago, a friend of ours acted to convert that grade to "pass" from "fail." Believing that true learning comes from basics like reading, writing, and arithmetic. And that if excellence breeds achievement, then excellence should be rewarded. // He set out to ensure that another century from now, they will say of us: They taught their children well. // His name was David Boren. His brain child was the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. //

This Foundation rests on the knowledge that America can only be as great as her children are educated. And that while the Federal government must help, education is mostly a local and State responsibility. // So it seeks, financially, to support values that are as central to Oklahoma as love of God and of freedom -- as soaring as Mt. Rich and as expansive as the plains.

First of all, as Senator Boren can attest, the Foundation reflects Oklahoma's belief in infinite possibility. Someone said, "Anything can have happened in Oklahoma. Practically everything has." // Your work has raised private money to give \$1,000 cash scholarships to the State's top 100 high school seniors -- chosen from over 600 applicants. These Academic All-Staters are the trustees of our posterity. //

Next, this Foundation mirrors Oklahoma's dedication to high achievement. ((I'm reminded of the story of the Tulsa man who went to a theatre. For 15 cents, he got two theatre pictures, a Mickey Mouse doll, a newsreel, and two sets of dishes. // Yet he demanded his money back. Why? He didn't strike oil under his seat.)) // The Oklahoma Foundation wants learning to strike. So you're giving \$5,000 grants to four teachers: One elementary, a secondary, one college professor, and a school administrator. This entire State salutes tonight's award-recipients. //

Finally, the Foundation for Excellence reflects the belief that education can be the great uplifter -- and, yes, equalizer. ((Perhaps that great Broadway character, Oklahoma's Aunt Eller, put it best when she said, "I don't say I'm better than anybody

else, but I'll be danged if I ain't just as good!")) // David Boren's idea can enrich education -- and help education enrich our lives. //

Achievement, possibility, and equality -- what a definition of Oklahoma. And what a difference this movement has made in just five years. // Earlier, I mentioned facts. Listen to these. Over \$2 million raised. Over 3,00 nominations received. Fully 80 local foundations created to reward performance. // By increasing private support for public education, you have slashed drop-out rates, raised test scores, and cut illiteracy. If there's any doubt, you've resolved it: When it comes to education, Washington Doesn't Know Best. People do. //

As a result, today Oklahoma ranks first, per capita, in the formation of public school foundations. Tonight, I'll make a prediction: They'll help you build a first-rate system of schools. // And as they do, Oklahoma will become an example, locally, of what America must do nationally. Parents, officials, teachers, and school boards working together. Acting today to help our kids --like Oklahoma's fabled pioneers -- discover, and conquer, the untamed frontiers of education tomorrow. //

We know, of course: It won't be easy. ((Let me recall 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.")) //

Yes, education will meet roadblocks. But they are obstacles which can be overcome. For you're not in this alone -- Washington wants to help. Not by pouring funds into kooky courses or extreme curricula. Nor by pandering to "value-free" groups who embody a moral and cultural wasteland. // But by supporting education values that are always in style. Values like good citizenship, patriotism, and self-discipline. Values that are Oklahoma's values. The values which make America great.

That's why a year ago we sent to the Congress our "Educational Excellence Act" -- legislation which seeks, first, to encourage excellence. Second, to see that Federal dollars serve those most in need. Third, to demand educational accountability. And fourth, to support flexibility and choice. This legislation is designed to aid those closest to the communities -- and who best understand its priorities. Not bureaucrats. We reject -- implicitly -- the notion of Federal mandates in education. Rather, those with local ideas -- local creativity -- and with our help, more local autonomy. //

For instance, we want to create a \$500 million program to reward schools that improve the most. And a Magnet Schools of Excellence program: We believe parents -- not Big Brother -- should decide which public school their kids attend. // Our program will reward schools that create a drug-free environment and cut the drop-out rate. It will fund a National Science Scholars Initiative which provides an incentive to excel in science, mathematics, and engineering. And recently, I was

pleased to sign into law, legislation to help schools hit hardest by drug use. //

These steps will help our children unlock the future. Give them the tools to master the new world of new technologies. And reverse a recent comparison of 13-year-old students in the United States and 5 other countries where America placed last in mathematics and near last in science. // Most of all, they will tell the world that American education is Number One again. That American students are unsurpassed again. And that America can outthink, outwork, and outperform any Nation any day of the week.

You know, Will Rogers once said, "I love a dog. He does nothing for political reasons." Neither does our legislation. // Instead, it can achieve the education goals we recently announced. We want every student in America to start school ready to learn. And each school to have an environment where kids can learn. // That means making every school drug-free. And a graduation rate of at least 90 percent. We want U.S. students to be first in math and science by the year 2000. And every American to be a skilled, literate worker and citizen. // Great goals? Obtainable goals. In this State? In every State.

((Let me close with a story about learning, and teaching, and the scholarship that -- together -- all of us can foster. 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, these Academic All-Staters will ask many questions. Questions about their faith and future, problems and priorities, about what we can become, and why we are here. // If we do our job -- as tonight's teachers have -- education can provide some answers. Answers that reflect the spirit of Oklahoma. A spirit that is selfless, independent, and unafraid.//

Think of the heroes who founded this State. They didn't believe in government by bureaucrat. They believed in themselves. // They built homes out of sod, and schoolhouses from dust. Dry Run, Sitting Up, Crocus Hill. Small. Dirt floors. Log walls. Often, supplies were limited -- but there were always enough hands. Pitching in. Teaching classes. Fighting off everything from claim-jumpers to bears.

These pioneers dreamed dreams as big as Oklahoma -- and made their dreams come true. Like us, they knew where the future lay: In their kids, through education. // The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence can help achieve our dreams. So let us seek them, and fulfill them, and shape the next one hundred years. So that a century from now, future generations will say of American education: "Like Oklahoma, you're doing fine -- OK."

Thank you for this occasion. Good luck to the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. And God bless our beloved land -- the United States of America.

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(Smith/Blessey)
April 29, 1990
9 A.M.
HOMA

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OKLAHOMA FOUNDATION
TULSA, OKLAHOMA
FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1990
6:53 P.M.

Governor Bellmon, Senator Boren, members of the Foundation, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for that introduction -- and for your kind reception. Barbara and I are delighted to be in this State of open hearts and open skies. //

Earlier today, I gave the Commencement Speech at Oklahoma State University. // They'll never forgive me in Norman. // ((After all, the musical Oklahoma says "the farmer and the cowman should be friends." It doesn't say a thing about the Sooners and the Cowboys.)) //

Well, this evening I'd like to talk about one thing both schools -- like all Oklahomans -- have in common: their dedication to America's most enduring legacy. I refer, of course, to the education that is vital to everything we are, and can become. //

The great preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, once said, "There are only two bequests we can hope to give our children -- one of these is roots; the other, wings." ((A theme embodied, I might add, in the beautiful sculptures you'll be presenting shortly.)) Henry Beecher knew -- as we do -- that knowledge ~~firmly planted in our children can help their young minds soar and sweep as they pursue that rainbow called tomorrow.~~ //

... provides the foundation for every idea that takes flight in the mind of a child.

Yet today the facts are clear -- and they don't make for pleasant reading. Erratic standards. An unacceptable drop-out rate. Too little parental involvement. Too little accountability by teachers and students. Our schools are wracked by drug use. Our kids are ill-equipped to read or write. Let's be honest: Our educational system isn't making the grade.//

Five years ago, a friend of ours acted to convert that grade to "pass" from "fail." Believing that true learning comes from basics like the Three R's. And that if excellence breeds achievement, then excellence should be rewarded. // He set out to ensure that future generations will say of us: They taught their children well. // His name was David Boren. His idea was the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. //

This Foundation ^{wisely} ~~rests on the~~ ^{believes} understanding that America can only be as great as her children are educated. And that while the Federal government must help, education is and should be a local and State responsibility. // ~~You and I know that~~ parents, teachers, and local administrators -- not distant bureaucrats -- ^{kind and} best grasp local needs. // So this program affirms values as central to Oklahoma as love of freedom and of God.

First of all, the Foundation reflects Oklahoma's belief in high achievement. Someone said, "Anything can have happened in Oklahoma. Practically everything has." // Your work has raised private money to give \$1,000 cash scholarships to the State's top 100 high school seniors. I salute these Academic All-Staters who are the true trustees of our posterity. //

Next, this Foundation mirrors Oklahoma's dedication to excellence. ((I'm reminded of the story of the Tulsa man who went to a theatre. For 15 cents, he got two theatre pictures, a Mickey Mouse doll, a newsreel, and two sets of dishes. // Yet he demanded his money back. Why? He didn't strike oil under his seat.)) // *You understand that those were the responsibilities of our children's education, laborably saved the foundation in their hands.* // Today, ~~education can help America strike it rich.~~ So you're giving \$5,000 grants to three magnificent teachers and a superb public school administrator. I salute the 1990 Oklahoma Medals for Excellence recipients in Teaching and Administration.

Finally, the Foundation for Excellence reflects the belief that education can be the great uplifter and equalizer. ((Perhaps that great Broadway character, Oklahoma's Aunt Eller, put it best when she said, "I don't say I'm better than anybody else, but I'll be danged if I ain't just as good!")) // David Boren's idea can enrich education -- and help education enrich our lives. //

Achievement, excellence, and equality -- what a definition of Oklahoma. And what a difference this movement has made in just five years. // Over \$2 million raised. Eighty new local foundations created -- each following your lead. // By increasing private support for public education, you have raised test scores and slashed drop-out rates and illiteracy. If there's any doubt, you've resolved it: When it comes to Oklahoma education, Washington Doesn't Know Best. Oklahomans do.

The result is that today Oklahoma ranks first, per capita, in the number of public school foundations. ~~Helping~~ ^{ing} make your Foundation a model for other States to follow. You're showing

how parents, teachers, administrators and school boards can work together to help our kids -- like Oklahoma's fabled pioneers -- discover the ^Uinlimited frontiers of learning. //

We know, of course: It won't be easy. There'll be obstacles along the way. But they are obstacles which can be overcome, because you're not in this alone. // That's why a year ago we sent to the Congress our "Educational Excellence Act" -- legislation which can help America outthink, outwork, and outperform any Nation any day of the week. //

For instance, we want to create a \$500 million program to reward schools that improve the most. And a Magnet Schools of Excellence program: We believe parents -- not Big Brother -- should decide which public school their kids attend. // Our program will reward schools that cut the drop-out rate. Found a National Science Scholars Initiative providing incentive to excel in science, mathematics, and engineering. And recently, I signed into law, legislation to help schools hit hardest by drug use. //

These steps will help our children unlock the future. Give them the tools to master the new world of new technologies. And reverse ^{the trend we saw in} a recent comparison of 13-year-old students in the United States and 5 other countries where America placed last in mathematics and near last in science. //

Most of all, our Educational Excellence Act can make American education Number One again by achieving the goals we announced in January with Governors like Henry Bellmon. We want every student to start school ready to learn. And each school to

have an environment where kids can learn. // That means making every school drug-free, and a graduation rate of at least 90 percent. We want U.S. students to be first in math and science by the year 2000. And every American to be skilled and literate. Great goals? Obtainable goals. In this State? In every State.

X ((Let me close with a story about the scholarship that, together, all of us can build. 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 said, "I got out just in time. He was beginning to ask me questions.")) //

In coming years, these Academic All-Staters will ask many questions. Questions about their faith and future, why we are here, and what we can become individually and as a Nation. // How can education supply some answers? The same way this administrator and these teachers have. By embodying the spirit of Oklahoma's past. //

Think of the heroes who ~~founded~~ ^{settled} this State. They didn't believe in government by bureaucrat. They believed in themselves. // They built homes out of sod, and schoolhouses from ~~dust~~ ^{scratch}. Dry Run, Sitting Up, Crocus Hill. Dirt floors. Log walls. Often, supplies were limited -- but there were always enough hands. Pitching in. Teaching classes. Fighting off everything from claim-jumpers to bears.

These pioneers dreamed dreams as big as Oklahoma -- and made their dreams come true. Like us, they knew where the future lay:

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In their kids, through education. // The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence can help achieve our dreams. So that future generations will say of American education: "Like Oklahoma, you're doing fine -- OK." ?

Thank you for this occasion. Good luck to the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. And God bless our beloved land -- the United States of America.

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Phyllis
OKLAHOMA FOUNDATION
TULSA, OKLAHOMA
FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1990
6:53 P.M.

Chinda
THANK YOU, SENATOR NICKLES, FOR YOUR INTRODUCTION.
GOVERNOR BELLMON, SENATOR BOREN, CONGRESSMEN INHOFE AND
WATKINS, SPEAKER CARL ALBERT, MEMBERS OF THE
FOUNDATION, HONORED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I
APPRECIATE YOUR RECEPTION, AND AM DELIGHTED TO BE IN
THIS STATE OF OPEN HEARTS AND OPEN SKIES. //

EARLIER TODAY, I GAVE THE COMMENCEMENT SPEECH AT
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY. // THEY'LL NEVER FORGIVE ME
IN NORMAN. // ((AFTER ALL, THE MUSICAL OKLAHOMA SAYS
"THE FARMER AND THE COWMAN SHOULD BE FRIENDS." IT
DOESN'T SAY A THING ABOUT THE SOONERS AND THE
COWBOYS.)) //

THIS EVENING I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT ONE THING ALL
AMERICANS HAVE IN COMMON: OUR DEDICATION TO AMERICA'S
MOST ENDURING LEGACY. I REFER, OF COURSE, TO THE
EDUCATION THAT IS VITAL TO EVERYTHING WE ARE, AND CAN
BECOME. //