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<b>G</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

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(Smith/Grossman)  
February 11, 1992  
Draft Two  
AFRO-AMERICAN

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1992

Thank you, and welcome to the White House. Barbara and I are honored to join you in celebrating African-American History Month. / I am especially proud to introduce two special guests -- Maya Angelou and Shirley Caesar. //

Professor Angelou is an author, editor, dancer, producer. Now the Reynolds professor of American Studies at Wake Forest College, her life spans a monumental career which not only gave us ...Why the Caged Bird Sings -- but helped to set it free. //

Our other guest is one of America's greatest gospel singers. It's no surprised that they rendered unto this Caesar a Grammy. // Shirley Caesar has long "lifted [her] voice [to] sing" the song of gospel. Her message, like the words of the Black National Anthem, are "..full of the faith that the dark past has taught us..[and]..the hope that the present has brought us." //

Gospel is both music and tradition -- steeped in harmony / history / and belief in God. // It reflects the spirit of African-American History Month: A time to reflect on past triumphs and tragedies -- but also to celebrate tomorrow. // We salute today the courage and commitment that has taken you from the back of the bus to the cockpit of the space shuttle. //

A black scholar once said, "The ignorant are always prejudiced and the prejudiced are always ignorant." By erasing

both, we can bring better relations to race relations. // We can help, too, by not viewing black experience though a white prism. / Too often the book of black history is defined only by slavery, emancipation, and civil rights. This month we have the chance to celebrate another page in Afro-American history. /

I speak of Africans' Roots Explore New Worlds -- which salutes the black pathfinders and trailblazers who pushed back the bounds of ignorance and expanded the boundaries of \_\_. / Explorers like Pedro Nino, who followed the stars to a New World. / Pioneers like Guion Bluford, who parted the stars toward new horizons and beyond. / Or arctic explorer Matthew Henson, who stood on the edge of creation at the new-found North Pole. //

These individuals were the first to climb new mountains and discover new climes. Each made a difference. All make us proud. // Today we celebrate their exploration and discovery -- yet we do not celebrate them alone. // Think of black pioneers whose compass was called courage and whose map was moral vision. People like Dr. Martin Luther King, who had a dream. Or Ralph Bunche, who, like Dr. King, won the Nobel Prize. // Remember Gwendolyn Brooks, who pioneered a Pulitzer. Jesse Owens, who blazed an Olympic trail. Or George Washington Carver, or Rosa Parks. // Dr. Charles Drew and Banneker. The Black Eagles. Colin Powell. // These pioneers -- and many like them -- peered over the rim of the possible, and dared to walk where only others dreamed. //

We, too, stand at the edge of a frontier. We, too, must blaze a better -- richer -- fairer tomorrow. // Not for ourselves alone -- but for our children -- for in the end, we all are children of the same humane and loving God. //

Too often, we spend too much time pointing fingers -- and too little pointing the way. // So let us turn our backs on old divides, and set our sights on new plateaus -- remembering that, as Booker T. Washington said, "A race is not measured by its ability to condemn, but to create." // Together, let us create new tolerance and opportunity -- for if it is in our hearts, then surely it is in our hands. //

Thank you for coming here, God bless you and the United States of America. / Now, it is my great privilege to sign the document proclaiming this Afro-American History Month.

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