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Disability - National Black Deaf Advocates

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**THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON**

Invitation/RSVP

EVENT: On behalf of the Vice President, he invites you or a member of the **National Black Deaf Advocates** to attend a Disability and Employment Meeting on Social Security. The Social Security Administration Commissioner Ken Alpfel and Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman will also address the meeting.

DATE/TIME: Friday, February 12, 1999 at 12:45pm

PLACE: The Desmond Hotel, Albany, New York

**Please Fax your RSVP to:
JENA ROSCOE
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON
202-456-6218 or 202-456-6682**

For more information, contact Jena Roscoe at 202-456-2930.

_____ YES, I will attend.

_____ No, I will not be able to attend.

NAME: _____ TITLE: _____

ORGANIZATION: _____

TELEPHONE #: _____ FAX: _____ EMAIL: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____ SOCIAL SECURITY #: _____

We will need clearance information faxed to Jena Roscoe by Thursday, February 11, 3:00 pm.
Thank you.

PRESIDENT CLINTON AND VICE PRESIDENT GORE:
Increasing Opportunities for Americans With Disabilities

“Increased access to health care, more assistance at home and in the workplace, remarkable new technologies made more available: This is how we can make sure that all Americans can take their rightful place in our 21st century workplaces.”

President Clinton
January 13, 1999

President Clinton and Vice President Gore are committed to expanding opportunities for Americans with disabilities and demonstrating to all Americans that people with disabilities -- given access to the workplace, health care, community services, and technology -- make significant contributions to our society and economy.

EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Fighting to Enact the Work Incentives Improvement Act (WIIA) -- The Work Incentives Improvement Act is an historic bill produced through the bipartisan efforts of Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth and Moynihan in collaboration with leaders in the disability community and staff throughout the Administration. On January 13, 1999, the President previewed one of his FY2000 budget initiatives, committing to the full funding of the WIIA. The Administration's budget initiative, which invests \$1.2 billion over five years, will help provide better health care options for people with disabilities who work.

The Work Incentives Improvement Act will improve access to health care by: (1) expanding states' ability to provide a Medicaid buy-in to people with disabilities who return to work; (2) extending Medicare coverage, for the first time, for people with disabilities who return to work; and (3) creating a new Medicaid buy-in demonstration to help people with a specific physical or mental impairment that is not severe enough to qualify for health assistance, but is likely to lead to a severe disability in the absence of medical treatment. In addition, WIIA will modernize the employment services system by creating a "ticket" that will enable Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries to go to any of a number of public or private providers for vocational rehabilitation. If the beneficiary goes to work and achieves substantial earnings, providers would be paid a portion of the benefits saved. And WIIA creates a Work Incentive Grant program to provide benefits planning and assistance, facilitating access to information about work incentives, and better integrate services to people with disabilities working or returning to work.

Providing a \$1,000 Tax Credit for Work-Related Expenses for People with Disabilities -- On January 13, 1999, the President announced a new proposal that will allow workers with significant disabilities to receive an annual \$1,000 tax credit to help cover the formal and informal costs that are associated with employment, such as special transportation and technology. Like the Jeffords-Kennedy-Roth-Moynihan Work Incentive Act, this tax credit, which will assist 200,000 to 300,000 Americans, will help ensure that people with disabilities have the tools they need to return to work.

Establishing the Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities -- On March 13, 1998, President Clinton signed an Executive Order establishing a National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, charged with creating a coordinated and aggressive national policy to bring adults with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate that is as close as possible to that of the general adult population. According to a 1998 Bureau of Labor Statistics report, only 30 percent of persons with severe disabilities were in the labor force in the third quarter of 1994 (latest data available).

Taking Action on All of the Task Force's Formal Recommendations -- In December, the Vice President accepted the report of the President's Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities. Alexis M. Herman, Secretary of Labor, chairs the Task Force and Tony Coelho, Chairman of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, serve as Vice-Chair. The Administration has taken action on all the Task Force formal recommendations: work to pass the Work Incentive Improvement Act; work to pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights; examine tax options to assist with expenses of work; foster interdisciplinary consortia for employment services; accelerate development and adoption of assistive technology; direct Small Business Administration to expand outreach; remove Federal hiring barriers for people with mental illness and direct the Office of Personnel Management to develop model plan for Federal hiring of people with disabilities.

Signing the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Improving Worker Training and Placement Options for People with Disabilities -- Last year, the President signed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which included the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. The new Act establishes better links between the vocational rehabilitation (VR) system and the general workforce development system. Job seekers with disabilities will have improved options for service through the mainstream worker training and placement system, as well as through the disability-specific VR system. The U.S. Department of Labor, with assistance from the Department of Education, has been providing valuable technical assistance to the network of one-stop career centers on how to provide nondiscriminatory and accessible services to people with disabilities. In addition, the Rehabilitation Act has also been strengthened to give increased options to individuals with disabilities in developing employment plans.

Working on Innovative Strategies to Improve Employment of Adults with Disabilities -- Agencies within the Clinton Administration continue to work on innovative strategies to employ Americans with disabilities. The Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor and the Department of Education are all participating in inter-agency demonstration projects to expand employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. For instance, the Department of Education has awarded six systems-change grants to establish models of improved cooperation and coordination between State Vocational Rehabilitation programs, public employment/employment training programs, and other related programs. The grants will assist in reducing barriers to employment and increasing the capacity of the State's overall employment system to serve individuals with disabilities. The focus of these systems change projects is increasing the employment rate of individuals with disabilities who are currently receiving support through public programs.

Supporting Families -- President Clinton fought for and enacted the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) making workplaces more accommodating for many families that include a child or adult with

a disability. In his 1999 State of the Union, the President proposed to extend the benefits of the Family and Medical Leave Act to ten million more American workers. Currently, only workers who are employed at businesses with 50 or more employees are protected. By covering workers in businesses with 25 or more workers, 10 million more American workers will be covered by the FMLA. The President also called for expanding the law to allow FMLA-eligible workers to take up to 24 hours of additional leave each year to meet specified family obligations, such as accompany one's child to dental or medical appointments.

Helping Move People from Welfare to Work -- Some of those who are having the hardest time moving from welfare to work are people with disabilities. Recognizing the special needs of this and other hard-to-place populations, the 1997 Balanced Budget Act included \$3 billion to assist long-term welfare recipients obtain jobs. In addition, the FY99 budget included a number of measures designed to expand welfare to work activities. The final budget included \$283 million for 50,000 new vouchers exclusively for people who need housing assistance to make the transition from welfare to work and \$75 million to assist states and localities in developing flexible transportation alternatives, such as van services. For FY 2000, the President announced that he will propose an additional \$1 billion for his Welfare-to-Work program to ensure that those remaining on the welfare rolls who face the greatest challenges can succeed in the workforce and to increase the employment of fathers of children on welfare so they can better support their children.

Funding a Disability Research Institute -- The Vice President recently announced that the Social Security Administration will fund a Disability Research Institute to help provide policy-makers with information and research data in the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability policy area, including ways to assess work ability and return-to-work strategies.

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Enacting a Stronger Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) -- In 1997, the President signed into law a stronger Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, so that in FY 2000, IDEA will serve 6.2 million children with disabilities. The expanded IDEA reaffirms and strengthens our national commitment to provide a world class education for all our children. It ensures that our nation's schools are safe and conducive to learning for children, while scrupulously protecting the rights of our disabled students. This bill makes it clear once and for all that children with disabilities have a right to be in the classroom and to be included in school activities like work experience, science clubs and field outings. IDEA also helps all classroom teachers get the full range of teaching skills that they need to teach children with disabilities. Teachers are now required to be involved in the development of individual education plans to help disabled children succeed. In addition, President Clinton has proposed requiring that states establish performance goals for special education.

Opposing Amendments to IDEA -- In the 105th Congress, the Majority in the House sought to amend the Individual with Disabilities Education Act to make it easier to expel children with disabilities who were judged by school officials to be potentially violent in school. These broad, subjective judgements could have resulted in inappropriate expulsion of large numbers of students with disabilities. The Administration, working with parents, successfully opposed these amendments.

Enforcing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act -- The Clinton Administration has supported the rights of children with disabilities under IDEA in the following Federal Court cases: *Cedar Rapids Community School District v. Garrett F.*; *Marie O. v. Edgar*; *Sacramento City Unified School District v. Holland*; *Hartmann v. Loudon County Board of Education*.

EXPANDING THE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL

Adding a New Statue to the FDR Memorial -- On May 2, 1997, President Clinton dedicated the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial to honor the thirty-second President of the United States. On July 2, 1998, Vice President Gore announced that the FDR Memorial will soon include an additional outdoor room at the main entrance which will depict FDR in the small wheelchair he invented. Thanks to the efforts of the disability community, the Clinton-Gore Administration has selected a specific design that will show how FDR became one of our greatest presidents while he had a disability and used a wheelchair.

INCREASING ENFORCEMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS

Vigorously Enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act -- President Clinton has led the fight for vigorous enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Act, the IDEA and other critical civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities in housing, schools, workplaces and public areas across the nation.

Working to Stop Discrimination Against People With AIDS -- President Clinton supports the Supreme Court's decision in *Bragdon v. Abbott*, which reinforces the protections offered by the landmark Americans With Disabilities Act for Americans living with HIV and AIDS. The President directed the Justice Department and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to vigorously prosecute those who discriminate against people with AIDS, leading to actions against health care providers and facilities that violate the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Reducing Backlog and Expanding Alternative Dispute Resolution at Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) -- Thanks to President Clinton, the FY99 budget included \$279 million -- a \$37 million increase over the previous year -- to significantly expand EEOC's alternative dispute resolution program and reduce the backlog of private sector discrimination complaints. The final budget fully funds the President's request -- providing the first real increase for EEOC in several years. This increase, the first since EEOC took responsibility for investigating violations of the ADA, will help give the EEOC the resources it needs to investigate claims of discrimination under the ADA.

Working for Fair Housing -- In response to the increase in reported cases of serious fair housing violations, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has committed to doubling the number of its civil rights enforcement actions by the year 2000. In addition, the President proposed and won a major expansion of HUD's Fair Housing programs. The FY99 budget expands HUD's Fair Housing programs to \$40 million -- a \$10 million increase over FY98 funding. That 33-

percent increase includes \$7.5 million for a new audit-based enforcement initiative proposed by the Administration.

Increasing Outreach -- In July 1998, the President directed key Federal civil rights agencies to increase their outreach efforts to individuals with disabilities, including those in diverse cultural communities, including immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities and rural residents.

SAVING SOCIAL SECURITY NOW

Saving Social Security First -- President Clinton is committed to saving Social Security for the 21st Century. The President will fight to save every penny of any future surplus until a bipartisan plan to save Social Security is enacted to preserve the program for all eligible individuals, including the one-third of beneficiaries who are covered by the disability and survivors insurance programs.

Protecting Supplemental Security Income Benefits -- In 1995, the President vetoed a budget bill that would have significantly cut cash assistance to most families with disabled children on Supplemental Security Income -- families who are struggling to care for a child at home and face extra costs for home modifications, equipment and income lost because a parent is unable to work full-time. In addition, the 1997 Balanced Budget Act ensured that 30,000 disabled children losing SSI because of the new tighter eligibility criteria kept their Medicaid coverage.

HELPING TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Fighting to Pass a Strong, Enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights -- President Clinton has called on the Congress to pass a strong, enforceable patients' bill of rights that assures Americans the quality health care they need. The bill should include important patient protections such as: assuring direct access to specialists; real emergency room protections; continuity of care provisions that protect patients from abrupt changes in treatment; a fair, timely, and independent appeals process for patient grievances; and enforcement provisions to make these rights real.

Proposing New Initiatives to Improve Prevention and Treatment and Fairness for People with Mental Illnesses -- The President and Vice President advocated for and enacted the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996, which took steps to end discrimination based on mental illnesses. On January 14, 1999, Mrs. Gore unveiled three new major initiatives, including: an unprecedented \$70 million increase in the mental health services block grant, a 24 percent increase, totaling \$358 million for FY2000, which will enable states to target particularly-hard-to-reach adults and children with severe mental illnesses; the announcement of a White House Conference on Mental Health to be held this spring; and a Presidential request to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to explore measures to eliminate the stricter standards currently applied to federal hiring practices for adults with psychiatric disabilities.

Increasing Home and Community-Based Programs -- On July 29, 1998, the anniversary of the ADA, President Clinton announced that the Health Care Financing Administration was directing State Medicaid Directors to provide services to people with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs and in conjunction with the Americans with Disabilities Act. State Medicaid Directors are being urged to conduct self-evaluations to ensure that their practices and procedures encourage rather than inhibit integration into communities. The Clinton Administration's flexibility in granting state waivers has spurred an increase in home and community-based services; since he took office, the President has approved over 300 such waivers. As a result, the number of people with developmental disabilities served in home and community waiver programs has increased significantly.

Increasing Access to Health Care and Supporting Employment for Disabled Americans -- The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 created an optional program whereby States could allow people with disabilities who were earning up to 250 percent of poverty to purchase Medicaid coverage. Oregon is the first state to take advantage of this policy, and they have created a program that will let individuals go to work and get or keep Medicaid. Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala has asked every governor to seriously consider this program.

Passing Meaningful Health Insurance Reform -- President Clinton signed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 which limits exclusions for pre-existing conditions, makes coverage portable and helps individuals who lose jobs maintain coverage.

Protecting the Medicaid Guarantee for People with Disabilities -- The Clinton Administration refuses to go backwards on health care coverage for Americans with disabilities -- rejecting proposals to end the Medicaid guarantee to meaningful health benefits for people with disabilities. The President vetoed the Republican's proposal in the 104th Congress to block grant the Medicaid program, preserving Medicaid coverage for six million persons with disabilities. Medicaid is often the only form of health care available to people with disabilities and allows many children and adults to receive services at home rather than in institutions. Thanks to President Clinton, the 1997 Balanced Budget Act preserved the Federal guarantee of Medicaid coverage for populations who depend on it.

INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY

Increasing Public Transportation Accessibility --The Department of Transportation and the Access Board have issued final regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions for over-the-road bus (OTRB) accessibility and provides a definition of what constitutes discriminatory action. The regulation requires large fixed-route operators to achieve 50% of full fleet accessibility by October 2006 and 100% by October 2012. The Department has strengthened the regulations by including provisions making OTRB operators individually and collectively accountable for providing accessible service. Additionally, in 1998, President Clinton signed the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), legislation that provides significantly increased resources to make our Nation's surface transportation systems accessible. The Act included increased funding for the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities grant program.

Expanding Accessibility to the Parks and Wilderness -- In October 1997, a memorandum of understanding was signed by the Federal wilderness management agencies and a nonprofit organization called Wilderness Inquiry, Inc. (WI), to coordinate their policies to “establish a general framework of cooperation between the agencies and WI for increased opportunities for people of all abilities to use and enjoy the programs, facilities, and activities of the agencies.” On November 10, 1998, President Clinton signed legislation (H.R. 4501) that requires the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a comprehensive study to improve the access for persons with disabilities to outdoor recreational opportunities (such as fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, hiking, boating, and camping) made available to the public on the Federal lands in the National Forest System, the National Park System, the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the Bureau of Land Management.

Increasing Housing Options -- The Clinton-Gore Administration took a number of significant actions in 1998 that advanced housing policy for people with disabilities. First, HUD issued a statement supporting the view that institutional living does not constitute real housing for people with disabilities. On April 28, 1998, Fannie Mae announced the publication of “A Home of Your Own Guide,” the first manual specifically created to provide step-by-step home buying guidance for people with disabilities. And in February, HUD Secretary Cuomo issued a directive encouraging communities to use community development block grant funds for home modifications for people with disabilities. Also, in HUD’s recent Notices of Funding Availability, the agency included bonus points for developers when they seek to build structures that include “visitability” by people with disabilities.

Increasing Section 8 Funding in HUD Appropriations -- President Clinton supported the inclusion of \$40 million in Section 8 funding for people with disabilities, in part to offset the displacement likely to occur as a result of “elderly-only” designation of public housing formerly occupied by people with disabilities.

Reinventing Government -- Under the leadership of Vice President Gore, the Clinton-Gore Administration is making government smaller, better managed and more efficient, creating a government that works better and costs less. The Administration is dramatically improving customer service to give all Americans the best service they've ever experienced with the government.

PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY

Signing the Assistive Technology Act -- Technology is a crucial component in enabling people with disabilities to obtain and keep meaningful employment. President Clinton supported and signed the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, which reauthorized the old "Tech Act" that created State Assistive Technology Centers to provide assistive devices to needy individuals with disabilities. On January 13, 1999, President Clinton announced a new initiative to improve the development, adoption and prevalence of information and communications technologies to help people with disabilities work. This initiative, if enacted, will: (1) help make the Federal government a “model user” of assistive technology; (2) support new and expanded state loan programs to make assistive technology more affordable for Americans with disabilities; and (3) invest in research and development and technology transfer in areas such as “text to speech” for people who are blind, automatic captioning

for people who are deaf, and speech recognition and eye tracking for people who can't use a keyboard. This \$35 million investment in FY 2000 will more than double the Administration's current investment in deploying assistive technology.

Ensuring the Federal Government Provides Accessible Technology and Information -- The Clinton-Gore Administration recommended, and Congress enacted, changes to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. These changes strengthened the obligations of Federal agencies to provide accessible technology and information to their employees and customers. Section 508 now grants the Access Board authority to issue accessibility regulations. In addition, Federal employees as well as agency constituents now have the right to file a complaint under a procedure similar to that outlined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. With these changes, the Federal government can use its considerable purchasing power to influence private industry toward developing universally designed technology that is accessible to almost everyone.

Ensuring that the Telecommunications Revolution Benefits All -- In June 1998, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposed rules to implement the portion (Section 225) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 that requires that telecommunications equipment and services be accessible to individuals with disabilities, where readily achievable. In addition, the FCC has amended rules to require closed captioning to video programming for the 27 million Americans with hearing disabilities; proposed improvements on Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) to ensure that TTY users have access to telecommunications network; and proposed a requirement to expand TRS so that persons with speech disabilities have access to telecommunications.

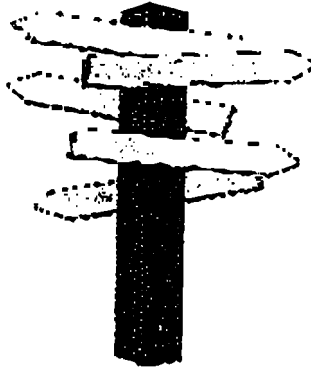
CREATING AN ADMINISTRATION THAT LOOKS LIKE ONE AMERICA

Appointed the Most Diverse Administration in History --President Clinton has appointed a highly talented and the most diverse Administration in history, including the appointment of record numbers of people with disabilities in the White House and throughout the Clinton-Gore Administration. The Federal government now employs more than 100,000 employees with some type of disability. President Clinton's Administration appointees include: Judith Heumann, Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitation Services; Paul Miller, Commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; and Fredric Schroeder, Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Commission. People with disabilities serve in the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, State and Transportation. President Clinton has also appointed people with disabilities to positions in such independent agencies as the National Council on Disability and the Social Security Administration, as U.S. District Court Judges and to various Presidential Committees, Commissions and Task Forces. In the White House, Charles Ruff serves as Counsel to the President. And Jonathan Young, Associate Director of Disability Outreach, is the first person with a disability ever appointed to do disability outreach in the White House Office of Public Liaison.

DIRECTIONS

**Desmond Hotel and Conference Center
Albany, New York**

(518) 869-8100



If you are arriving from the South or from the West:

Take NYS Thruway to Exit 24. After toll booths, take Adirondack Northway (I-87) North "Montreal and Saratoga" to Exit #4 "Albany Airport" exit. At the end of the ramp, go left. At next traffic light, go left on Albany-Shaker Road. You will pass under the highway, proceed straight through the next intersection. The Desmond Hotel is the next building on your left.

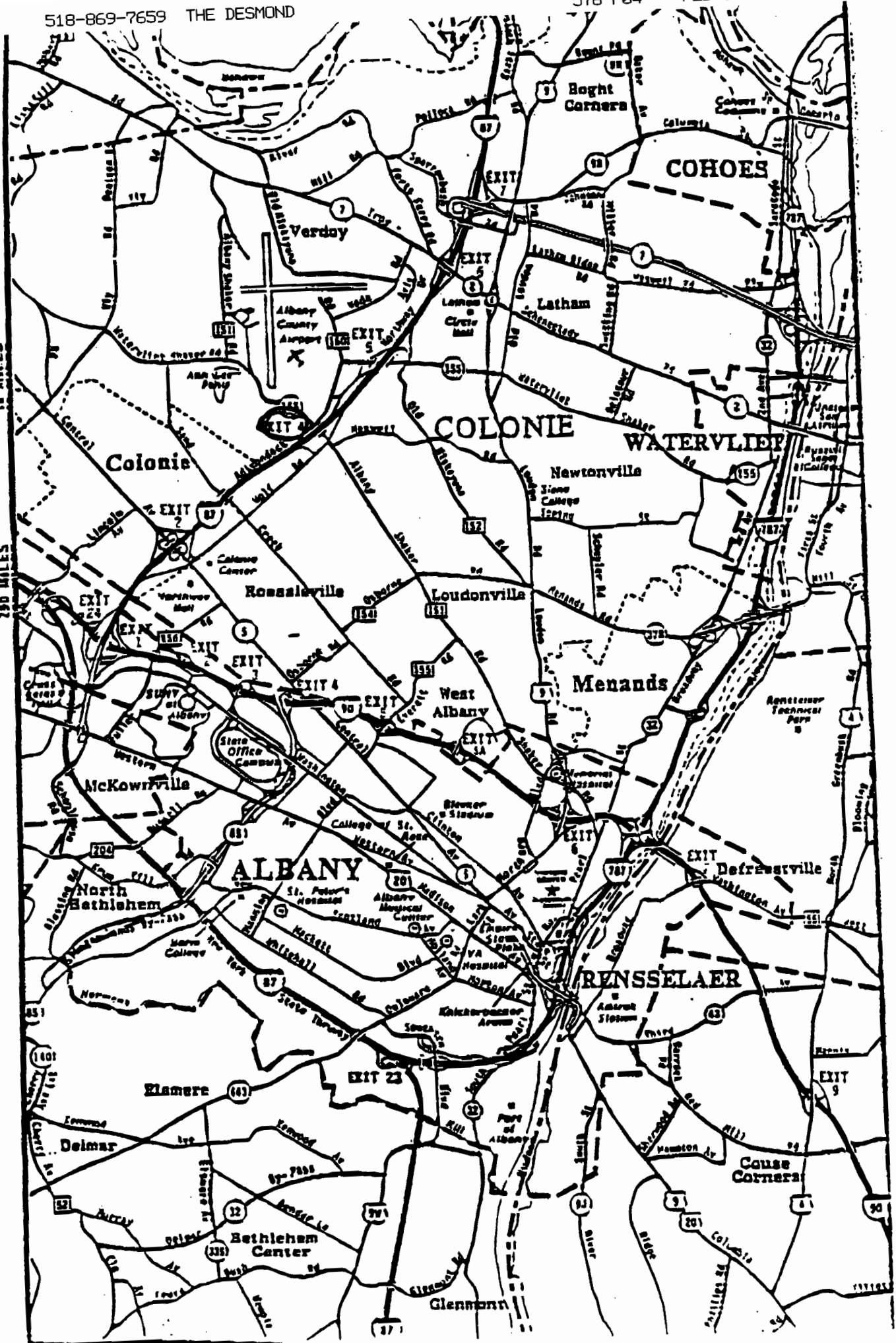
If you are arriving from the East:

Take Mass Turnpike West to Exit B1, "I-90 Albany West". Remain on I-90 West for 15-20 miles, viewing downtown Albany to your left about mid-way. Stay on I-90 until you see signs for "Montreal, North". Go North on the Adirondack Northway "Montreal" I-87 to Exit #4 "Albany Airport". At bottom of ramp, go left. At next traffic light, go left onto Albany-Shaker Road. You will pass under the highway, proceed straight through the next intersection. The Desmond Hotel is the next building on your left.

If you are arriving from the North:

Take the Adirondack Northway (I-87) to Exit #4 "Albany Airport/Wolf Road". On ramp, bear to the right. At end of ramp, there is a traffic light. Go left onto Old Wolf Road. At the next traffic light, go right onto Albany-Shaker Rd and take an immediate left into our parking lot.

660 Albany-Shaker Road, Albany, New York 12211

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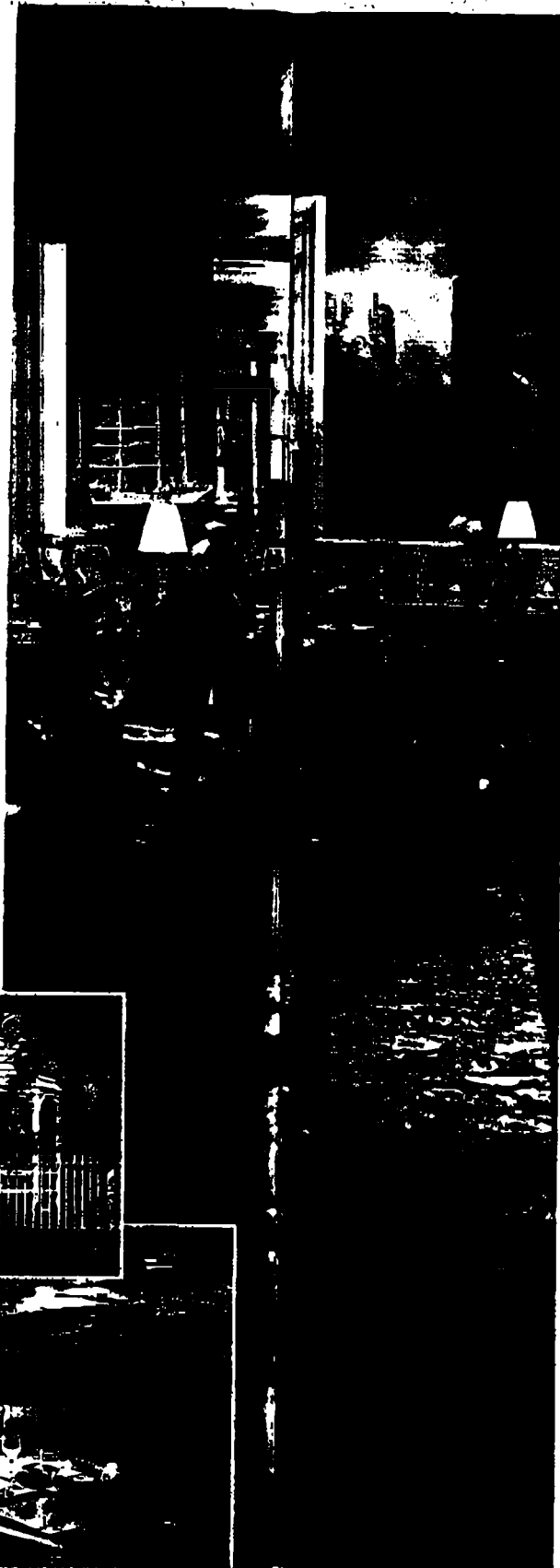
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Albany, New York

*Unwind and Let
the Day's Pressures
Slip Away*

After your business is through for the day, take time for yourself. Work out in the exercise area. Take a dip in the heated pool. Follow the winding brick walkways through our lamplit indoor courtyards. Join friends or colleagues for dinner in Scrimshaw or Simpson's. Unwind over cocktails in front of the hearth in Scrimshaw Tavern. And the next morning, wake up from a good night's sleep in your quiet, comfortable guest room, relaxed, refreshed and ready to start the day.

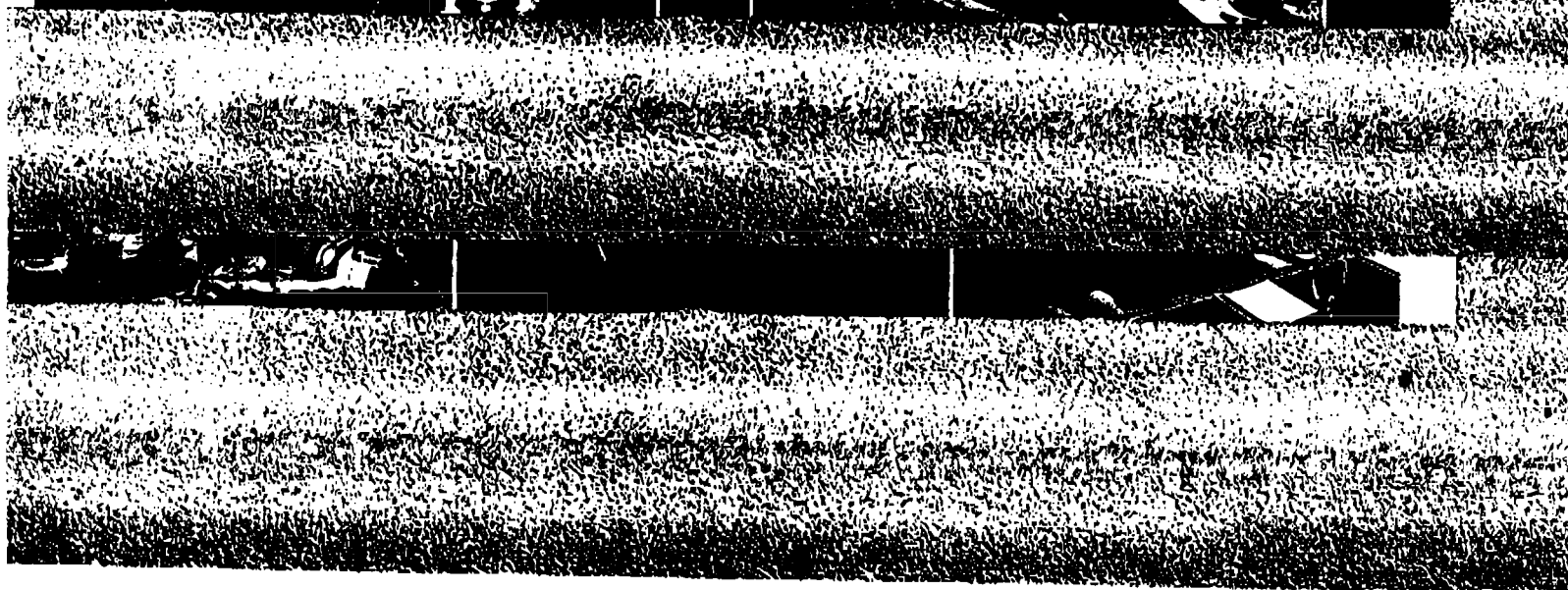
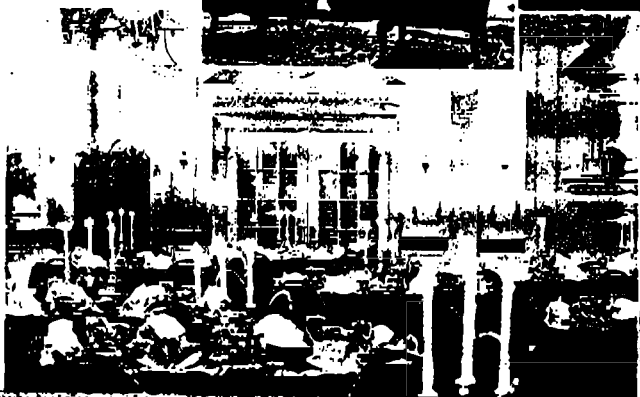


*Satisfy Your Appetite
For Superb Cuisine*

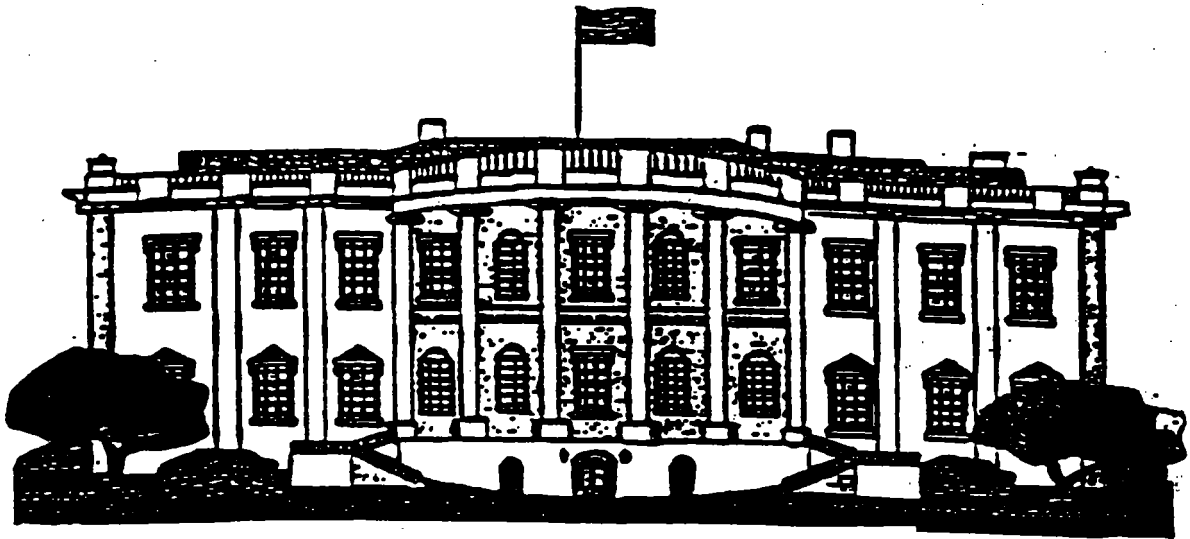
When was the last time you enjoyed a truly wonderful meal in an elegant hotel restaurant? When was the last time you dined at Scrimshaw in The Desmond? You owe it to yourself to experience the culinary excellence, 18th Century charm and exemplary service that place Scrimshaw among the area's most highly rated and exclusive dining establishments.

Featuring one of the most extensive wine lists in the Northeast, Scrimshaw's wine cellar contains more than 400 of the finest American and European wines. You can choose from 18 superb wines by the glass to complement every wonderful Scrimshaw entrée.

For delicious lighter fare, relax in the casual comfort of Simpson's Grill. Whether you're starting your day with a hearty fresh breakfast, taking a break at midday for lunch, or satisfying a healthy appetite at dinner, you'll find everything on Simpson's menu perfectly prepared and promptly served. We wouldn't have it any other way.



WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF PUBLIC LIAISON



Phone (202)456-2930 Fax (202)456-6218

Page: One of 15

Date: 2-11-99

To: Thomas Samuels

Fax: 718-482-536

Phone: 718-482-5314

From: Jena Roscoe, Associate Director for African America Outreach

Comments: _____
