

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART

BOSTON, MASS

DECEMBER 5, 1998

Thank you, Johanna, for that wonderful introduction, and for your friendship over the years. It's a great pleasure and honor to join you and Kay Sloan (president); Richard MacMillan (Executive Director); co-chairs Pat and Arthur Stavaridias and Kathryn and John Hamill; students, faculty, and everyone here tonight -- as we come together to celebrate 125 years of creativity and imagination here at the Massachusetts College of Art. I understand that Kathryn received her degree from this college just a few years ago -- after she finished another creative endeavor -- raising her four daughters. Her story is a wonderful example of the enduring pull of art in our lives -- and the importance of cultural institutions like this one -- which give us all the opportunity to be transformed and enriched by the arts.

In preparation for coming here, I've been reading about the history of this remarkable institution -- and how it grew out of an amazing confluence of leaders in the late 1800s who were determined -- for both economic and cultural reasons -- to foster the study and practice of the arts. That the Massachusetts state legislature passed a law in 1870 mandating both drawing classes for young people in the schools and free after-work art classes for adults seems particularly visionary to us today -- when so many of our public schools are cutting back on arts and music education.

But I've learned that the founding of this college of art was even more revolutionary -- because it changed who could study art in this country. At the time, many people associated art with affluence and privilege -- a sentiment that unfortunately persists even today. But with the opening of these doors in 1873 -- art was viewed for the first time as the domain of ordinary, working citizens.

I've read that descendants still reminisce about how this school opened the world of art to the whole family -- because a great aunt, grandmother, or uncle could study here for free.

What an extraordinary legacy you celebrate tonight -- a legacy that embraces a deep commitment to teaching the visual arts, a tradition of service to the community; and a history of diversity among the student body. MassArt remains not only the first and only public art college in America. You are an inspirational reminder to us all of the vital role that the arts can and should play in our everyday lives, and the lives of our children.

T. S. Eliot once said that "culture may be described simply as that which makes life worth living." And that's what your teachers, students, and graduates have been doing for us for the past 125 years.

Think of how enriched our lives are thanks to N.C. Wyeth's remarkable illustrations of our favorite books like *Treasure Island* and *Robin Hood*; Annie Lou Rogers' compelling cartoons depicting the early battles for a woman's right to vote; Warren Newcombe's memorable scenes in the Wizard of Oz; William Wegman's whimsical photographs of his dogs; and so many others who have spread their creativity and bold ideas across our nation.

This afternoon, I visited two historic sites not far from here that reflect this same creative spirit and imagination that has always been at the core of America's legacy -- and which we've come together to celebrate here tonight. As I toured the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow House today, I was reminded of the words of that great American poet: Art and poetry, he said, "will not till our lands; nor freight our ships; nor fill our granaries and our coffers; but they will enrich the heart, freight the understanding, and make up the garnered fullness of the mind."

My visits to the Longfellow House and the African Meeting House on Beacon Hill -- the oldest standing black church in America -- are part of a larger project to “Save America’s Treasures” as we approach a new millennium. It’s a public/private partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to preserve for future generations the memories, artifacts, historical sites and documents that tell the story of our nation, and embody our ideals. This year I’ve been touring sites like these that are vital to our national heritage -- to spotlight not only famous monuments and political leaders -- but also the religious, artistic, and literary pioneers who have shaped our history.

Over the past few years, my husband and I have been thinking a lot about how to celebrate this historic milestone of humankind -- and what we want, as individuals and as communities, to bring with us into this new century and new millennium.

We've created the White House Millennium Council -- to set the themes and stimulate activities in which all Americans can participate -- projects that help us learn the lessons from our past, and prepare us for the 21st Century. As we continue to initiate efforts like "Save America's Treasures" and White House millennium evenings with scholars and artists -- we've been thinking even more about the extraordinary role that the arts play -- and have always played -- in defining our nation.

In preparation for these millennium celebrations, I've been looking back on the last 1,000 years, and reading about all the dire predictions that were being made around that time. I've recently learned about a prolific and rather controversial monk by the name of Raoul Glaber -- who lived in the 10th century, and who consistently warned his local citizenry of impending doom. Perhaps because of his checkered career -- he was expelled from several monasteries. The earth did not implode -- as he predicted. In fact, we would make extraordinary progress.

From Islamic communities spreading north across Africa, to Native American tribes across our own continent, people created new forms of art, built cities, designed new systems of cultivation, remapped their worlds, and thought up new ideas. Yet those centuries would also be marked as well by plagues, genocides, and other unbearable human suffering.

Raoul Glaber comes from a long line of doomsayers and pessimists about the human condition. The kind of people who are always looking for what is wrong with advancements and progress, who are always pointing fingers at one another, and predicting the end of civilization as we know it.

Yet despite the doomsayers, and despite all of our own follies and missteps -- we have a lot to look back on with pride.

We see the discoveries of Galileo and Newton; the art of El Greco and Picasso; the writings of Shakespeare, Tagore, Neruda; the ideas of Lock and Gandhi. We can also look to those who helped move the idea of human progress forward --those who built strong economies; lifted up families and children and protected the most vulnerable among us; created inventions and scientific discoveries; all of which unleashed human potential and energy.

Fueling all of these scientific, intellectual, and artistic advances was, of course, the human imagination. An imagination rooted not only in the knowledge and understanding of the past -- but in the ability to dream and envision a future. An imagination that has allowed men and women throughout time to say no to the archetypal doomsday monks, and yes to their own ideas of the possibilities of a more positive and more possible tomorrow.

If one thinks about our earliest human ancestors, they did not first invent money. They first drew on the walls of caves. They first created figurines that had religious and other significance to them.

What were they trying to say? What were they doing? They were finding that special human trait, that attribute of imagination -- and using it. I can imagine the scenarios of a young man or woman wandering around not paying attention to the mammoth hunt. All of the relatives are saying, "you know, he just isn't with it. He's going to get us all killed." And then back in the cave that night, with the flickering fire, everyone else asleep, he is taking the charcoal and drawing a mammoth. All of a sudden out of his imagination comes an opportunity to share an experience that someone who had never seen one before could now understand.

Today, as we find ourselves at the end of another century, and the beginning of a new millennium, I hope that conversations and events like this one -- highlighting the importance of creativity and the arts -- will help us think more clearly about what is at stake as we plan our own individual futures, and as we think about the larger common good.

There are many unanswered questions about what will happen in the 21st Century. Will this century finally yield a cure for cancer? Will we find another Mozart? Will we end poverty, or perhaps even come near to lasting world peace? Or will the next 100 years give rise to more ethnic and racial hatred, a wider chasm between the rich and the poor, the spread of biological or chemical warfare, or even a brave new world of genetically engineered people who look and act the same?

Now, when I think about the future, I come down on a more optimistic note. I am a congenital optimist, because I've seen enough progress in my own lifetime to believe that we can continue to overcome the challenges that divide us, and make progress together. But I have to confess I am worried about certain trends that I see around me every day. Trends that could -- without being checked by our knowledge of history, our understanding of ourselves, and our willingness to work together -- undermine our conception of ourselves as human beings and make it more difficult for us to forge a common future.

Those trends are self evident. What does it mean for us to have such instantaneous communications and such rapid technological advancement? It means great opportunities to be in touch with people around the world -- and to have more information than we ever dreamed possible.

Yet it also means we can retreat into anonymity -- hiding behind a computer keyboard and communicating with the world from a distance.

I also wonder about how we will survive as a democracy -- and retain our sense of citizenship -- when there is so much pressure on a daily basis to move us toward a society of consumers, and away from a democracy of citizens. The emphasis on our consumer culture distorts our sense of self. It threatens the essence of our pluralistic society, and yet it seems beyond our control to stop. More and more messages pour out -- influencing particularly the minds of our young people.

Why are more American children driven to violence? We are seeing increasing evidence that it does matter what is in the popular culture. It does count how many hours of television you watch -- and how many violent episodes and murders you see, how many killers who are not remorseful at the end of the plot.

Children from unstable situations are even more prone to listen to those messages. Why is it that so many American children today judge their worth by the logo on their sneakers instead of the good deeds that they might do or the homework that they finish every night?

You know as well as I do that the consumer culture driven by our free market economy demands more and more buying on the part of more and more consumers. So messages are aimed now to children of earlier and earlier ages -- because to keep this great engine going, we have to create a lot of unmet wants, and a lot of frustration. And it all makes me wonder, what am I giving up in my own thinking and in my spirit to this consumer culture, to this machine of technology?

I find it interesting that Isaac Edwards Clarke -- a great promoter of the arts and arts education in America in the late 1800s -- was also concerned about how consumerism impacted on the arts. In his 1880 book entitled *The Democracy of Art* -- he warned: "Now the word art has to speak to this pushing generation ... this maddening race of competition which so characterizes the present age ... this desire to produce things by wholesale and to induce millions to buy them in haste ... it's the old story of slavery."

Today, I ask myself the same questions. How do I keep my distance in this consumer culture? How can I be sure that I have the right balance in my life? How do I retain the most precious possession I have, my role as citizen, and enjoy the blessings that I am given because those who came before us understood the importance of a democratic and open society?

If one stands back and thinks about the images we have of the future -- it is a little disquieting. The overwhelming popular images are of movies in which desolation has occurred; where road warriors are fighting one against the other; where there are people living under great glass bubbles or in sterile atmospheres because we have polluted and degraded our environment. We don't yet have a picture in our heads of the kind of society that we want and expect to live in in the future.

I would argue that the arts and humanities -- in fact -- give us the best guide we will ever have to thinking through the problems of today and defining who we want to be tomorrow.

It is not a luxury to read the great poetry of the past; to ponder Shakespeare's plays; to think about the Greek philosophers; to wonder in our own minds what modern poetry and literature and film are saying to us.

Instead, I believe it is our responsibility -- because as we think about these challenging ideas that come to us from our scholars and artists, we will be better equipped in our own lives and in our public life to go forward.

Yet as we've been discussing -- it is hard for the arts and humanities to flourish when there is very little space left in the popular culture. That is why we must do all we can to support them, and to make it clear that they are not a luxury, but they are essential to the refueling of the human imagination, and to our very notion of an open, democratic society.

It is through history and philosophy; literature and painting, music, sculpture, poetry, photography, dance, architecture, design -- all of it -- that we can reclaim the popular imagination.

It is through them that we can rekindle our spirit of citizenship, that we can exercise the power of our ideas, experiences, and feelings to promote a brighter vision of the future.

In our country, there is too often an assumption that the arts and humanities are the exclusive preserve of the rich or best educated of the cultural elite. Yet from our own personal experiences, we know otherwise. How many of us have felt our hearts stir at a favorite song or painting, or a haunting passage in a novel, or a dancer's elegant leap? I remember the moment I came across a print of Guernica as a junior high school student. Looking at Picasso's painting of that city after it was bombed by the fascists -- I finally realized that art was more than aesthetic. It was a way of communicating, a way of taking people beyond the boundaries of their own experience and giving them a fuller understanding of the world around them.

Art and culture have always been a part of my life, not in any practicing way -- I have absolutely no talent whatsoever -- but as an observer, as someone who tries to appreciate what I see and hear. In fact, I attribute my long-time marriage and relationship with my husband to art.

I was standing in line at the Yale Law School to register for classes, and struck up a conversation with this young man I had seen wandering around the campus. He suggested we go to the University museum to see a wonderful exhibit of Rothko paintings -- and his favorite Henry Moore sculptures. That was my first date with Bill Clinton -- but also my first date with Rothko and Henry Moore. All three of them have stayed a part of my life ever since.

I know that every one of you has had a similar experience. Which is why I believe it is so important that we do all we can to make sure that the arts and humanities are available in every school in America, in every community in the nation.

I find it so disheartening when members of Congress, local school boards, or state governments decree that public support of the arts and humanities is a luxury we can't afford.

I have seen what the arts can do in the lives of young people who we don't ordinarily think of as season ticket holders to the symphony or the opera. Last spring, I visited a junior high school in a Washington inner city neighborhood whose students are drawn mostly from nearby housing projects. I brought with me our three most recent Poets Laureate. I wanted them to see in action a program that is funded by the NEA -- where writers and poets are assigned to work with young people.

The students we saw were engaged in what is called a poetry slam. If you have never seen a poetry slam, it's a high speed, high spirited competition in which students face off against one another by reading their own poems, and are then scored by a group of judges.

These students -- all African Americans, from poor homes -- recited poems that made my heart leap. Some of them had written poems about their own names; or about the plight of a homeless man in their neighborhood; or the contributions of Duke Ellington. They talked of their pride, their joys, their pain. They also talked about how poetry -- and learning how to write poetry to express themselves -- enabled them to put their anger on paper instead of acting it out. One boy recited a poem with wonderful lines like this: "I am so musical that when I write songs, you sing them for the rest of your life."

We know from our own experience how critical these kinds of programs are for our children -- particularly those living in some of our most depressed neighborhoods. For these children, exposure to the world of arts and ideas can literally mean the difference between lives of accomplishment and lives of hopelessness and failure.

As the President's Committee showed in last year's report "Coming Up Taller," arts and music education can offer children safe and productive alternatives to crime, violence, gangs, and drugs -- transporting them beyond the bounds of their difficult circumstances.

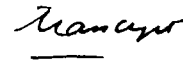
In 1962, when President Kennedy asked for public support for the arts, he reminded Americans that Abraham Lincoln ordered work to go forward on the capitol dome during the Civil War. I would add that one of the great sources of solace President Lincoln had during that War was the poetry he read and wrote, plays that he saw -- people who inspired him to keep imagining. Franklin Roosevelt, in the midst of World War II, dedicated the National Gallery of Art in Washington. President Kennedy said about them: "These leaders understood that the life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction in the life of the nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose, and is the test of the quality of a nation's civilization." We are now facing that test ourselves.

One of my most fervent hopes for the next millennium is that all of us who care about the arts will do what we can to put them back into our public schools -- so that all students have access to and can be enriched by them. And here, I want to applaud MassArt for the important role you play in promoting the arts in Boston's public schools -- including your role in establishing Boston's first public high school for the arts. I also commend your efforts -- including the event this evening -- to promote the study of technology in the arts, and to explore new ways of opening up that technology of the future not only to your students, but to the broader community.

One hundred and twenty five years ago, the founders of this remarkable institution committed themselves to ensuring the arts would enrich and benefit us all. Tonight, we celebrate the flowering of that vision in your remarkable accomplishments of the past -- and your creative embrace of the future.

But we also recognize that we have much work to do to ensure that every citizen of this country -- young and old, rich and poor -- has the same access to and appreciation for the arts that we do here in this room tonight. Together, let us recommit ourselves to that goal. By doing so, let us live up to the ideals of our democratic way of life by placing the arts at the center of our ongoing efforts to make America a more perfect union.

Thank you.



**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS AT THE PRESENTATION OF "CREATIVE AMERICA"
THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES
WASHINGTON, D.C.
FEBRUARY 25, 1997**

Thank you John. I want to thank you and all the members of the President's committee for the time and hard work you have invested in preparing this report; for devising a thoughtful and practical blueprint for strengthening America's cultural life, and for helping all of us recognize the vital role the arts and humanities play in our own lives and in the life of our democracy.

As this report shows, the creative forces that give life to the arts and humanities can be found everywhere, within every single person in America. These creative forces touch our lives everyday, sometimes without our even knowing it. They have inspired Nobel-prize winning novels as well as submissions to high school literary magazines. They have guided the brushes of the painters celebrated in major art galleries as well as the needles of quilters who sell their works at county fairs. And they are as much behind a symphony's Mozart festival as they are behind a young person's first piano recital. The arts and humanities belong to all of us and the best of America's culture should be made available to all our citizens.

These rich expressions of creativity are no less than the expressions of our great democracy. For 200 years, the freedom that is at the heart of our democratic system has unleashed the spirit of Creative America. It has spurred us to say and write and draw what we think, feel and dream. It has inspired us to celebrate through dance, in songs, in paint and on paper the story of America -- of who we are, where we have been, and what we hope to be. And through all of these activities encompassed by the arts and humanities, our democracy, in turn, is nurtured, strengthened, made more resilient.

And as we prepare for a new century -- and a new millennium -- the arts and humanities are more essential than ever to the endurance of our democratic values of tolerance, pluralism and freedom. At a time when so much is happening to change the way we work and live, the way we relate to one another and the way we relate to the rest of the world, we cannot fully understand the past, nor envision the future we need to pursue without the arts and humanities.

That is why we must do everything we can to strengthen our support for the arts and humanities in the coming years. The President and I are very excited about the Millennium Initiative described in this report. The approach of a new millennium and a new century presents us with a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the past two centuries of our collective American journey, to raise awareness about the importance of the arts and humanities in our lives, and to examine the ideas, values and experiences that can shape our future.

When we look back at the past 1,000 years and try to understand the defining events, ideas, and movements of past civilizations, of what it was like to live in a certain age, we often rely on the paintings, sculptures, books and other writings created by the men and women of

those times.

So it is imperative for all of us living at the end of the twentieth century to encourage the creation and preservation of works that will serve as our own unique legacy for future generations. The President is eager to lead this initiative and will call upon all citizens, local communities, state governments, federal agencies and private sector partners to create Millennium programs that reflect and celebrate our cultural heritage. As we have over the past four years with performances, new art acquisitions, and rotating sculpture exhibits, the President and I will continue to showcase outstanding examples of American art and scholarship at the White House.

We must encourage communities to identify and preserve their local traditions, history and folk creations. We must inspire the commercial and non-profit organizations that produce or own much of our cultural material to take steps to preserve their holdings. And we can support efforts to ensure that America's cultural resources are made more widely available on the Internet -- so that a child growing up in some of our most isolated communities can take a virtual tour of our finest museums and libraries.

As this report has noted, the arts and humanities in America depend on a dynamic network of support that is very unique to our country. The arts and humanities depend on partnerships between government agencies, private foundations, corporations, non-profit organizations and individual benefactors to nurture talent and bring the creative achievements of our best artists and artisans to as wide an audience as possible. The arts and humanities could never thrive, much less survive, on support from just one of these sources. That is why all of us must do our part and work to renew America's philanthropic spirit.

And government must take a leadership role in making sure that all Americans have opportunities to develop their own talents and take part in the artistic and intellectual life of our nation. For children, especially those living in some of our most depressed neighborhoods, federal, state and local support of the arts and humanities, as well as the strengthening of arts and humanities programs in our schools, are critical. For these children, exposure to the world of arts and ideas can literally mean the difference between lives of accomplishment and lives of hopelessness and failure. As the President's committee showed last Spring in another report called "Coming Up Taller," arts and humanities education can offer children safe and productive alternatives to crime, violence, gangs, and drugs, transporting them beyond the bounds of their difficult circumstances.

I am reminded of how the opportunity to explore and develop creative potentials can change a child's life each time I see a pair of painted park benches in my office. They are the gifts of the students of Gallery 37, an organization started by President's Committee member Maggie Daley in Chicago that nurtures the artistic and creative talents of children of all backgrounds. Through apprenticeships in such fields as architecture, jewelry-making, bookbinding, and painting, the children have blossomed in so many ways. One child literally found his voice at Gallery 37. When he first joined the program, he refused to speak to other students or instructors. But in time, the eagerness to talk about his art not only moved him to speak, it also spurred him to critique the work of his peers.

I had a similar experience when I visited the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh, an organization supported by both the National Endowment for the Arts and private donations. At the Guild, founded by a dynamic man named Bill Strickland in one of Pittsburgh's most troubled neighborhoods, I met children whose lives had been transformed by their participation in ceramic art and photography programs. When they spoke of their experiences at the Guild and of their newly discovered love for the arts, it wasn't difficult to hear the excitement in their voices or see the hope in their eyes. The Guild had given these children, whom many schools had been labeled "at-risk," much more than the skills to shape clay or develop pictures. It gave them the confidence to finish school, to go to college, and to pursue their dreams.

We also need to bolster our great humanities institutions -- our libraries, museums, universities and research centers -- to ensure that all Americans have opportunities for lifelong learning. They are the catalysts and the incubators for so many of the great ideas that have kept our democracy strong -- and moving forward.

So let us all work together to keep the arts and humanities alive and well in the future and in the public domain. We must continue investing in the arts and humanities -- in the values we claim to honor, in the imaginations and spirit of our people, and in the cultural traditions that have sustained and strengthened our democracy.

The arts and humanities are not a luxury, but a necessary part of life. As the President said in his State of the Union, "Our economy is measured in numbers and statistics, and it's very important. But the enduring worth of our nation lies in our shared values and our soaring spirit." Let us all work to ensure that America remains the world's beacon of liberty and creativity in the next millennium and for all time.

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Longfellow's Poetry References to Art (con't.)

Ah, to build, to build!
That is the noblest art of all the arts.
Painting and sculpture are but images,
Are merely shadows cast by outward things
On stone or canvas, having in themselves
No separate existence. Architecture,
Existing in itself, and not in seeming
A something it is not, surpasses them.
As substance shadow.

Michael Angelo (1882)

Unfinished at the time of Longfellow's death

Several Comments on the Fine Arts

January 4, 1828 Longfellow's first trip to Europe to study languages.

At the Pitti Palace; the collection of paintings very beautiful. There is also the Venus of Canova. What beauty, what elegance, what modesty! It is the rival of the Venus de' Medici: . . . I saw them both in one day. I had heard much of the skill of sculptors. But when I saw before me a statue that seemed to breathe and move and the hardness of marble softening away into the delicate beauty of rounded outline, -- I could not but wonder at what man had done.

this is it ↓
April 1831 In a beginning series of articles to the *North American Review*, Longfellow wrote:

If this be true, then are the ornamental arts of life not merely ornamental, but at the same time highly useful; and Poetry and the Fine Arts become the instruction, as well as the amusement of mankind. They will not till our lands, nor freight our ships, nor fill our granaries and our coffers; but they will enrich the heart, freight the understanding, and make up the garnered fulness [sic] of the mind. And this we hold to be the true use of the subject . . .

June 12, 1846 While opening a bale from Italy containing a bust of a Roman woman, Longfellow wrote:

There is a great difference . . . between sculpture and painting on the one hand, and poetry on the other; namely in the manipulation, -- the delightful sensation of the busy fingers, the electric pleasure of the touch; in the creative power of the mind. This poetry has not; the conception is all in all; the record has more pain than pleasure in it; the pen does not give form and color, as the chisel and the brush.

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These rich expressions of creativity are no less than the expressions of our great democracy. For 200 years, the freedom that is at the heart of our democratic system has unleashed the spirit of Creative America. It has spurred us to say and write and draw what we think, feel and dream. It has inspired us to celebrate through dance, in songs, in paint and on paper the story of America -- of who we are, where we have been, and what we hope to be. And through all of these activities encompassed by the arts and humanities, our democracy, in turn, is nurtured, strengthened, made more resilient.

And as we prepare for a new century -- and a new millennium -- the arts and humanities are more essential than ever to the endurance of our democratic values of tolerance, pluralism and freedom. At a time when so much is happening to change the way we work and live, the way we relate to one another and the way we relate to the rest of the world, we cannot fully understand the past, nor envision the future we need to pursue without the arts and humanities.

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We must encourage communities to identify and preserve their local traditions, history and folk creations. We must inspire the commercial and non-profit organizations that produce or own much of our cultural material to take steps to preserve their holdings. And we can support efforts to ensure that America's cultural resources are made more widely available on the Internet -- so that a child growing up in some of our most isolated communities can take a virtual tour of our finest museums and libraries.

As this report has noted, the arts and humanities in America depend on a dynamic network of support that is very unique to our country. The arts and humanities depend on partnerships between government agencies, private foundations, corporations, non-profit organizations and individual benefactors to nurture talent and bring the creative achievements of our best artists and artisans to as wide an audience as possible. The arts and humanities could never thrive, much less survive, on support from just one of these sources. That is why all of us must do our part and work to renew America's philanthropic spirit.

And government must take a leadership role in making sure that all Americans have opportunities to develop their own talents and take part in the artistic and intellectual life of our nation. For children, especially those living in some of our most depressed neighborhoods, federal, state and local support of the arts and humanities, as well as the strengthening of arts and humanities programs in our schools, are critical. For these children, exposure to the world of arts and ideas can literally mean the difference between lives of accomplishment and lives of hopelessness and failure. As the President's committee showed last Spring in another report called "Coming Up Taller," arts and humanities education can offer children safe and productive alternatives to crime, violence, gangs, and drugs, transporting them beyond the bounds of their difficult circumstances.

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I had a similar experience when I visited the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh, an organization supported by both the National Endowment for the Arts and private donations. At the Guild, founded by a dynamic man named Bill Strickland in one of Pittsburgh's most troubled neighborhoods, I met children whose lives had been transformed by their participation in ceramic art and photography programs. When they spoke of their experiences at the Guild and of their newly discovered love for the arts, it wasn't difficult to hear the excitement in their voices or see the hope in their eyes. The Guild had given these children, whom many schools had been labeled "at-risk," much more than the skills to shape clay or develop pictures. It gave them the confidence to finish school, to go to college, and to pursue their dreams.

We also need to bolster our great humanities institutions -- our libraries, museums, universities and research centers -- to ensure that all Americans have opportunities for lifelong learning. They are the catalysts and the incubators for so many of the great ideas that have kept our democracy strong -- and moving forward.

So let us all work together to keep the arts and humanities alive and well in the future and in the public domain. We must continue investing in the arts and humanities -- in the values we claim to honor, in the imaginations and spirit of our people, and in the cultural traditions that have sustained and strengthened our democracy.

The arts and humanities are not a luxury, but a necessary part of life. As the President said in his State of the Union, "Our economy is measured in numbers and statistics, and it's very important. But the enduring worth of our nation lies in our shared values and our soaring spirit." Let us all work to ensure that America remains the world's beacon of liberty and creativity in the next millennium and for all time.

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"And since it is art which teaches us, which aids us to appreciate these pleasures, who will deny that it is infinitely useful to us? It is not a question of intellectual pleasures, however, but of much more. Art shows man his *raison d'être*. It reveals to him the meaning of life, it enlightens him upon his destiny, and consequently points him on his way." --Rodin to Paul Gsell.

"Art is contemplation. It is the pleasure of the mind which searches into nature and which there divines the spirit by which Nature herself is animated. It is the joy of the intellect which sees clearly into the Universe and which recreates it, with conscientious vision. Art is the most sublime mission of man, since it is the expression of thought seeking to understand the world and to make it understood." --Rodin to Paul Gsell.

"I am convinced that by showing 'my sculpture' and demonstrating what I understand by sculpture, I will be rendering some service to the cause of art."--Rodin.

"And it is solely the power of character which makes for beauty in art, it often happens that the uglier a being is in nature, the more beautiful it becomes in art."--Rodin to Paul Gsell.

"For the first time I saw clay, and I felt as if I were ascending into heaven."--Rodin

(Poet, and secretary to Rodin for a while) Rainer Maria Rilke, on Rodin's Thinker:

"He sits, silently lost in contemplation, heavy with thoughts and images; he thinks with all his strength--with the strength of a man who acts. His whole body has become head, and the very blood of his veins become brain."

To keep in mind: in the face of continual hardship, scandal, and ridicule, Rodin went on to become one of the most celebrated and seminal modern artists.

He struggled against poverty as a young artist, having to make his livelihood working in a ceramics factory (at Sevres) for several years before he could branch out on his own. His first submission to the Salon in 1875-6-The Age of

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He struggled against poverty as a young artist, having to make his livelihood working in a ceramics factory (at Sevres) for several years before he could branch out on his own. His first submission to the Salon in 1875-6-The Age of Bronze-earned him a scandalous reputation because it was thought to be too realistic not to have been cast from life, and he spent years trying to clear his name from such artistic misconduct. While he received a number of important commissions from municipal and national patrons during the next 30+ years and struggled with their production, his finished works were, often, in the end, rejected--thought too radical, disturbingly expressive, or just plain wrong for their intended concept. Balzac, for instance, which Rodin worked on for seven years, was dismissed in 1894 as a "colossal fetus", the Committee of Calais rejected his monument to the 14th c. Burgheers of that city, and his monument to Victor Hugo was not much more well received. People misunderstood Rodin's pioneering vision and the artist was not one to cow-tow to popular taste. As Anatole France, a contemporary critic put it, Rodin was an artist, who "too often courted catastrophe."

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 18, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
AT THE WHITE HOUSE MILLENNIUM EVENING LECTURE SERIES

The East Room

*Jennifer
Devlin -*

4156-6298

7:30 P.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Good evening and welcome to the White House. The theme we have chosen for the millennium is "Honor the Past, Imagine the Future." This lecture continues a series of millennium evenings with scholars, scientists and other creative individuals which we are holding to commemorate and celebrate this milestone.

THE PRESIDENT: With the millennium, we must now decide how to think about our commitment to the future. Thomas Payne said, a long time ago, "We have it in our power to begin the world over again." We have always believed that in this country, and we must now take it upon ourselves to take stock as we approach this new millennium to commit ourselves to begin the world over again for our children, our children's children, for people who will live in a new century.

It is to the people of that new century that we must all offer our very best gifts. It is for them that we will celebrate the millennium.
(Applause.) (A film clip is shown.) (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you and welcome to the White House. We are so delighted to have you here this evening. We have a wonderful millennium performance and lecture that celebrates Jazz, an American metaphor. Willis Conover, whose Voice of America program brought jazz to the world during the Cold War, once said, jazz is people talking, laughing, crying, building, painting, abstracting, extracting, giving to, taking from, making of. In other words, living. Jazz is the quintessential voice of America, and we are honored to bring it to you tonight.

This is the fourth in a series of White House millennium evenings, where we've brought together scholars and artists, scientists and other creative individuals, to help us explore who we are as Americans and who we want to be as we approach this milestone in history.

Professor Bernard Baylin (phonetic) started off by challenging us to think about the everyday people who founded America and shaped the enduring values that define us still. Physicist Stephen Hawking stretched our minds to the farthest reaches of the universe. And some of America's greatest poets pulled at our hearts, showing us the power of words to connect us, torment us and make us fully human.

And tonight, we will celebrate the boundless creativity that has fueled the arts, sparked innovation and defined the American experience by filling our ears with the music of jazz.

I think most Americans will never forget the first time they heard the swing of Benny Goodman and the scat of Ella Fitzgerald, the jamming of Lionel Hampton and the sophisticated jazz of Duke Ellington. The language of jazz was born and raised in America, always reflecting our deepest aspirations as individuals and as a nation.

Through the darkest days of racism and segregation, its language of diversity told us we were stronger together than apart. Through wars and depression, its language of hope inspired us never to give up. And its language of freedom has given voice to people chained in by oppression everywhere and continues to bring our world closer together.

It is a great honor to have with us tonight one of the world's most eloquent and powerful voices of freedom and a real jazz fan, President Havel of the Czech Republic. We're also joined in the East Room of the White House by Secretary Albright, Secretary Riley, Secretary Slater, Congressman Conyers and so many other very special guests. In fact, I think this is the greatest gathering of jazz musicians ever assembled in the White House, and perhaps even the largest number of jazz presidents, namely two, ever assembled anywhere. (Laughter.)

I want to say a word of welcome to the millions of viewers who are watching us. And a special thanks to VH-1 and its "Save the Music" program, and to C-SPAN, which are broadcasting this live; and to Sun Microsystems for enabling us to cybercast this event so that people all over the world can log on and even ask questions later in the program.

None of this would have been possible without the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Howard Gilman Foundation, Sun Microsystems and the National Endowment for the Arts which, in addition to everything else, helped bring three of their jazz master awardees here tonight -- Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter and James Moody. It wouldn't have been possible without the Library of Congress, which loaned us the photos and film clips that will enrich this evening and help our hosts, the dynamic duo of Wynton Marsalis and Marian McPartland to guide us on this journey.

But there is one person in particular who is responsible for all of us being here tonight. It is my great honor, as always, to introduce America's First Jazz Fan, our President and my husband, Bill Clinton. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to join Hillary in welcoming all our musicians here tonight and all the jazz fans. I thank, in particular, President Havel and Mrs. Havel for being here. When I was in Prague, the President took me to a jazz club, gave me a saxophone he had personally inscribed and provided me with a band that covered my sins. (Laughter.) And then he accompanied me on the tambourine, made a CD of it and sent it to me, so I'm actually a recording artist -- (laughter) -- thanks only to Vaclav Havel. I also want to thank the First Lady for having the idea for these millennium evenings and for agreeing eagerly to my entreaty that at least one of them ought to be devoted to this unique American contribution to the creativity of the world.

A little more than a century ago, a famous composer arrived on our shores and was amazed by what he heard. African American music, blues and spirituals, street songs and work songs. It was unlike anything he had heard in Europe or, in fact, anywhere else in the world.

After hearing these new, uniquely American sounds, he wrote: "America can have her own music. A fine music, growing up from her soil and having its own special character. The natural voice of a free and great nation." Those words were written by the great Czech composer, Antonin Dvorak, in 1892. It is especially fitting, therefore, that we have a worthy successor of Czech greatness in the President of the Czech Republic here with us tonight.

In time the music Dvorak heard became what we know today as jazz. And jazz became the soundtrack of this, the American century. Like

America itself, it is inventive and bold, vital and free, respectful of its roots; yet always changing, always becoming, always reinventing itself. The great drummer and band leader, Art Blakely, once said, "No America. No Jazz." This was no mere boast. Jazz could have only have happened here because it is music borne of the American experience, and it gives voice -- eloquent, insistent voice -- to our American spirit.

Like our country, jazz is a cultural crossroads, where the rhythms of Africa meet the musical instruments of Europe; where black meets white and Latino; where New Orleans meets the southside of Chicago and 52nd Street. And like our democracy, jazz provides a framework for flowing dialogue, a basis for brilliant improvisation, a point of reference and a point of departure. It poses challenges and seeks resolution, finding it in the coordinated efforts of the community as well as in the unique voice of the individual, syncopation, and solo. Like me you're probably eager to hear some of the music, so please join me in welcoming two remarkable musicians who are our hosts for this evening.

Marian McPartland, as you all know, plays improvisational jazz piano and has now been playing it quite wonderfully for over seven decades. With just as much energy and enthusiasm -- I should not have said that. I had the chart here, that's the point where I should have ad libbed, but I didn't. (Laughter and applause.) The thing that I really appreciate is that Marian has long been introducing young students to jazz, even introducing them to Duke Ellington himself a number of years ago.

And in the great tradition of Duke Ellington, Wynton Marsalis is a distinguished composer, big band leader, devoted advocate for the arts and education. It is no wonder that last year he became the first jazz artist to win the Pulitzer Prize for music. And he may be the only musician in our lifetime to be virtually universally acclaimed as the finest player of his instrument in either classical or jazz mediums.

Wynton, Marian, the stage is yours. (Applause.) ("Blues in the Key of F" performed.)

MR. MARSALIS: Thank you very much. Thank you all very, very much. That was the "Blues Played in the Key of F," and it's one of the first compositions played by jazz musicians, W.C. Handy, entitled "St. Louis Blues," and it's a good piece of us to begin our discussion of jazz as an expression of democracy.

Now, we wouldn't have our democracy without the foundation of our Constitution, and we certainly wouldn't have jazz without the foundation of the blues. Now, the blues is a musical form. It's a form, like it's 12 bars long; that's what we just played, is 12 bars. The blues is also a feeling. I want you all to notice that that piece didn't sound sad or depressing in any way; maybe some of the notes I hit, but -- (laughter) -- in general, the piece is happy. It's important to understand the difference between having the blues and playing the blues. (Laughter.)

The music poses a problem, then the music wrestles with that problem, and then we resolve it. That's what we try to do in democracy. This form of government gives us the latitude to solve problems.

Now, having the blues is sad, but listening to the blues is like taking a vaccine. Just like you take a little bit of smallpox, and you give it to yourself and it inoculates you against that disease, that's why you listen to the blues; it keeps you from getting the blues. (Laughter.) Or when the blues comes, you can recognize them and you can chase them away.

Now, people have been playing the blues for more than a century. And one of the places it was played the best -- and they're still playing it down there -- was in the Crescent City, the town where jazz was born. I'm talking about New Orleans, Louisiana, which also happens to be my hometown.

Now, in our democratic way of living, our central concern is how to balance what we want to do with what needs to be done, and that's a big concern. In other words, "I" versus "we." Jazz musicians on bandstands around the world struggle with this nightly, and believe me, it's a great struggle. Because you want to play loud and you want to play long solos. So does everybody else on the bandstand.

So in order to sound good, you have to be cognizant of "I" and how "I" am going to relate to "we." We have choice. You can solo as long as you want. You make up with your plan. You can do what you want. So do you choose to be a drag and it pulls what you're doing on everybody, or do you choose to say, "Well, okay, maybe five choruses is enough. Let somebody else in the band play."

Now, we're going to play a piece that is composed by one of the first great masters of the New Orleans trumpet tradition, Joe Oliver. He was called "King" Oliver because of the dignity of his sound. This is also a blues in the 12-bar form, and it demonstrates very well the balancing of "I" and "we." I will be the improvised solo, and that's when you try to say through your instrument "I feel like this." You declare your individuality. And the way that I feel is unlike anyone else in the world.

"We" is what we call "polyphonic improvisation." This is unique to New Orleans jazz, and it's when we all improvise different melodies at the same time. It's very easy for this to sound like noise, so you have to try to say, "Let me get together with everybody else," because you don't know exactly what they're playing. This is the challenge of jazz and it is the challenge of democracy. This piece is entitled, "The Dipper Mouth Blues," King Oliver.

(The "Dipper Mouth Blues" is performed.) (Applause.)

MS. MCPARTLAND: Believe it or not, I used to play that tune with my husband, Jimmy, who was a great cornetist. And when we were living in Chicago, that was in his repertoire. This is one of those great old tunes written by King Oliver. And of course, when he left New Orleans and moved up to Chicago, he took a young trumpet player with him, named Louis Armstrong who, of course, turned everybody around. He was so wonderful and somebody that actually inspired me a great deal, because I'm from England and I had listened to a lot of jazz on the BBC and on the radio, and we had records, and so of course, I got to hear a lot of Louis Armstrong before I ever came over here. He really has been a tremendous influence on me and somebody I've always loved and admired.

MR. MARSALIS: Now, the (inaudible) allows for more personalized and direct communication across class, race, and gender -- I'm talking about democracy. That's why Louis Armstrong, who was from the poorest and most disrespected class of people in the country, could become its greatest communicator, and nobody could do anything about. When people felt that soul, they immediately loved him. He represented all of us to the world through improvisation, syncopation and soul. He transformed popular ditties into short masterpieces that astonished audiences all over the world, including this wonderful clip that we're about to see -- it's a Tin Pan Alley favorite entitled, "Dinah."

Now, Louis Armstrong was the only artist in western music, who could be considered a genius as an instrumentalist and as a singer. And he was an unbelievable singer. This clip captures the magic of

Armstrong in his youth -- we always hear him when he's over 60, when he was older. But we got to check him out when he was young, too, because he was bad his entire life. (Laughter.) Now, he displays his skills as an entertainer also. I want you all to notice how the entire band is being recorded through one microphone and notice how effectively Louis Armstrong uses it when he sings and then when he plays his horn.

Also for you musicians, I want you to all notice how soft that band plays when he comes in singing, and let's try to start playing our instruments softer. This is Louis Armstrong, "Dinah."

(Film clip is shown.) (Applause.)

MR. MARSALIS: Yes, indeed. Now, through the visionary genius of Louis Armstrong, the American era in music asserted itself in all of its native glory, and soon it took possession of the world. That was a pickup band. Louis Armstrong could go anywhere in the world and he'd say, I'm looking for a band, and there would be a pile of musicians in line -- pick me, Pops.

Armstrong manifested the rhythmic style known as Swing. And he manifested it again and again. He developed the coherent improvised solo as the highlight of a performance, and he demonstrated the durability of the Blues sensibility, which is we're going to make it all right, no matter how bad things get. And it's going to be all right because we know how to improvise. We know how to work with whatever is available. And Lord knows where he was from, he had to figure that out.

Improvisation means the power to choose. This freedom of choice gives us the power to improve things. Even more, it gives us the opportunity to do something that maybe has never been done before. Armstrong always said that jazz and I grew up together, and his popularity on stage, recordings, radio, TV, and in films enabled him to forever alter the idea of the modern artist. By the time Louis Armstrong made his way to New York City to join the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, he encountered a burgeoning jazz scene that included the likes of great musicians such as Coleman Hawkins, tenor saxophonist; the pianist, James P. Johnson; and Fats Waller.

MS. MCPARTLAND: You know I was lucky enough to hear all the records of Fats Waller in England, when I was growing up. And I used to see posters of him appearing at places like the Palladium in London and, of course, I knew I couldn't go because my parents probably wouldn't let me. But I did have the records, and I learned all his tunes. And he was such an amazing musician because he composed such great songs, and his style of playing was something I always tried to emulate. I always wanted to try to play stride piano.

And I think probably the greatest thing about Fats Waller was his sense of humor. He had this wonderful, insouciant air, and you know, just making everything seem so light and wonderful -- all of his songs -- and they all had a message. And I'd like to play one of my favorites for you, and this one is "Ain't Misbehaving."

("Ain't Misbehaving" is performed.) (Applause.)

MR. MARSALIS: Please welcome jazz authority and scholar -- and he'll sneak a trombone out and play it if you don't watch him -- Dr. David Baker. (Applause.)

DR. BAKER: We've heard how jazz reflects American society. But it also had a role in changing how we live together. Especially in matters of race, jazz led rather than followed societal trends. African American soldiers returned from World War I to a segregated society, having fought for freedoms that they themselves did not possess.

During this time, America was virtually completely segregated: the schools, the armed services and even theaters and music halls. Musicians had to live and work under those conditions. But in many instances jazz musicians, both black and white, found ways to work together -- jam sessions, recording sessions and other gatherings often brought together black and white musicians as equals.

Jazz musicians were more likely to judge each other by their ability to play than by the color of their skin. As early as 1923, the African American pianist and composer, Jelly Roll Morton, teamed up with the popular white group known as the New Orleans Rhythm Kings -- so what was possibly the first racially mixed recording session.

In 1929, trumpeter and American icon, Louis Armstrong, teamed with Jack Teagarden, a brilliant white trombonist from Vernon, Texas, to record the jazz classic, "Knocking a Jug." The years 1933 and 1934 saw white clarinetist and band leader, Benny Goodman, record with such African American artist as Bessy Smith, Billie Holiday, Ethel Waters, Teddy Wilson and Coleman Hawkins.

Beginning with the decade of the 1930's, African American arrangers and composers often provided the material that helped lead to the success of many of the great white bands of that era. Benny Goodman had Fletcher Henderson, Jimmy Monday, (phonetic) and Edgar Samson (phonetic). Gene Cooper and Artie Shaw enlisted the services of Jimmy Monday and Cy Oliver (phonetic). Cy Oliver (phonetic) was also the chief architect of the Tommy Dorsey style during the late 1930's and early 40's. Recordings, radio and films spread jazz music to everyone. A dance hall, a night club, might be segregated; but no one could stop white kids from listening and dancing to jazz on the radio or from buying records.

While Hollywood did stereotype both black and white musicians, it often showed them playing together as equals, and that was progress. The film, "Hollywood Hotel," was made in 1937, one year before the famous Carnegie Hall event that brought together in concert some of jazz's greatest players, irrespective of race.

In the clip of the Benny Goodman quartet, which we are about to see, Goodman, Lionel Hampton, Gene Cooper, and Teddy Wilson played together. I might add, predictably, when this film was shown in the South, this clip was omitted.

(A film clip is shown). (Applause.)

MR. MARSALIS: Now I would like to ask Lauren Shornberg, (phonetic) who was one of the world's foremost lovers of Swing and of swinging to step away from the tenor chair and say a little bit about that subject.

MR. SHORNBERG: Thank you, Wynton. If there's been one definition about Swing, there's been 100. But to me, the best one is purely the feeling that Louis Armstrong brought to American music. Swing can be used as a noun as in, "It don't mean a thing, if it got that Swing." It can also be used as a verb as, "Swing that music." But what it boils down to is that certain rhythmic feeling that happens when all the musical gears are turning in the same groove.

Jazz has always challenged the established order -- that's a very American concept. Swing is dance music -- of course you know the Lindy Hop, and you know the Jitterbug. But above all, the American Big Band is very much like our democratic process -- 17 people all playing together and all making their individual contributions. And probably the best example of an American jazz Big Band was, of course, the Duke

Ellington Orchestra.

Edward Kennedy Ellington was born right here in Washington, D.C. in 1899. And not only is he the greatest jazz composer, but he's also one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, regardless of genre. And he made up his band by hiring musicians from Massachusetts, from Alabama, from New York, from Louisiana, from Puerto Rico and all over the United States.

And that didn't satisfy his need for exotic music; he asked the musicians to bring in music from their specific regions into the Ellington Orchestra. And it didn't stop there because beyond that, when the Ellington Band toured around the world, which they did for 40 years, they brought American music and the principles it represents to wherever they went. And it didn't stop there. They added those things that they heard around the world and brought it right back to American music.

Every member of Ellington's band had the responsibility of bringing their own musicality into whatever the band played. And in the same way, our Democratic system places obligations on each citizen. Before you can play in the band, you have to know the music. And here's some Duke Ellington music -- this is Duke Ellington's "Harlem Airshaft."

("Harlem Airshaft" is performed.) (Applause.)

MR. MARSALIS: Thank you very, very much ladies and gentlemen. Thank you. Please welcome the doctor of jazz and also a man who insists on the playing of left hand if you're going to play the piano. I'm talking about Dr. Billy Taylor. (Applause.)

DR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Wynton. The next style to follow swing was bebop. Bebop was created by musicians who came out of bands like this, huge bands. They wanted a chance to express themselves because jazz is a means of personal expression. So in the late '30s and early '40s -- as a matter of fact, in the very late '30s in the Earl Hines Band, I met Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker right here in Washington, D.C. at the Howard Theater. And they were doing something that was quite different from what anybody else was doing. They were taking notice of the chords that Art Tatum (phonetic) and Duke Ellington were using, and they were -- (demonstrates piano chords).

In those days, those were kind of weird chords. People said, what are those notes? And what they would do was to take different parts of the chord and use different intervals. (Demonstrates notes). And they would go to strange places with that music. So taking chords and using the notes of those chords and making special types of self-expression, they came up with something that was different and an expansion of what swing and the music that preceded them were doing -- people were doing in that style.

What they did was to take the bass, for instance, and take what Jimmy Blanton was doing and take it a step further. They were playing the bass-playing melodies like this. (Cello notes demonstrated.) The drums, in the hands of people like Kenny Clark (phonetic) and Max Roach (phonetic) took on a totally different kind of feeling, because the drummer always had to do something different.

Drummers were always, by this time, using all four appendages. But they began to do things like this, using the right foot like this. (Drum demonstration) Adding the left foot like this (demonstration); adding the right hand like this (demonstration); adding the left hand like this (demonstration). So he was quite busy, you see. (Laughter.) On top of that, the pianist had to do something with those chords that I was talking about.

Dizzy Gillespie said that when he discovered this chord -- (piano chord played) -- he heard this melody -- (piano notes played). From many of the things that he and Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk and other early innovators were to do -- well, one thing they were to do was to get the rhythm section to play together and have someone like John Faddus (phonetic), who wasn't even born in those days, play something like this. We're going to play the blues like this. (Jazz song performed.) (Applause.)

Thank you. John has something very special, and as you can see, he uses many parts of the trumpet very high. On the clip that we heard before with Teddy Wilson, Teddy Wilson was using his left hand. (Demonstration.) Playing tense and really running all over the place with his right hand. I learned a lot from Teddy Rose and from Art Tatum, Duke Ellington. And one thing I learned from then was that you have to do your own thing with all of the information that they gave you.

This is something I learned. (Piano demonstration.) (Applause.)

MS. MCPARTLAND: You know, we've heard so much of the music tonight that I listened to when I was in England growing up, and Duke Ellington, of course, was one of my favorites. I also wanted to hear some of the women musicians. Well, I did hear them, actually. Louis Armstrong had, when he made the record, "The Hot Five," his wife, Lil, was on piano and nobody said anything about, Oh, there's a girl in the band, and so she was somebody I listened to early on.

And then when I came over here with Jimmy, there were all these people that I wanted to hear as well as Louis Armstrong, as well as Duke Ellington. Mary Lou Williams, for instance, and Cleo Brown, and I couldn't wait to get to clubs to hear where all these people were performing. And we were lucky enough to be in Chicago and being the opening band for Billie Holiday and things like that are such fantastic memories of working with Billie and then working with Ella Fitzgerald and different musicians, and I was really involved in trying to hear all the women players I could and all the women singers, and I'm still doing it, as a matter of fact.

We have one of the great singers here with us tonight, and she's going to perform for you. Miss Diane Reeves. (Applause.)

(Ms. Reeves sings.) (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Diane. Thank you, Billie. Thank all of our wonderful musicians. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Marian and to Wynton for showing us how much jazz can tell us about our country, our century, our deepest aspirations.

I did grow up loving jazz. I was inspired, moved by the agility of Charlie Parker and Sonny Rollins, by the inventiveness of Thelonious Monk, by the incredible inventive genius of John Coltrane and the incomparable Miles Davis. They and many others opened my ears and opened the ears of millions of our fellow citizens to a music that was profoundly human and distinctly American.

But if jazz is an American invention, it certainly travels well. From club to concert hall, from coast to coast, across the oceans and back, returning with the imprint of other cultures and new influences. Music that began as American at the core truly has become now the music of the world. Jazz is also, as it has long been, the international language of liberation. What a man named Willis Conover (phonetic) called the "Music of freedom."

For more than 40 years during the Cold War, Willis Conover hosted the jazz program on the Voice of America. Dictators banned it and jammed his broadcasts because they understood the power of jazz to unleash the human spirit. But they could not stop the music. Six nights a week, as Conover started his show with the first bars of "Take the A Train," 30 million listeners in the Soviet bloc would join him for the ride.

As far away as China and as recently as 1989, students at Tiananmen Square hummed the tunes they heard on the Voice of America. Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie. It became sort of a not-so-secret code in the struggle for human rights.

Tonight, we are honored by the presence of someone who has stood at the front line of that struggle and who can tell us the meaning of jazz for those yearning to be free. A few years ago, as I said tonight, when we were in Prague, we even performed a few tunes together. Please join me in welcoming an artist and a leader whose work is a tribute to the human spirit, and who perhaps will tell us a little bit about the impact of jazz on his Velvet Revolution --

President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic. (Applause.)

PRESIDENT HAVEL: My country was, before the war, free. And in 20's and 30's, this freedom was identified with jazz and Swing. I think that a lot of people in that time didn't know exactly if the founder of our free country was our first president named Masaryk or Satchmo. (Laughter.)

Later came Nazis. They occupied our country. Of course, immediately this was forbidden. And a lot of our Benny Goodman's played in very secret, secret, secret cellars. Totalitarian government hates music. Why? Because it is free, perhaps. After the war, once more, have Benny Goodman go to cellar because our dictatorship came -- a communist one. And in 70's and in 80's, once more, the music born in your country had to go in cellars. It was rock and roll. I think I would like to thank your President. That I had the possibility two days ago see one of the legends in my country in this house, a rock musician. And I would like to thank my dear friend, Hillary, for opportunity now to listen to jazz in this place. I thank you. (Applause.)

MS. LOVELL: People all over the world and the country have been listening to this, and they're sending us questions on the Internet. Should we take the first question Mrs. Clinton?

MRS. CLINTON: Yes, this question is from Washington. My question for the artists is the secret in playing jazz in that you must know your instrument well enough that you don't think about the notes, that your heart or soul begins to play the music?

MS. LOVELL: Wynton, would you answer that one?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, I'd have to say yes. (Laughter.) It's exactly like speaking. When you talk, you have certain phrases you're used to using and you rely on them. You take a little pause and you get your thoughts together, but you don't think about each individual word. If you're doing that, you're going to be in a world of trouble. (Laughter.) That's the same thing we do on the bandstand. And speaking is a matter of your facility with the words and the language, and also, it is a matter of your intent. If your intent is pure, benign, if it's soulful, then when you speak to people, they will listen to you. And if you have something to say, they'll learn something, or they'll get away from you, one or the other. (Laughter.)

And the same thing is true in our music; it's a matter of us being able to play our instruments on the one hand, and the other is our

intent, and our belief in the music. The more belief you have, the more powerful a statement you can make.

Now, we're going to -- as a matter of fact, we're going to play a tune now which really demonstrates that our music is about communication, because every musician that plays speaks in their own way. We have something that -- a way of playing together in jam sessions and in other places where each musician stands forward and makes their statement. And the other thing about jazz music is, it is -- the generation doesn't make a difference.

We have everyone from Al Gray, who is one of our most esteemed veterans. I'm not going to say what generation he's from, because after Marian dropped that 70 years on me, I got nervous and my palms started sweating. (Laughter.) But let me just say, Al is not too far behind. (Laughter.) And we're going to go from Mr. Al Gray on the trombone to our youngest lion out here from New Orleans, Louisiana, a great trumpeter, Mr. Nicholas Payton (phonetic), who is in his early '20s. We have Mr. John Faddus (phonetic), who owns the air waves. When you see him with a trumpet, you stay down low. (Laughter.)

I'm going to be down there. We're going to play -- now, this is -- we are playing -- we have like a conversation. But sometimes, somebody reaches for a blade and it becomes a cutting contest. And that's the thing that makes you understand the importance of practicing your instrument, because nobody wants to get their head cut. This is a song composed by Sonny Rollins entitled, "Sunny Moon For Two."

("Sunny Moon For Two" is performed.)

MS. LOVELL: We just heard some great instrumental voices, but now let's go to a voice from Canada.

MRS. CLINTON: This is from Alberta, Canada. Subject: Influences of jazz. Question: Mr. President, how did jazz influence your choice of going into public service over private business? We love you in Alberta. Respectfully. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, my first thought is that when I was younger in my teens, I used to do this a lot. And I was honest enough to know when I was doing it that while I was never happier doing anything else, I knew I'd never be as good as these guys, so I figured I had to get a day job. (Laughter.)

That's a very good question. I had never thought about it before, but I think the answer is, my association with music and the discipline and long hours of preparation it took and the joy it brought, particularly when I got into jazz, had a lot in common with what I love about public service. It is about communication, it's about creativity, but cooperation, as Wynton said earlier. And like jazz, I don't think you can be really, really good at it unless you care about other people and have a good heart, like these guys do. Thank you. (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: This question is from Oswego, New York. And the question is for Miss McPartland: I am 13 years old and want to pursue jazz music at school. How would you suggest our school begin a class that would help me?

MS. MCPARTLAND: Well, you know, they could get some records. I think that would be really a good thing to get some records of some of the people we've talked about and heard music played tonight and let them get a feel for the music from the early days, from like the tune played by the band, "Dipper Mouth Blues," right up to present day and listening to people like Dizzy Gillespie or Herby Hancock.

Actually, I think that's really the best idea is to start listening, and actually, my husband did this years ago when they had this little band in Chicago, the Austin High School Gang, Jimmy and Bud Freeman, (phonetic) and the rest of them. That's how that got started listening to recordings in a candy store somewhere where they had a record player. And they all took their different parts from the records -- and Jimmy picked out the trumpet part, and the piano player would pick out the piano. And probably this is the way to go because I think you can learn music as I did a little bit from actually reading music, although I'm not very good at that.

But really the natural way to learn is by listening and then try to perform something, try to play something -- don't be afraid. Don't say, I can't do it. Sit down at a piano and play what you hear in your head. Oh, I could go on for hours about this, but I better stop because -- (Laughter and applause).

MRS. CLINTON: That's great. This is a question from Bernard Smith from Bath, England. During World War II, American jazz played on the Voice of America to the great joy of the boys in the field, what style of music do you envision being played to the future democracies?

MS. LOVELL: Wynton, will you take that one?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, I don't know. The direction we're going in, they might just blow up something. There might not even be music. That's a very difficult question for me to answer because we have a tremendous strain in our culture right now, in terms of what direction we're going to go in with music. We need a lot more education, and we need to get much deeper into the mythology of our music and understand what we have been given and deal with it and develop it instead of the way that we're presenting music now. So that depends on which way it goes, if I have to answer honestly.

I hope it's going to be something swinging, but you never know what's going to happen out here, you know. I'm going to be doing my best to try to help us to swing, but we have a long way to go in terms of that, my good brother, in England.

MRS. CLINTON: You know, that's one of the reasons why the VH1 "Save the Music" program is so important because just as Wynton said, there have to be opportunities for young people to hear good music and learn their instruments and then, we have to have some faith in them. But they have to have that good grounding.

This is a question from Hawaii. How do you feel the history of jazz in America can best be preserved into the millennium?

Well, one of the reasons we're doing this show, Jill, is to preserve the history of jazz in America into the millennium because I think it's so important that all Americans and people all over the world like President Havel was saying appreciate the contributions that jazz has made to our democracy and to the spread of freedom around the world. And that, to me, is something that really needs to be preserved and honored for the future.

MS. LOVELL: Well, Mrs. Clinton, you answered the question. And Mr. President, I can't believe this evening has gone so fast. Do you have any final comments?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we should probably end with a question. You know, one of the things that I'd like to say, I'd like to compliment the recording companies who had put CD's recently -- all of Ella Fitzgerald's recordings for example. And I would like to encourage all the people who are involved in this business to think about as a way of

celebrating the millennium to look at all the great jazz music that is still available in any condition over the last decades and think about packaging anything that is not, yet, now in mint condition -- the best available condition -- in making it widely available because I think that is very, very important.

A lot of young people will listen to this, will carry it on, will imagine it and play it -- as Marian said -- if they have access to it. So that's a great, great question and a great way to end. We can't know everything that will happen in the new millennium, but I'll bet you one thing we know. When you hear American jazz coming back transformed as Brazilian music or African music as Hillary and I have in our trips around the world, I think jazz will be a big part of it. And all of you who are part of this night tonight will know that all of your work will live well into this new century and into this new millennium. And the world will be a better place because of it.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. MARSALIS: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Now, we're going to conclude with a classic blues composed by the great Charlie Parker. It's entitled, "Now Is the Time."

("Now Is The Time" is performed.)

END

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**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
"YEAR OF THE HUMANITIES AND ARTS"
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
APRIL 28, 1998**

President Bollinger, Provost Cantor, administrators, faculty, students, alumni, members of the Ann Arbor community, distinguished guests and friends:

It is a pleasure to be back in Ann Arbor, back on this campus, and back in this concert hall. Not only have many great American artists performed on this stage, the building is a monument to the creative expression of one of our nation's finest architects, Albert Kahn. So I am really pleased that, in this venue, we gather today to continue a very important discussion about the humanities and arts and what they have meant to each of us and to our country. I know we are all grateful to the ensemble from the Michigan School of Music and Amazin' Blue for sharing their music with us and so ably carrying on the arts tradition at the University of Michigan.

[Let me also say that, reluctant as I ever am to inhibit the free flow of ideas and opinions and cultural expression, it is clear that the recent UPI college ratings poll should be censored. I, for one, am sticking with the AP].

I'd like to thank Lee Bollinger for his many contributions — as a legal scholar, as a president of this university, and perhaps most important, as an advocate for the principles and traditions of American public higher education. Through his dedication, and that of Provost Cantor and many others here, the University Michigan has delivered on its promise of offering a world-class education to an extraordinarily broad range of American citizens.

The classrooms and laboratories on this campus remind us of the value of a diverse student body and faculty and the benefits they bring to a university community.

President Bollinger, even before assuming this post you were a tireless champion for the humanities and arts at the University of Michigan and beyond. And I thank you for helping to educate people about the vital role that the arts and humanities play in strengthening civil society, which is the fabric of our democracy and of our pluralistic way of life.

Provost Cantor, thank you for your advocacy on behalf of the arts and humanities, and for the time and energy you have committed to help Congress explore the role of women in our nation's military.

Finally, I would like to thank Associate Vice Provost Julie Ellison, director of the Year of the Humanities and Arts, and David Scobey, director of the “Arts of Citizenship” program, for sharing with students, faculty and the Ann Arbor community their vision of the dynamic relationship between the arts and humanities and a democratic society.

The Year of the Humanities and Arts comes at a propitious time. We are at the twilight of a century, the dawn of a millennium. And it is precisely moments such as these that give rise to self-examination — reflections on the past as well as forecasts about the future.

Looking back 1,000 years, we are reminded of the occasional dire predictions that accompanied the end of the first millennium and the beginning of the second. I don't know how many of you have ever heard of a prolific — yet rather controversial — monk in the 10th century named Raoul Glaber who constantly warned his local citizenry of impending doom. Perhaps because of his checkered career — he was expelled from several monasteries — he didn't attract much of a following. The earth didn't implode, as he predicted; instead, the next ten centuries allowed for some rather astonishing advances in the history of human civilization.

Yes, there continued to be plagues and genocides and unbearable human suffering.

But time's passage also allowed for the discoveries of Galileo and Newton, the art of El Greco, Rubens, and Picasso; the writings of Murasaki, Shakespeare, Tagore, Jibran, and Neruda; the ideas of Locke and Gandhi.; the humanitarianism of Florence Nightingale and Jane Addams.

From Islamic communities spreading North across Africa to the Kahokia here in the Midwest, people created new forms of art, built cities, designed new systems of cultivation, remapped their worlds and thought up new ideas.

Fueling all of these scientific, intellectual, and artistic advances was, of course, the human imagination. An imagination rooted in a knowledge and understanding of the past. An imagination that has allowed men and women throughout time to say "no" to the archetypal doomsday monks and envision and create a better future.

Today, as we find ourselves on the threshold of another century -- another millennium -- we find ourselves again trying to imagine a future: For us personally, for our children and grandchildren, for our communities and for society as a whole.

Will human civilization in the 21st century yield the cure for cancer, another Mozart, the end of poverty or lasting world peace? Or will it give rise to more ethnic hatred, a wider chasm between rich and poor, the spread of biological warfare, or a brave new world of genetically engineered people who look and act the same?

Now I'm an optimist. And I'm married to the most optimistic man in the world. But I have to confess that I am bothered by the trends I see around me every day that so undermine our conceptions of our ourselves and of our common future.

Most troubling of all is a consumer culture that not only distorts our sense of self, but threatens the essence of our pluralistic society and the very ideals that our democracy stands for.

Why are more American teenagers smoking? Why are more American children driven to violence? Why are more American kids spending hours staring blankly into the television screen? Why do so many American children judge their worth by the logo on their sneakers instead of the goodness in their hearts?

Is it because we live in a consumer culture that seduces us with apocalyptic visions of the future — of post-nuclear explosion scenarios, extra terrestrial invasions, boundless violence and killing?

A consumer culture that; in Oscar Wilde's words, knows the price of everything and the value of nothing?

A consumer culture that has traded knowledge for information, substance for style, generosity for greed?

A consumer culture which, in the eyes of Czech president and playwright Vaclav Havel, has so homogenized our tastes and desires that, instead of uniting us in a common enterprise, produces a yearning for conformity and identity that results in even deeper divisions, misunderstandings and hostilities among us.

If our shared vision of the future is apocalyptic rather than auspicious, information-based rather than knowledge-based, driven by material rather than human concerns, then chances are that such a future is what ours will become.

But, optimist that I am, I believe there is an alternative scenario. One in which the humanities and arts -- the greatest nurturers of the human imagination -- guide us as we navigate our world into the next century and the next millennium.

It is through history, philosophy, literature, painting, music, sculpture, poetry, photography, dance, architecture and design that we can reclaim the popular imagination, rekindle our spirit of citizenship, and exercise the power of our ideas, experiences and feelings to promote a brighter vision of the future.

In our country, there is too often an assumption that the arts and humanities are an exclusive preserve of the rich, or the best educated, or some cultural elite. Yet, from our own personal experiences, we know otherwise. How many of us have felt our hearts stir as we listen to a favorite song, read a haunting passage in a novel, watch a dancer's elegant leap?

How many of us have found our thoughts provoked and our minds illuminated by a new idea?

Like many of us, my first exposure to art came as a child. I had the chance to see Picasso's "Guernica" when I was in high school. Standing before this large canvas I suddenly appreciated that art was more than aesthetic. It was a way of communicating, a way of taking people beyond the boundaries of their own experience and giving them a greater understanding of the world around them. Guernica told me about the human condition. About war. About people in a place thousands of miles from me who, nonetheless, I felt were somehow connected to me.

You might say my love of things cultural was cemented almost thirty years ago when I was a student at Yale Law School. One day, I met a young man in the line for class registration. We struck up a conversation. He was very voluble and we continued to talk long after we had finished signing up for classes. He suggested that we go to the university art museum which, it turned out, was closed.

But the young man, determined to show me his favorite sculpture, persuaded a janitor to let us in, on condition that we help collect trash that had piled up in the building. So we dutifully collected the trash, and had a wonderful time looking at sculptures all by ourselves.

That was my first date with Bill Clinton.

My point is that, whether we know it or not, most of us partake in -- and are influenced by -- the arts and humanities. And that's why I find it so disheartening when members of Congress, or local school boards, or state governments decree that public support for the arts and humanities is a luxury that our country cannot afford.

Last week, I visited a junior high school in inner city Washington with our nation's three most recent poets laureate. I wish every member of Congress who has ever voted to cut off funding for the National Endowment for the Arts or the National Endowment for the Humanities could have been with me.

The students were competing in a poetry "slam." If you've never seen a slam, it's a high-speed, high-spirit competition in which students face off against each other by reading their own poems and receiving scores from a group of judges. They recited poems about the beauty of their names, the plight of a homeless man, the contributions of Duke Ellington, their pride, their joys, their pain. They talked about how poetry had helped them put their anger in writing instead of acting it out. They talked about how writing poetry had given them confidence, a sense of purpose and accomplishment. One boy recited a poem that said: "I'm a student."

Later that evening at the White House the President and I hosted the Poets Laureate in a celebration of American poetry.

They read works by everyone from Emily Dickinson to Wallace Stevens to William Carlos Williams. But we also asked some non-poets to read their favorite poems. A veteran from a veteran's home with a wonderful gravelly voice read Robert Frost's "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening." A minister from Boston read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "Psalm of Life." A high school teacher from Virginia moved nearly all of us to tears as he read Dudley Randall's "Ballad of Birmingham." And a seventh-grader from the District of Columbia offered a spirited and touching reading of Langston Hughes' "Life is Fine."

Whether you listened from the audience or watched on a computer screen at home, you came away from that evening with a greater sense of pride in our nation's rich tradition of poetry -- but also with a keener understanding of how creative expression enables us to transcend our differences and find our common roots as Americans and as human beings.

The strengthening and perpetuation of our nation's culture is not an expendable frill. It is essential to us as individual citizens. It is essential to America's leaders. It is essential to our democracy.

Because, as you at the University of Michigan are showing us, there is an art to citizenship. And the arts and citizenship do go hand in hand.

We know from countless studies that children exposed to the world of art and ideas score higher academically than those who aren't. I have seen for myself in Pittsburgh, in Chicago and elsewhere how the arts and humanities offer safe havens for children desperately seeking positive outlets for their energy and creativity. I have seen children hopeless about their futures suddenly transformed when they put their eyes behind a camera or their fingers on a keyboard. Or their thoughts and experiences on a blank sheet of paper.

We also know that the best way to learn about the world -- and all of its complexities -- is not by looking in the mirror.

At a time when our nation is still dogged by racial insensitivities and unfounded stereotypes, what better way to come to terms with our multi-ethnic, multi-racial way of life than to share in each other's ideas, emotions, tastes and attitudes. What better way for young people to learn to respect their differences — and appreciate their similarities — than by contributing to the larger mosaic of American culture.

And what better way to instill a sense of community and belonging than to celebrate our shared history and explore together our common future.

Let me commend all of you here at the University of Michigan, at Community High School, and at the Mack Elementary School -- along with city officials and local community leaders -- who are collaborating on the Students on Site project.

In one of Ann Arbor's oldest, historic neighborhoods, the Broadway Bridge reconstruction effort will unite people young and old from throughout Ann Arbor in an exploration of local culture through history, writing, photography, design, environmental education and other disciplines. This is a wonderful example of how the arts and humanities can provoke the imaginations of people in an entire community, engage citizens in an effort to preserve and promote their shared culture and, in this case, literally build a bridge to the future. And as a demonstration of how relevant both past and future are to innovative teaching and community building, this project will create its own Website archive of local historical, environmental and community materials, including maps, photos, and newspaper articles about Ann Arbor. What a wonderful nexus of history and technology and human imagination.

Albert Einstein once said: "When I examine myself and my method of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing knowledge."

As we find ourselves at this unique moment in history, the President and I have launched a special White House Millennium Program to encourage Americans

to celebrate and preserve cultural achievements of the past, better integrate the arts and humanities in our lives, and imagine ways to shape the century ahead.

The President and I chose as our theme a simple phrase that lies at the heart of our democratic experience: "Honor the past. Imagine the future."

Imagination is a unique human gift. It is what separates us from other species. It is what, for more than two centuries, has fueled the American Dream. And it is a gift that must continually be nurtured and fed so that the full creative and intellectual potential of our people and our country can be realized for future generations.

If we look back over the last 200 years, we see that the human imagination is the animating force of our democracy. Our Founders imagined a better system of governance. Civil rights leaders imagined a more just society. Just as America's unbridled energy and imagination inspired Charlie Chaplin, jazz, and modern dance, so did they give us universal suffrage and the empowerment of American workers.

In short, the freedom of our artistic and intellectual imagination has continually shaped America's ideals of democracy, pluralism and tolerance.

In 1962, when President Kennedy asked for public support of the arts, he reminded Americans that Abraham Lincoln ordered work to go forward on the Capitol Dome during the Civil War. And that Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1941, when the world was engulfed in war.

"These leaders," President Kennedy said, "understood that the life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction in the life of the nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose, and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilization."

That is why my husband is so committed to continue his fight for public support of the arts and humanities and our nation's cultural activities. It's why, through the White House Millennium Program, we are inviting speakers like the Poets Laureate to lecture about topics ranging from America's founding ideas, to creativity and science, to America's traditions in dance. It's why we are working on a national initiative called "Save America's Treasures" to preserve and restore our nation's cultural treasures --- from precious documents like the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, to artifacts like the Star Spangled Banner, which inspired our National Anthem, to historic sites like Thomas Edison's laboratory to the ancient structures of Mesa Verde that are in danger of deterioration.

As we move together into the 21st century, working to imagine and create a better future for ourselves and our country, perhaps you at the University of Michigan can be our guide. Universities, after all, are great incubators of culture. They are places where we can test our ideas, emotions, experiences and attitudes -- places that arm us with the cultural tools we need to move forward as a civilization.

As the Year of the Humanities and Arts and the Arts of Citizenship program are showing here at Michigan, the arts and humanities stimulate learning and collective discourse, provoke our senses and emotions and teach us about the vastness of human experience.

They are our greatest equalizers.

So: Together, let us honor the past. Let us imagine the future. Let us live up to the ideals of our democratic way of life.

Thank you.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 5, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AND THE FIRST LADY
AT PRESENTATION OF
THE NATIONAL MEDAL OF THE ARTS
AND THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES MEDAL

The South
Lawn

11:18 A.M. EST

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you so much. Welcome to the White House. It's a great honor for the President and me to have all of you here. This is one of the days we look forward to, as we come together to celebrate the unique and indispensable role that the arts and humanities play in shaping our nation, and to honor those who have made such extraordinary contributions to human knowledge and expression.

There are many, many distinguished guests here today, but I want particularly to thank the members of Congress who are with us -- Senator Baucus, Senator Durbin, Representative Engel, Representative Morella -- and all the elected officials who are part of this celebration, for your support and commitment to the arts and humanities. (Applause.)

T.S. Eliot once said that "culture may be described

simply as that which makes life worth living." Well, we decided to open today's Arts and Humanities Award ceremony with a few minutes of culture that will surely make all of our lives a little more worth living. And I believe it will also enrich the lives of these young performers as well, to be able to perform before our awardees and all of you. I am delighted to present a group that has been at the White House before, the Jacques D'Amboise Dancers from the National Dance Institute. Please join me in welcoming these young performers. (Applause.)

(The dancers perform.)

MRS. CLINTON: You know, this day and this ceremony holds real significance for those of us who care deeply about promoting the arts and humanities in communities across our country, because that's where the real work is done -- in places where young dancers are trained, young artists are encouraged, young writers are critiqued -- all the work that goes on that enables us to really understand what T.S. Eliot said.

Today we pay tribute to a number of extraordinary Americans who have stretched our imaginations, tested our beliefs, celebrated our diversity, and channeled our emotions and ideas into positive forms of creativity and self-expression. We also recognize the contributions that each of you in this tent have made to enable us to be in a time when we can see that the arts and humanities are making such an impact on our lives, through your work, your philanthropy, and your public service.

I want especially to thank Bill Ivey, the Chairman of the NEH; and Bill Ferris, the Chair of the NEA; John Brademas, the Chair of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities; the members and staff of the National Council on the Arts, and the

National Council on the Humanities; and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. I also want to acknowledge Diane Frankel, the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the members of her board, who I will join later today in honoring three museums for their innovative programs serving children and families in their communities.

And finally, I want to thank all of you, who are the supporters of the arts in America. We are all in your debt. Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

We know and recognize how central the arts and humanities are to our lives and, particularly, to the lives of our children, like the young dancers we just saw. We know how they stimulate our imagination, but we also know how they connect us to each other and to our common humanity.

Over the past six years, many people in this administration and many of their partners in the Congress have worked tirelessly to promote the arts and humanities. We've been honored to hold and host many events honoring the arts and humanities here at the White House. And when the President and I began planning for the coming of the millennium, we knew it would come whether we planned for it or not, but we thought it would be a good idea to think of a way we could use this turning point in history to really celebrate the richness of America, and to look at ways we could think of gifts we might give to the future.

Well, we put the arts and humanities at the heart of our efforts, and developed a theme -- Honor the past, imagine the future. We have recognized and will continue to recognize our artists and musicians, our writers and historians, our poets and philosophers, our scientists and others who have always helped define us as Americans, and guided our nation forward. Here in the White House we will continue to hold millennium events that showcase the enduring contributions to our lives and to our vision of the future.

In his State of the Union message this past January, the President called for a public-private partnership to preserve America's cultural and historic treasures. And I'm so pleased and gratified to announce that in this most recent budget, Congress provided \$30 million toward millennium programs that will help preserve our priceless heritage for our children and for future generations. And I want to thank the Congress for doing that. (Applause.)

Some of you may know that we've launched a "Save America's Treasures" program. And I was privileged this past summer to get on a bus with some of you and travel through several of our states, highlighting some of the well-known treasures, like the "Star-Spangled Banner," and some of the relatively unknown treasures that really help mark our passage as Americans. And I know that we're going to be doing more of that, and we welcome your participation and advice.

This Congress also marked a turning point in the future of government support for the arts and humanities. Today we recommit ourselves that we will continue to support the NEA and the NEH so that they will thrive and grow. (Applause.) It makes such a difference to have that federal validation and support for that artist in the school, for that dance company in a small community, for that symphony orchestra -- the only one in a state -- and so many other ways that we have seen lives literally changed.

As the President said in his recent tribute to the National Arts and Humanities Month, our investment in the living cultural heritage of today will reap benefits tomorrow, strengthening our communities and uniting our nation.

Just last month I helped launch, with a number of you, a national campaign to get arts back in our nation's schools, and I hope that we again recommit ourselves to that goal. (Applause.) As I travel around our country, it is literally heartbreaking to go into schools that because of budget problems have had to cut out all of their arts and culture and after-school activities for the children. They've cut out their sports and recreation. And I think to myself that I had more opportunities 30 and 40 years ago growing up than many of our children do today.

But with a public-private partnership, we can re-ignite arts education in our schools. Every child in America should have the skills to read and comprehend a novel or history book. They should know how to research and write about ideas. And every child in America deserves the opportunity these young dancers have had to explore their abilities, create new experiences, and break their own boundaries of creative expression.

Tomorrow, as part of our ongoing effort to promote the arts and humanities here at the White House, I will be honored to unveil the seventh exhibit of American sculpture that we've held in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden here at the White House. These exhibits have been enjoyed by our millions of White House visitors. And I hope all of you will have a chance to see this current exhibition, which shows how American sculpture was, in many ways, inspired by the great French artist, Rodan.

But in all of these endeavors, we believe -- my husband and I -- that we have an opportunity to take the arts and humanities as broadly as possible throughout our country, to give all Americans a chance to see what it means to them personally and to see what it means to us as a nation.

I was thinking about the sculpture garden because my first date with my husband and our President was at the Yale Art Gallery, when we showed up and knew there was a Mark Rothko exhibit inside and Henry Moore sculptures in the sculpture garden. There was, however, a strike, a labor strike going on and the museum was closed. But in a manner of persuasiveness that I saw for the first time that day, and have seen every day in the last 27 years -- (laughter) -- Bill Clinton was able to persuade the -- (laughter) -- museum curators and watchman that if we picked up the trash that had accumulated in the front of the museum, we could go in. (Laughter.)

So we had our own special tour of the Rothko exhibit, and got to spend a long time with Henry Moore's sculptures in the sculpture garden. And I realized at that moment that he was an effective advocate for the arts and humanities.

So let me introduce our President, Bill Clinton. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the

wonderful welcome. I just realized that at the moment of greatest unity for my political party in many years, my wife has told the President of the AFL-CIO that I crossed a picket line. (Laughter.) But it's true. (Laughter.)

Let me join Hillary in thanking the representatives of the NEA, the NEH, the Museum and Library Services for all they have done. I thank Senator Baucus, Senator Durbin Congressman and Mrs. Engel, Congresswoman Morella for being here and for their support for the arts and humanities.

There are many, many other supporters in both parties of the arts and humanities in Congress who wanted to be here today, but in light of Tuesday's election results in Minnesota, they're in the gym working out. (Laughter and applause.)

I'd like to thank our USIA Director Joe Duffy for being here, and a special thanks to our wonderful Secretary of Education Dick Riley, and his wife Tunky. Thank you for being here. (Applause.) Secretary Riley's going to persuade them to try to work out their minds as well as their bodies. (Laughter.)

Paul Klee once said, "Art does not reproduce the visible, rather it makes it visible." Today, we honor an extraordinary group of Americans whose daring vision and indelible contributions to arts and humanities have opened all our eyes to the richness, diversity, and miracles of the human experience.

We are blessed to live in an era of breathtaking change and unlimited possibility -- an economy that is the strongest in a generation; hopeful reductions in many of our social problems; around the world, a surging tide of democracy in lands where creativity and freedom once were viciously suppressed; an emerging global community united increasingly by the technological revolution, commercial ties, and greater interaction.

But we know that change also, always, brings new challenges and, perhaps, even as important, can obstruct old, unresolved difficulties. Now, more than ever, therefore, we need our artists and patrons, our historians and educators to help us make sense of the world in which we live, to remind us about what really matters in life, to embody the values we Americans hold most dear -- freedom of expression, and tolerance and respect for diversity.

For more than 200 years, through dance and songs, in paint or on paper, Americans have expressed their individuality and their common humanity. This tradition of our shared culture is one we must nurture and take with us into the new millennium.

Today, we proudly honor 19 men and women, a theatre troupe and one organization, all of whom have laid the foundation for a new century of greater American creativity.

First, the National Medal of the Arts. More than 50

years ago a New York City mother, looking for a way to keep her seven-year-old son off the streets, decided to send him with his sister to her ballet class. From there, Jacques D'Amboise leapt to the pinnacle of the dance, thrilling audiences as principal dancers for the New York City Ballet, landing roles in Hollywood musicals, creating timeless ballets of his own. With his National Dance Institute, he has given thousands of children, like those we saw today, the same opportunity he had, to strive for excellence and expression through dance.

Those who know him know he would walk a thousand miles for his kids. And this spring he will be doing just that, hiking the length of the Appalachian Trail to raise money for his institute.

Ladies and gentlemen, Jacques D'Amboise. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: From Blueberry Hill to Capitol Hill, and countless concert halls and honkytonks in between, Fats Domino has brought musical joy to millions, including me. I was this morning trying to remember all the lyrics to all the songs that I could. I will spare you a recitation. (Laughter.)

Antoine Domino grew up in New Orleans speaking French, English and boogie woogie. His talent was as big as his frame and his nickname. In a career spanning half a century, his rich voice and distinctive piano style helped to define rock and roll, the music that more than any other creative force in America has brought the races together. When I heard he couldn't make the ceremony I thought, ain't that a shame. (Laughter.) But I'm thrilled that his daughter, Antoinette Domino Smith, is here to accept the Medal on behalf of her remarkable father, Fats Domino. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: When the movie "Urban Cowboy" came out, Ramblin' Jack Elliot must have laughed, because even though he sings like he was raised on the range, he was actually born, as he puts it, on a 45,000-acre ranch in the middle of Flatbush. (Laughter.) He left home at 15 to join the rodeo, where he learned to sing cowboy songs. But it was hearing his first Woody Guthrie record that transformed him into the man Sam Shepard called a "wandering, true American minstrel."

Since then, he's traveled the world with his guitar and recorded more than 40 albums, winning a Grammy and fans from Bob Dylan to Mick Jagger. In giving new life to our most valuable musical traditions, Ramblin' Jack has, himself, become an American treasure. Ladies and gentlemen, Ramblin' Jack Elliot. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: From the industrial skyscrapers of Louis

Sullivan to the prairie houses of Frank Lloyd Wright, to the elegant geometry of I.M Pei, Americans have defined the field of architecture in the 20th century. No architect better expresses the American spirit of our time than Frank Gehry. From concert halls to shopping malls, he has given the world buildings that are fearless and flamboyant, that trample the boundaries of convention. There are few architects whose works so stir the imagination that people will cross oceans just to see it built. But his Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, has attracted architecture pilgrims for years.

When people ask what America aspired to on the eve of the 21st century, they will look to the work of this remarkable man, Frank Gehry. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: President Franklin Roosevelt once said that the conditions for art and democracy are one. Citizen-activist and arts patron Barbara Handman has dedicated her entire life to ensure that those conditions are met. Her sustained support for the arts, fighting to keep some of New York's historic theaters from going dark, serving on the city's theater advisory board, and many other activities have enriched our nation's cultural life. Her passionate advocacy of the First Amendment has enlarged our vital freedoms.

When we celebrate the arts today we also celebrate the commitment of Americans like Bobbie, whose activism and generosity are essential, and just as essential as our artists, to the flourishing of our arts and the preservation of our ideals.

Ladies and gentlemen, Barbara Handman. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: The revered and visionary painter, Agnes Martin, once told a reporter that, "everyone sees beauty, and art is a way to respond." Throughout a lifetime she has responded to the beauty of her world with luminous graphite lines, fields of white or bands of subtle color on canvas. For more than 40 years, her quiet, spare paintings have conveyed happiness and innocence to viewers and have earned the Saskatchewan native and naturalized American a place among America's foremost abstract artists. Her work is featured in the permanent collections of our finest galleries.

Today, even into her mid-'80s, she continues to paint every morning, finding inspiration in the solitude of her studio in Taos, New Mexico. Ladies and gentlemen, the remarkable Agnes Martin. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: Sixty years ago, Gregory Peck abandoned pre-med studies for the sound stages of Hollywood. While he never

practiced the healing art, his performances have helped to heal some of our countries deepest wounds. For many, he will always be Atticus Finch, the Alabama lawyer whose brave stand for justice and against racism in "To Kill a Mockingbird" stirred the conscience of a nation. He won an Oscar for that role and would star in 55 films: "Gentlemen's Agreement," "Roman Holiday," "The Guns of Navarone." He has been a tireless advocate for the arts, serving on the National Council on the Arts, as President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Today, he tours America in a one-man show, sharing memories with fans who still consider him the handsomest man on Earth. It's a great honor for me to present this award as a genuine fan of Gregory Peck. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: We've seen it so many times in movies and in real life -- a star falls ill only to be replaced by a promising ingenue who then catapults to stardom. Fifty years ago, that stage was the Met, the opera was Don Giovanni, and the ingenue was a 19-year-old soprano from the Bronx, Roberta Peters. She went on to achieve international acclaim, giving voice to the great heroines of opera -- Lucia, Gilda, the Queen of the Night. She is, you might say, for all of us coarser types, the Cal Ripken of opera -- (laughter) -- having performed as many as 30 times a season, achieved the longest tenure of any soprano in the Met's history and appeared on the Ed Sullivan show a record 65 times. She has sung for every President from President Eisenhower to President Bush. Now it is time for this President to honor her.

It is an honor to present our next winner with the Medal of Arts. Ladies and gentlemen, Roberta Peters. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: What Dublin was to Joyce or Yoknapatawpha County was to Faulkner, Newark is to Philip Roth. (Laughter.) Who would have thought this melting pot of immigrant aspirations -- of Jews, Italians, Irish, African Americans -- would have yielded a voice as distinct and powerfully American as Philip Roth. He and his many literary alter egos, from Nathan Zuckerman to "Philip Roth," have been among us now for four decades. He brought to the world's attention a generation of writers from what he calls "the other Europe," whose instinct for freedom matches his own. His last four books, "Patrimony," "Operation Shylock", "Sabbath's Theater," "American Pastoral," have each one a major literary award. Improbable as it may seem, this brash kid of Newark has become a grand old man of American letters.

Ladies and gentlemen, Philip Roth. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: You know what he said when I gave him the award? He said, "I'm not so old as you think." (Laughter.) And Hillary said, "It's just a literary expression." (Laughter.)

To indulge his passion for art, something he needs, I might say, as an expatriate southerner who can never quite leave the romance of his roots, the Chairman and CEO of Sara Lee, John Bryan, now just had to show up for work, for covering the walls of the Sara Lee's downtown Chicago headquarters is a vast collection of impressionist paintings by Monet, Matisse, Pissaro.

But a few months ago, Sara Lee announced that it would donate the entire collection to museums around the country. This generosity is not unusual. Under John's leadership, Sara Lee has supported the arts all across America -- the Lyric Opera in Chicago, the Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis are just two. From the cakes they bake to the paintings they share, Sara Lee does, indeed, nourish the world.

Thank you, John Bryan. Please accept this Medal on behalf of Sara Lee and a grateful nation. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: The 1974 birth of Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre in a church basement has been described as "a moment when the cosmos got lucky." Through a miraculous mix of talent and vision, Steppenwolf has reconciled the contradictions of modern theater. It stages edgy, experimental productions that still manage to attract mainstream audiences. It is an ensemble company that shuns the star system, and yet it has launched its fair share of stars -- John Malkovich, Gary Sinise, Joan Allen. That those stars regularly skip movie roles to act in Steppenwolf plays speaks volumes about the magic of this theatre.

To the many Tony Awards Steppenwolf has won, it is now my privilege to add the National Medal of Arts. Dr. Martha Lavey, the artistic director, is here to accept the Medal, along with an historic gathering of 32 members of her troupe. And if they're out there, I'd like to ask them to stand as she comes up, please. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: It's every performer's dream. In 1953 Gwen Verdon exited the stage after a brief solo in the Broadway musical "Can Can," only to hear the crowd go wild, shouting, "We want Verdon." Quite literally, she stole the show. After that first Tony Award-winning performance, she just kept dancing. Her collaboration with the great choreographer, Bob Fosse, defined the art of jazz dance. She gave brilliant performances in shows from "Damn Yankees" to "Sweet Charity" to "Chicago," winning three more Tonys and fans

all over the world. In movies ranging from "The Cotton Club" to the recent, critically acclaimed film, "Marvin's Room," this famous redhead is showing us all that she is still alive and kicking.

Ladies and gentlemen, Ms. Gwen Verdon. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: Now, the National Humanities Medals.

Ever since President Eisenhower asked the then 28-year-old Stephen Ambrose to edit his papers, he has animated history with stories of great leaders and average citizens whose common denominator is their uncommon heroism. With a storyteller's ear for narrative and a scholar's eye for detail, he puts us in the shoes of our most courageous Americans -- from 19-year-old citizen soldiers storming the beaches of Normandy to Lewis and Clark as they opened the American West. His work has inspired Americans to make

pilgrimages to long forgotten historic sites brought to life by his prose.

Ladies and gentlemen, Stephen Ambrose. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: The son of a pianist and music store owner, E.L. Doctorow is perhaps the finest chronicler of the changing rhythms of American life. From "Ragtime" to "Billy Bathgate," to "The Waterworks," he has captured the cacophony of American life and turned it into melodies that resonate in readers' minds long after they turn the final page. His narratives are such compelling physics histories of a young nation, struggling with the divergent impulses of human nature, that they have earned him both critical acclaim and popular appeal. He's a true literary lion, a caring professor, a gentle soul. I am grateful that I have had the chance to learn a lot about my country from his work.

Ladies and gentlemen, E.L. Doctorow. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: Ten years ago, Harvard's Diana Eck began to notice that her students weren't just choosing her class on Indian religions to learn about a foreign culture. They were enrolling to learn more about their own heritage. She was inspired to explore how America, founded by people in search of religious freedom, has changed and been changed by the religions of our recent immigrants.

She has found the religions of the world in America's own backyard: mosques in Massachusetts, Hindu temples in Houston; and even a century-old Buddhist temple in her native Montana. And through a new CD ROM, "On Common Ground: World Religions in America,"

she is helping us to appreciate not only the richness of our diversity, but the strength of our shared values.

Ladies and gentlemen, Diana Eck. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: For 10 years, an adult literacy teacher struggled to motivate her students. Then, when she became a mother, she realized that a parent will do for her child what she will not do for herself. "If you want to teach a person to read, Nancy Gaj thought, "teach her to read to her children." She brought this insight to her work with female inmates in a North Carolina prison, with dramatic results. The mothers not only learned to read, their children did better in schools and their families grew stronger. Through her literacy program, MOTHEREAD, Gaj has unleashed the power of family reading in schools and homes all across America. Today America honors a true revolutionary of literacy, Nancy Gaj, with the National Humanities Medal. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: Near the beginning of this century, W.E.B. Du Bois predicted a "black tomorrow" of African American achievement. Thanks in large measure to Henry Louis Gates, that tomorrow has turned into today. For 20 years he has revitalized African American studies. In his writing and teaching, through his leadership of the Dream Team of African American scholars he brought together at Harvard, Gates has shed brilliant light on authors and traditions kept in the shadows for too long. From "signifying monkeys" to small-town West Virginia, from ancient Africa to the new New York, Skip Gates has described the American experience with force, with dignity and, most of all, with color.

Ladies and gentlemen, Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
(Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: In high school in Beirut, Vartan Gregorian was so brilliant his teachers called him "Professor." At the Carnegie Corporation of New York, now they call him "President." But at Brown University, where he just concluded nine successful years at the helm, he's remembered simply and fondly as Vartan, the most approachable and engaging man on campus. Public education has been his faith and greatest enthusiasm. As an Armenian child in Iran, as a student in Lebanon and the United States, then as President of the New York Public Library, where he restored grandeur and purpose to one of America's great institutions.

President, philanthropist, friend -- Vartan Gregorian is, as one magazine put it, "a phenomenon." And we're proud to honor

him today. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: Growing up in La Jolla, California, Ramon Eduardo Ruiz spent nights listening to his immigrant father's tales of the heroes and history of Mexico. After serving as a pilot in World War II, he took his passion for Mexico's past to the halls of academia, becoming one of America's premier and pioneering scholars of Latin American history.

He has dedicated his life to exploring what he calls "the saga of the Mexican people, a story of sporadic triumphs played out on a stage of tragic drama." His history of Mexico, "Triumphs and Tragedy," is taught in colleges and universities all across our country, shaping a new generation's understanding of the heritage and homeland of millions of our fellow Americans.

Ladies and gentlemen, Ramon Eduardo Ruiz. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: For more than 50 years, Arthur Schlesinger has been at the vital center of our public life. He has not only chronicled the American history, he has helped to define it -- as the fighting intellectual of the Americans for Democratic Action, advisor to Adlai Stevenson, special assistant to President Kennedy. A renowned historian, like his father, Schlesinger has steered Americans on a straight and sensible course through the changing tides of history, from the age of Jackson to the multicultural nation in which we live today.

As he has written of the leaders he served, Professor Schlesinger, throughout his life, has taken "the Promethean responsibility to affirm human freedom against the supposed inevitabilities of history." What a remarkable life he has lived; what wonderful books he has written.

Ladies and gentlemen, Arthur Schlesinger. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: I want to choose my words rather carefully now before honoring one of America's leading students of presidential rhetoric. (Laughter.) Lincoln, Garry Wills has written, knew the power of words -- to win a war, to change history, to shape a nation. Garry Wills, too, understands the power of words. And his own books and essays have given eloquent voice to our past and to our present.

In the Pulitzer-Prize-winning "Lincoln At Gettysburg," he offered new perspectives on the most important speech in American history -- the way it redefined our Constitution in the minds of our people and rededicated our nation to our revolutionary ideals. Whatever his subject, politics or popular culture, the classics or even boxing, his insight is unsurpassed. I find that difficult to acknowledge from time to time. (Laughter.) Like his students at Northwestern, Hillary and I, and indeed, all America are grateful for his brilliant and iconoclastic scholarship.

Ladies and gentlemen, Garry Wills. (Applause.)

(The Medal is presented.)

THE PRESIDENT: The late Dizzy Gillespie once said of his fellow jazz trumpeter, Louis Armstrong, who had blazed musical and professional trails before him, "No him, no me."

Today, a grateful nation says to the 21 medalists in this room, "No you, no we." Thank you for opening doors of hope. Thank you for opening doors of artistic and intellectual possibility. Thank you for opening them for all Americans and lighting the way to our common future.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

END

11:55 A.M. EST

Message Sent To: _____

**THE FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
ARTS AND HUMANITIES AWARDS
THE WHITE HOUSE
NOVEMBER 5, 1998**

It is a great honor for the President and me to welcome all of you to the White House. Today, we come together to celebrate the unique role that the arts and humanities play in shaping the life of this nation. And to honor those Americans who have made extraordinary contributions to the vibrancy of our daily lives.

“Culture” — T.S. Eliot once said — “may be described simply as that which makes life worth living.” We decided to open today’s Arts and Humanities Awards Ceremony with a few moments of culture that will surely make our lives a little more worth living — and that I would guess does the same for these young performers as well. I’m delighted to present to you the Jacques d’Ambroise (JAUQUE DAHM-BWUAZ) dancers from the National Dance Institute.

(DANCERS PERFORM)

I can’t think of a more uplifting way to begin this National Arts and Humanities Awards Ceremony, and I think these young people deserve a round of applause. I’ve had the privilege of seeing these young dancers before — and I’m always amazed at their exuberance and talent. In these few short minutes, I’m reminded once again why the President and I look forward to this day with such excitement and anticipation every year, and why this ceremony holds such significance for all of us who care deeply about promoting the arts and humanities in communities across the country.

Today, we pay tribute to a number of extraordinary Americans who have stretched our imaginations; tested our beliefs; celebrated our diversity; and channeled our emotions and ideas into positive forms of creativity and self expression. We also recognize the contributions that every one of you in this room has made to the arts and humanities in America. Through your work, your philanthropy, and your public service, you have all helped enrich the artistic and intellectual life of this nation.

I want to especially thank Bill Ivey, Chairman of the NEH; Bill Ferris, chair of the NEA; John Brademas, chair of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities; and members and staff of the National Council on the Arts; the National Council on the Humanities; and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. I also want to acknowledge Diane Frankel -- Director of the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services -- who I will join today -- at an awards ceremony honoring three outstanding museums for their innovative programs serving children and families in their communities. And finally, I want to thank the patrons and supporters of the arts who are here with us, and who have made such a difference in our lives and in the lives of America’s young people. We are all in your debt.

As we watched those wonderful young dancers today, we were witnessing the unique power of the arts to engage our young people in ways that encourage their originality and yet

also deepen their connections to each other, and to their community. Yet too often today, instead of children discovering the rewards of moving together in dance, picking up a paintbrush, joining a choir, writing a poem, or testing out a new idea, they express themselves through frustration, or hopelessness, or even violence.

Many of you here today have made it your life's work to open up the imaginations of our young people -- because you recognize that these experiences can be soul saving and life enriching, and that where there is a lively imagination, there is hope. All of us here have seen, over and over again, the extraordinary potential of the arts and humanities to shatter the limits that are so often imposed on our lives, and how these experiences can enable anyone, but particularly a child, to imagine a positive vision of their lives and their future.

Just last month, I helped launch a national campaign -- along with many of you -- to get the arts back in our nation's schools. And I hope we can all recommit ourselves to that goal here today. Every child in America deserves the opportunity that these young dancers have -- to explore their abilities; create new experiences; and break boundaries. Every child deserves to have the skills to read and comprehend a novel or a history book -- and to know how to research and write about ideas.

When the President and I began to plan for the coming of the millennium, we made the celebration of the arts and humanities central to our efforts, and developed the theme: honor the past, imagine the future. Our artists, musicians, writers, historians, poets and philosophers have always defined us as Americans, and guided us forward as a nation. And here in the White House -- we will continue to hold millennium programs that showcase the contributions of the arts and humanities to the life of this nation -- and to our efforts to envision the future before us.

Just last month, ~~we fought off~~ efforts in Congress to cut funding for the arts and humanities. And we must recommit ourselves here today that NEVER again will the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities be threatened with elimination. And that in fact, they will thrive and grow -- so that their work will reach and engage all Americans. We also gained \$30 million in the budget to preserve America's artistic and historical heritage -- so that our children and future generations can learn and benefit from that priceless legacy. As the President said in his recent tribute to National Arts and Humanities Month -- "our investment in the living cultural heritage of today will reap benefits tomorrow, strengthening our communities, and uniting our nation."

Tomorrow, I'm unveiling the seventh exhibit of American sculpture that we've held in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden here at the White House. And I'm proud that these exhibits have been enjoyed by millions of White House visitors over the past six years. I hope all of you have a chance to see this current exhibit of American sculpture -- all inspired by the great French artist, Auguste Rodin.

In fact, sculpture holds a special place in my own heart. I now want to introduce to you someone who on our first date took me to see the bronze statues of Henry Moore at the Yale Art Gallery's sculpture garden -- and who has since become America's most effective advocate of

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the arts and humanities — my husband, President Bill Clinton.

THE FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
ARTS AND HUMANITIES AWARDS
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It is a great honor for the President and me to welcome all of you to the White House. Today, we come together to celebrate the unique role that the arts and humanities play in shaping this nation -- and to honor those who have made extraordinary contributions to human knowledge and expression.

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All of us here know how central the arts and humanities are to our lives -- and to the lives of our children. We only have to watch those wonderful young dancers today to witness the unique power of the arts to engage us in ways that stimulate our imaginations -- and yet connect us to each other -- and to our common humanity.

Over the past six years, this Administration has worked tirelessly to promote the arts and humanities here at the White House -- and in every community.

When the President and I began to plan for the coming of the millennium, we placed the celebration of the arts and humanities at the heart of our efforts, and developed the theme: honor the past, imagine the future. We recognize that our artists, musicians, writers, historians, poets and philosophers have always defined us as Americans, and guided us forward as a nation. And here in the White House, we will continue to hold millennium events that showcase their enduring contributions to our lives and to our vision of the future.

In his State of the Union message this past year, the President called for a public/private partnership to preserve America's cultural and historical treasures. And in this most recent budget, Congress provided \$30 million toward millennium programs that will help preserve this priceless heritage for our children and for future generations.

This Congress also marked a turning point in the future of government support for the arts and humanities. Today, we recommit ourselves: We will NEVER again allow the NEA and the NEH to face elimination. And we will ensure that they will thrive and grow -- so that their work will reach and engage all Americans. As the President said in his recent tribute to National Arts and Humanities Month -- “our investment in the living cultural heritage of today will reap benefits tomorrow, strengthening our communities, and uniting our nation.”

Just last month, I helped launch a national campaign -- along with many of you -- to get the arts back in our nation’s schools. And I hope -- once again -- that we can all recommit ourselves to that goal here today. Every child in America should have the skills to read and comprehend a novel or a history book -- and know how to research and write about ideas. Every child in America deserves the opportunity that these young dancers have had -- to explore their abilities; create new experiences; and break boundaries.

Tomorrow -- as part of these ongoing efforts to promote the arts and humanities -- I'm pleased to unveil the seventh exhibit of American sculpture that we've held in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden here at the White House. And I'm proud that these exhibits have been enjoyed by millions of White House visitors -- young and old -- over the past four years. I hope all of you have a chance to see this current exhibition of sculptures -- inspired by the great French artist, Auguste Rodin.

I now want to introduce to you someone who on our first date took me to see the bronze statues of Henry Moore at the Yale Art Gallery's sculpture garden — and who has since become America's most effective advocate of the arts and humanities — my husband, President Bill Clinton.

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The painter Paul Klee once said, "Art does not reproduce the visible; rather it makes it visible." Today we honor an extraordinary group of Americans whose daring, vision and indelible contributions to the arts and humanities have opened all our eyes to the richness, the diversity, and the miracle of the human experience.

We are living in an era of unprecedented hope and possibility: A technological revolution sweeping across the globe, changing the way so many of us live and work; making our world seem even smaller... an American economy that is the strongest in a generation, creating more opportunities for our people to reach their greatest God-given potential... the rising tide of democracy in lands where creativity and freedom were once viciously suppressed.

But change can bring new challenges. Now more than ever, we need our artists and patrons, our historians and educators to help us make sense of this complex world, to remind us of the values we Americans hold most dear -- freedom, tolerance, and pluralism. For more than 200 years, through dance, in songs, in paint and on paper, Americans have gained a greater sense of who we are, where we've been and what we hope to be. It is a tradition that we must nurture and take with us into the 21st Century.

Today, I am proud to honor 19 men and women, a theatre troupe and one organization who have laid the foundation for a new millennium of even greater creativity.

First, the National Medal of the Arts:

More than 50 years ago, a New York City mother, looking for a way to keep him safe and off the streets, decided to send her 7-year old son to sit on the sidelines of his sister's ballet class. From there, **JACQUES D'AMBOISE** leapt to the pinnacle of the dance world, thrilling audiences as principal dancer for the New York City Ballet, landing roles in classic Hollywood musicals, and creating timeless ballets of his own. With his National Dance Institute, D'Amboise has given thousands of children the same opportunity he had -- to dance and strive for excellence. Those who know him know that Jacques would walk a thousand miles for his kids. I wish him well as he does just that this Spring, hiking the entire length of the Appalachian Trail to raise money for his Institute

From Blueberry Hill to Capitol Hill -- and in countless concert halls and honkytonks in between -- **FATS DOMINO** has brought musical joy to millions. Antoine Domino grew up in New Orleans, speaking French, English and boogie woogie. His talent was as big as his nickname. In a career spanning half a century, his rich voice and distinctive piano style helped define rock and roll -- the music that, more than any other creative force in America, has brought the races together. When I heard that he could not make the ceremony, I thought, "ain't that a shame." But I am thrilled that the great Allan Toussaint is here to accept the medal on his behalf.

When the movie "Urban Cowboy" came out, **RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOT** must have laughed -- because even though he sings like he was raised on the range, he was actually born, as he puts it, "on a 45,000 acre ranch in the middle of Flatbush." He left home at 15 to join the rodeo, where he learned to sing cowboy songs. But it was hearing a Woodie Guthrie record that transformed him into the man playwright Sam Shepard called a "wandering, true American minstrel." Since then, he has traveled the world with his guitar, winning a Grammy and inspiring artists from Bob Dylan to Mick Jagger to Beck. In more than 40 albums, Ramblin' Jack has interpreted the stories and songs of our nation, and become an American original. Ladies and Gentlemen, Ramblin' Jack Elliott.

From the industrial skyscrapers of Louis Sullivan, to the prairie houses of Frank Lloyd Wright, to the elegant geometry of I.M. Pei, Americans have defined the field of architecture in the 20th Century. No American architect better expresses the spirit of our time than **FRANK GEHRY**. From concert halls to shopping malls, Gehry has given the world buildings that are fearless and flamboyant, that trample the boundaries of convention. There are few architects whose work so stirs the imagination that people will cross oceans just to see it getting built, but his Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain has attracted architecture pilgrims for years. When people ask what America aspired to on the eve of 21st Century, they will look to the work of Frank Gehry.

President Franklin Roosevelt once said that "the conditions for art and democracy are one." **BARBARA HANDMAN** has spent her life ensuring that those conditions are met. Her sustained support for the arts -- saving the historic theaters of New York City, and serving on the city's Theater Advisory Board, among other things -- has enriched our nation's cultural life. And as a citizen activist, her passionate advocacy of the First Amendment has enlarged all of our freedoms. When we celebrate the arts today, we are also celebrating the dedication of people like Bobbie, whose work ensures that the arts -- and our most enduring ideals -- can freely flourish. Ladies and gentlemen, Barbara Handman.

The revered and visionary painter **AGNES MARTIN** once told a reporter that "everyone sees beauty...and art is a way to respond." Throughout a lifetime, Martin has responded to the beauty of her world with luminous graphite lines, fields of white, or bands of subtle color on canvas. For more than forty years, her quiet,

spare paintings have conveyed happiness and innocence to viewers and earned the Saskatchewan native (and naturalized American) a place among America's foremost abstract artists. Her work is featured in the permanent collections of our finest galleries. Today, even into her mid-80s, she continues to paint every morning, finding inspiration in the solitude of her studio in Taos, New Mexico.

Sixty years ago, **GREGORY PECK** abandoned pre-med studies for the lights of Broadway and the soundstages of Hollywood. While he never practiced the healing art of medicine, his performances have helped heal some of America's deepest wounds. For many, Peck will always be Atticus Finch, the Alabama lawyer whose brave stand for justice and against racism in *To Kill a Mockingbird* stirred the conscience of a nation. Peck won an Oscar for that role and would star in some 55 films -- *Gentleman's Agreement...Roman Holiday...The Guns of Navarone*. He has been a tireless advocate for the arts -- serving on the National Council on the Arts and as president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Today, the actor whom many still call the "handsomest man on earth" tours in a one-man show -- sharing the stories of a legendary life with audiences across America.

We've seen it so many times, in movies and in real life: a star falls ill, only to be replaced by a promising ingenue, who catapults into stardom. 48 years ago, that stage was the Met, the opera was *Don Giovanni*, and the ingenue was a nineteen-year old soprano from the Bronx, **ROBERTA PETERS**. Peters went on to international acclaim, giving voice to the great heroines of opera -- Lucia, Gilda, the Queen of the Night. She is the Cal Ripken of Opera, having performed as many as thirty times a season, achieved the longest tenure of any soprano in the Met's history, and appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show a record 65 times. She has sung for every president from Eisenhower to Bush. Now it is time for this president to honor her. I won't try to sing, but I will present her with our next Medal of the Arts.

From the moment his first published short story "Goodbye Columbus" rocketed through the literary world, **PHILIP ROTH** has written timeless stories about the journey from ethnic enclave to affluent America. Philip Roth is our Kafka. His writing -- vivid, vital, sometimes profane, always profound -- wrestles with what it means to be a Jew, to be a man, a parent, a son. He and his many literary alter egos, from Nathan Zuckerman to the character known as "Philip Roth" have been among us now for four separate decades; his last four books have each won one of the major literary awards. Ladies and Gentlemen, Philip Roth.

To indulge his passion for art, John Bryan, Chairman and CEO of the **SARA LEE CORPORATION**, just has to show up for work. Covering the walls of the Sara Lee's downtown Chicago headquarters, is a vast collection of Impressionist paintings, works by Monet, Matisse, and Pissaro. Yet, a few months ago, Sara Lee announced that it would donate the entire collection to museums around the country. Under John's leadership, Sara Lee has supported the arts across America: The Lyric Opera in Chicago ... the Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis ... the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City are just a few. From the cakes they

bake to the paintings they share, Sara Lee does indeed nourish the world.

The 1974 birth of Chicago's **STEPPENWOLF THEATRE COMPANY** in a church basement has been described as "a moment when the cosmos got lucky." Through a miraculous mix of talent and vision, Steppenwolf has reconciled the contradictions of modern theater. It stages edgy and experimental productions that still manage to attract mainstream audiences. It is an ensemble company that shuns the star system, and yet it has launched more than its share of stars: John Malkovich...Gary Sinise...Joan Allen. That those stars have no problem skipping movie roles to take parts in Steppenwolf's plays, speaks volumes about this extraordinary theatre on Halsted Street. To the many Tony awards Steppenwolf has won, it is my privilege to add the National Medal of Arts.

It is every performer's dream. In 1953, **GWEN VERDON** exited the stage after a brief solo in the Broadway musical "Can Can," only to hear the crowd go wild, shouting "We want Verdon!" Quite literally, she stole the show. After that first Tony Award-winning performance, she just kept dancing. Her collaboration with the great choreographer, Bob Fosse, defined the art of jazz dance. Her show-stopping performances in musicals from "Sweet Charity," to "Damn Yankees," to "Chicago" won her three more Tonys, and fans all over the world. And in movies ranging from "The Cotton Club," to the recent critically acclaimed film "Marvin's Room," this famous "Redhead" is showing us all that she is still "Alive and Kicking." Ladies and Gentlemen, Miss Gwen Verdon.

Now on to the National Humanities Medal:

Ever since President Eisenhower asked the 28-year-old **STEPHEN AMBROSE** to edit his papers, Ambrose has animated history with stories of great leaders and average citizens whose common denominator is their uncommon heroism. With a storyteller's ear for narrative and a scholar's eye for detail, he tells timeless stories of courage -- from 19 year old citizen soldiers storming onto the beaches of Normandy, to the two men who cut a path through the wilderness and opened the American West. His work has inspired countless American families to make pilgrimages to the long-forgotten historical sites that his prose has brought to life. It is a great honor to present this award in the room that Meriwether Lewis lived in before he set out for the frontier. Ladies and Gentleman, Stephen Ambrose.

Novelist **E. L. DOCTOROW**, the son of a pianist and a music-store owner, is perhaps the finest chronicler of the changing rhythms of American life. From Ragtime to Billy Bathgate to The Waterworks, Doctorow has captured the cacophony of American life and turned it into haunting melodies that resonate in readers' minds long after they turn the final page. Doctorow's narratives are so musical, so inventive, such compelling psychic histories of a young nation

struggling with the divergent impulses of human nature, that they have earned him both critical acclaim and tremendous popular appeal. Doctorow is a true literary lion, a caring professor and a gentle soul. Ladies and Gentleman, E.L. Doctorow

Ten years ago, Harvard Professor **DIANA ECK** began to notice that her students weren't just choosing her class on Indian religions to learn about an exotic foreign culture, they were enrolling to learn more about their own heritage. The diversity of her students inspired Eck to launch the Pluralism Project and explore how America, founded by people in search of religious freedom, has changed and been changed by the religions of our recent immigrants. Eck has studied the religions of the world -- all without ever leaving home: Mosques in Massachusetts, Hindu temples in Houston, and even, a century-old Buddhist temple in her native Bozeman, Montana. And through a new CD-ROM, "On Common Ground: World Religions in America," she is helping us appreciate not only the richness of our diversity, but the strength of our shared values. Ladies and Gentlemen, Diana Eck.

For ten years, adult literacy teacher **NANCYE GAJ** [nancy guy] struggled to motivate her students. Then, when she became a mother, she realized that a parent will do for her child what she would not do for herself. "If you want to teach a person to read," Gaj thought, "teach her how to read to her children." Gaj brought this insight to her work with female inmates at North Carolina prison, with dramatic results: the mothers not only learned to read, their children did better in school, and their families grew stronger. Through her literacy program MOTHEREAD, Gaj has unleashed the power of family reading to schools, homes, and neighborhoods all across the America. Today, I honor Nancye Gaj, a great revolutionary of literacy, with a National Humanities Medal.

Near the beginning of the century, W.E.B. DuBois [doo-BOYCE] predicted a "black tomorrow" of African-American achievement. Thanks to **HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR** that tomorrow has turned into today. For 20 years, Professor Gates has revitalized African-American studies. In his writing and teaching, and through his leadership of the Dream Team of African-American scholars he brought together at Harvard, Gates has shed brilliant light on authors, traditions and events kept in the shadows for too long. From "signifying monkeys" to small-town West Virginia, from ancient Africa to the new New Yorker, Henry Louis Gates has described the American experience with force...with dignity...and most of all, with color. Ladies and Gentlemen, Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

In high school in Beirut, **VARTAN GREGORIAN** was so brilliant his teachers called him "Professor." At the Carnegie Corporation of New York, they now call him "President." But at Brown University, where he just concluded nine successful years at the helm, he is remembered, simply and very fondly, as "Vartan" -- the most approachable and engaging man on campus. Public education has been his faith and his greatest enthusiasm -- as an Armenian child in Iran; as a student in Lebanon and the United States; and then as president of the New York Public Library, where he restored grandeur and purpose to one of America's great

institutions. President, philanthropist, friend -- Vartan Gregorian is, as one national magazine put it, a "phenomenon."

Growing up in La Jolla, California, **RAMON EDUARDO RUIZ** spent nights listening to his immigrant father's tales of Mexico. After serving as a pilot in World War II, Ruiz took that passion for Mexico's past to the halls of academia, becoming one of America's premier and pioneering scholars of Latin American history. An expert on the Cuban and Mexican revolutions, Ruiz gave us new, thought-provoking interpretations of two of the most important upheavals of Hispanic America. His narrative history of Mexico, *Triumphs and Tragedy* is taught in colleges across the country, shaping our understanding of our neighbor to the south and the homeland of millions of our fellow Americans. Ladies and Gentlemen, Ramon Eduardo Ruiz.

For more than fifty years, **ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR** has been at the vital center of our public life. He has not only chronicled the American Century, he has helped define it: as the fighting intellectual of the Americans for Democratic Action, as adviser to Adlai Stevenson, as special assistant to President Kennedy. A renowned historian, like his father before him, Schlesinger has steered Americans on a straight and sensible course through the changing tides of our history --from *The Age of Jackson* to the multicultural nation we live in today. As he has written of the leaders he served, Professor Schlesinger himself has seized "the Promethean responsibility to affirm human freedom against the supposed inevitabilities of history." I am proud, Professor, to add another deserved honor to your distinguished list.

It is with great trepidation that I introduce one of America's leading students of Presidential rhetoric. Lincoln, **GARRY WILLS** has written, knew the "power of words" -- to win a war, change history, shape a nation. Mr. Wills, too, understands the power of words; and his own books and essays have given eloquent voice to our present and our past. In the Pulitzer-Prize winning *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, Wills offered new perspectives on the most important speech in American history and the way it rededicated our nation to our revolutionary ideals. Whatever his subject -- politics or popular culture, the classics or the Kennedys or even boxing -- Garry Wills' insight is unsurpassed. Like his students at Northwestern, our nation is grateful for his brilliant and iconoclastic scholarship, and we are all wiser for it.

The late great Dizzy Gillespie once said of his fellow jazz trumpeter Louis Armstrong who had blazed musical and professional trails before him, "No him, No me." Today, a grateful nation says to the 21 medalists in this room -- "No you, No we." Thank you for opening new doors of hope artistic and intellectual possibility for all Americans. Most of all, thank you for lighting the way to America's future.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Remarks for the Power of the Arts in Education
September 17, 1998

I am particularly pleased that a group of you who are so committed to the arts could be the first to be part of this unveiling for us here at the White House. I see as I look at many familiar faces, life-long advocates of the arts. I see some new friends on behalf of this cause, and I think it is fair to say that there have never been more arts education champions at the White House at any one time in our history.

There are many thanks due to each of you, because what you are doing is working tirelessly for the day when every single child in every single school in America can pick up a paint brush or an instrument in school and can compose his or her vision.

I want to thank the kids for sponsoring this event and the reception that is following. We are here with very important people today -- people who have made their commitment to our school and education system, particular to ensure the arts departments in our education system.

I had a great pleasure of visiting our schools here in Washington recently as a part of VH1's effort to save music. The VH1 family is committed to making sure that all children are exposed to music and they can try it out themselves.

I was pleased because that school, like so many, not only in the District of Columbia, but throughout our country, had a music program at one time but had a budget cutback and since then has been eliminated. But thanks to a dedicated teacher and the generosity of friends of that school, they were able to round up some funds and save the program.

We heard from a sixth grader named Troy who when he was in third grade, started taking drum lessons and it really made him happy. And the next year the art program was gone because of the budget problems. But because of a teacher named Mrs. Clipper, they began to meet before school, and, using a lot of instruments that were in bad repair being passed around among themselves, they had their music curriculum. And then finally today, because of the support of teachers, principals and our new superintendent in the District of Columbia and the generous partnership of VH1 and Cablevision, we were able to announce a donation for \$100,000 in support of music.

Now that is just one example of what is happening today around our country, because there has been a reaction to the loss of music and arts and what that means to children everywhere. And I think that is why we are all here today,

because the time is absolutely right.

In 1977, "Coming to Our Senses" made a case about why American children who study the arts get better educations. In 1983 "A Nation at Risk" made the very same argument that arts and humanities had to play a role in our education system. And ten years ago, in "Toward Civilization," the NEA said that arts in schools were important. They were and still are.

We have been told time and time again to reaffirm the importance of arts not as a luxury, but as a necessity. There are so many examples as well as research efforts -- I am sure that you could give ten or twenty off the top of your head -- I have seen very personally in the last several years, what the difference can be when the arts are part of education -- particularly in the education of inner city kids, kids at-risk, kids who are otherwise disadvantaged.

I have heard stories of children who wouldn't talk until they were finally introduced to an arts program or a musical experience. Babyface, those of you who may not know Babyface are not at all of this generation, because the children at the school this morning were thrilled to have him there. He shared this story about how as a young man he wouldn't talk at school, he wouldn't ask questions. He wouldn't even answer questions, no matter what the teacher said to him. And then one day he was introduced to the choir and he said he would feel the effect throughout his entire life. All of a sudden, he found his voice.

Well, I have seen that in schools in every part of this country. And I have listened to children and young people tell me why the arts are so important to them. A program funded by the NEA that I visited at a school here in DC a few weeks ago has children write their own poetry and then act it out. One young man stood up and read from his poem. One of the lines was, "I am so musical that when write songs you sing them for the rest of your life."

They not only sing songs but learn to control and recognize their feelings. These young people, who attend this school which is largely drawn from the housing project across the street, talk about how important it was to be able to let out the feelings they had every single day. And they found a way to do that through poetry, through the arts.

The NEA has done a lot of good work through the years bringing artists to the schools and encouraging schools to make sure that the arts departments move forward. And I feel compelled to say that I am very grateful for the support in the Senate that has been resoundingly given to the NEA. It is very important to all of us who care about the arts to understand how significant it is that the federal government has a role to play in supporting the arts and in funding programs like the ones which send artists to schools where children would never have seen artists otherwise. And I just want to reiterate on behalf of my husband that the

President will never back down on his commitment to federal funding for the arts and federal funding for the NEA.

My husband and I have supported arts funding and arts education almost intuitively over our lifetimes, but now we have research which very fortunately supports those intuitions. Ground-breaking research done primarily at the University of Wisconsin and University of California at Irvine, demonstrates conclusively that exposure to the arts, and particularly music, enables children to enhance their reasoning, their spatial understanding, their analytical abilities.

We are now more convinced than ever that even exposing infants and babies to music helps them to develop brain cells and make connections which will help them be more successful in school later on. That is why it is not only something that is the right thing to do to support arts education, but it is the smart thing for our nation, both the public sector and the private sector, to support arts education.

Because we are, by doing so, doing one of the things we know that will pay off the most in making children better able to learn.

Today the arts is a core subject under the President's program called "Goals 2000." Yes, reading and writing and mathematics and history, they are all there, and they need to be there, but so are the arts. \$10 million has been awarded to local art education applicants under this program -- under Goals 2000 -- to enable them to understand better how to use the arts to teach academic skills.

We also have new standards for our 2,000 Head Start centers that recognize how we can best get our children ready for schools by developing their creative self-expression through activities in art, music, movement and dialogue.

We are also very grateful that the arts education partnership has been created with the generous help of foundations and cultural institutions, many of which are represented in this room. And so we are finally reaching a consensus in our nation that we need to have art education in our schools. And we need to be sure that we are setting standards so that arts and education can help to really meet the needs of our young people.

I am always reminded of people who have been here before. And President John Adams said a lot of very sensible things. He was the first inhabitant, along with his wife Abigail, in the White House. And I know many of you know this quote, but I quoted Plato this morning at the school. I told the students that he was sort of like an ancient rapper. I don't know if that made much sense, so I will try John Adams instead. He once said, "I must study politics and war, so that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry and music."

And that is really what our hope is -- a full education in the deepest sense of the word is what will best prepare people for the challenges of this very uncertain future that poses so many opportunities but also will call on us in ways we cannot even imagine now, to be as fully human as possible in order to live together, to work together, to understand our interconnectedness.

So that is why we are issuing a call to action here in our nation to bring the arts back into every school in America. In fact the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities is about to publish a study on the best lessons learned from school districts. What they have found is that everyone who has a stake in our children's success, must see art education as their cause. Not just educators and parents, but also businesses, cultural organizations, colleges and universities. Over the next few years, I and many of you will have the opportunity to speak out on this topic and I want to enlist your support in making the case to the American public.

I am pleased to announce today new commitments from people who understand how important the arts education partnership is and who want to join the crusade.. Between this school year and next, Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation is doubling its goal to provide instruments to school music programs.

Now "Mr. Holland's Opus" happens to be one of my favorite movies. Because, for those of you who have seen it, you know that it really is a chronicle of life in the 60's forward. And for those of us who were in high school in the '60's, we remember, if we were lucky enough to attend most schools at that time in America in the suburbs and cities, there were music programs, and drama programs and art programs that we were able to take advantage of.

As you watch that movie you watch the slow elimination of arts programs. I want to thank Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation for their commitment. Ovation, a new cable channel for the arts, is asking young people around the nation to respond to the theme, "I Love Art, Here's Why," by writing an essay or a poem, or composing a sign or drawing a picture.

I think that is a wonderful way for young people to express themselves and for their feelings and thoughts to be shared with the rest of us. The Artists Rights Foundation is enlisting famous directors in six cities to teach the art of film making.

I also want to thank our private sector. I want to thank Vivian Smith, who is etching our White House Millennium theme by developing thirteen art exercises that ask students to honor the past and imagine the future. The director of our wonderful symphony here in the nation's capital, Dennis Slotkin, is touring in Europe, but wanted to be here, sent a message and said I had to give it to you.

He would be standing here, baton in hand to direct us, were he able, and that message is, "I will do everything in my power to fulfill the mission of this project and bring the arts back to our schools."

So you see we have a wide spectrum of support from many different aspects of our society. And in a year or two or five or ten we can look back and say that at this meeting we came forward in a united way to create the opportunity for the arts in education to flourish once again.

There are many people who are responding to that call, and it is my privilege to introduce one of them to you. I think that it is fair to say that many people have a stake in the creation of not only future artists, but audiences for artists. And among the people who have such a stake, are those who would broadcast to us the work of artists.

People in the corporate world know Michael Jordan as the Chairman and CEO of the CBS Corporation. People in the arts world know him as the Chairman for Americans for the Arts. Now I hope that people everywhere know him as the leader who brought those two very powerful and important institutions together -- AFA and CBS -- to raise public awareness about the value of the arts for our children. And to encourage children everywhere to understand the significance to their own lives of the arts, and to create posters, performers and artists and audiences for the twenty first century. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Michael Jordan.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

ARTS IN SCHOOLS EVENT

STATE DINING ROOM, WHITE HOUSE

SEPTEMBER 17, 1998

Thank you and welcome to the State Dining Room and the White House. I see many familiar faces here. Some lifelong advocates. Some new friends. But, I don't think I've ever seen more arts education champions at the White House at one time. And I want to thank all of you, who are working tirelessly for the day when every child can pick up a paintbrush or an instrument in school and compose a future.

Before we begin, I want to say a few words about the other speakers who I will be introducing later in the program: Michael Jordan, who until we added his title -- he's the CEO of CBS -- was causing all sorts of people who don't usually follow the arts to beg and plead to get into this event. [As a Chicagoan, I couldn't leave here with my head held high without making at least one Michael Jordan reference]. I also want to thank John Sykes of VH-1, who just this morning committed \$100,000 to put musical instruments back into three D.C. Schools.

We are also very fortunate to be joined by Gordon Ambach, of the Council of Chief State School Officers...who has done so much to support the Arts Education Partnership; Valerie and Ken Cohen, who are advocates and parents in the New York school system; and Andrew Rose and the wonderful Fillmore Arts Center Jazz Band, which will be performing later in the program.

Just a few hours ago, I had the pleasure of joining John Sykes at Marie Reed Elementary School. I heard about how they'd always had a wonderful music program that everyone was proud of...that is until, a few years ago, when the cutbacks came. Like many schools, music instruction was the first to go. But, there were a lot of people who were determined to bring it back. There were students whose lives had been changed, like a 6th grader named Troy, who started taking drum lessons in 3rd grade and didn't want to stop. There was a teacher, who started a

new music program that students could attend before school, but never gave up on reinstating music education.

There was a Principal and Superintendent who supported him. And, then there was VH-1 and Cablevision, who today donated the instruments that are helping that school bring back the music.

What we saw this morning were the two sides of a story that you know all too well -- a story of too many schools, where music is the first to get thrown out and the last to get brought back in. And the story of what can be accomplished when educators and creators and entire communities join forces to change all of that.

[I remember when my husband and I were growing up...our classrooms were places to discover not only the 3Rs, but also water colors, theater, music, and poetry. Looking at Picasso's Guernica, I saw the reality and brutality of war. I learned how to play the piano...which

led not to any actual talent but to a real appreciation for music. And school was where my husband first picked up a Saxophone. We cannot rest until every single child today has the same opportunities.]

There have been no shortage of reports to guide us on that journey. In 1977, Coming to Our Senses told us that Americans must support the arts as basic education. In the 1983 famous report, A Nation at Risk, we heard about a rising tide of mediocrity and the role that arts and humanities education must play to stem it. And, 10 years ago, in Toward Civilization the NEA sent a message that the arts in schools were in jeopardy -- that they weren't taken seriously or taught comprehensively and there were no agreement about what students should know.

Yes, we have made real strides. But, we have heard the call to come to our senses for more than 20 years. And the time has come to

fully answer it.

I am always amazed that there are still some who think arts are a luxury for the few, when we all know they are a necessity for us all.

I wish every single person who has ever said that arts don't belong in our schools had met the 4 year-old boy who came to pre-school every day but never talked. One day, as part of an early childhood arts program, he drew a picture and began to tell his classmates the story behind it. His development flourished after that.

I wish everyone who has ever marginalized the role of the arts in our children's lives could have seen the confident young people I met at Johnson Junior High School in Southeast D.C. They were rehearsing for a poetry slam. For those of you who have never seen one, it's not to be

missed. It's a high speed, high spirit competition where students face off against each other by reading their own poems and receiving scores by a group of judges.

The students read poems about the beauty of their names, the plight of a homeless man, the contributions of Duke Ellington. And they talked about how the poetry had helped them put their anger "on paper instead of acting it out." How it had given them confidence. In a poem one boy read, he said "I'm so musical that when I write songs, you sing them for the rest of your life."

[The program those students participated in was funded in part by the National Endowment for the arts. I mention this, of course, during

budget season. And with every budget season, just like clockwork, comes a fight over the NEA. I was heartened to see, at the beginning of this week, that those who wanted to eliminate the agency lost big on the Senate floor -- 22 to 77. Let me be clear: The President will never back down on his commitment to federal funding for the arts.]

More than twenty years after Coming to Our Senses was published, what we've seen anecdotally and understood intuitively has now been proven empirically. Convincing research tells us that the arts not only lift our children's hearts and stir their creativity. They can also improve reading, writing, and math skills. They can close the academic achievement gap between students of different social and economic backgrounds. They can increase a child's likelihood of getting involved in community service. Putting the arts in our schools can help children

stay there and excel.

[And, it helps out their teachers and administrators as well. I love the story about the A+ program in North Carolina, which puts the arts at the core of learning. All the faculty are required to attend a training institute. Now, the Principal of Bugg Elementary School, [Jim Fattada] is a fairly shy person, and he wasn't sure he wanted to go.

But, by the end of the week, in preparing a presentation on what they had learned, he was scripting, choreographing, and donning a tutu to make his point. Well, he carried those lessons, though not the outfit, back to school. He saw attendance rates rise to the highest in the country. And disciplinary problems fade away. He saw his school achieve "exemplary status." And he saw students cry when they got sick and had to miss out on arts activities. The bad news for the school is that

he just retired. The good news is that he's found another calling. Just yesterday, he delivered his first three pieces of sculpture to a foundry for bronzing...and he's here with us today.]

In the last 20 years, we've not only learned more, we're doing more with that knowledge. Back in 1989, when my husband was Governor, he helped write the national education goals. When he became President, he was determined to make them the law of the land. He was determined to make sure good education always means a good arts education. Which is what his Administration has done.

Today, the arts is now a core subject under Goals 2000. And, a full \$10 million has been awarded to local arts education applicants under this program. We have new standards for our 2,000 Head Start centers - standards that recognize we can help our children get ready for school by developing their creative self-expression through activities in art, music, movement, and dialogue.

We created an Arts Education Partnership -- with the generous help of foundations and cultural institutions, which have been at the forefront of this battle from the very beginning. And for the first time since the 70s, our nation's report card in education is testing not just math, science, and reading, but also the arts. What is tested is usually taught. And we're going to look over time at how students actually create and perform...and how teaching affects their progress. We'll have the results of this first test in November.

[President John Adams once said, "I must study politics and war that my sons may have the liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy...in order to give their children a right to study, painting, poetry, and music." I know that President Adams meant to include our daughters as well.]

If we want our daughters and sons to learn not only about the equations of Einstein but also the notes of Duke Ellington and the brush strokes of Van Gogh, then we must do more than set standards at the national level. We must do more than study the problem. We need a national call-to action that brings the arts into every school in America.

In fact, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities is about to publish a study on the best lessons from school districts. What they've found is that everyone who has a stake in our children's success must see arts education as their cause -- not just artists, educators, and parents, but also businesses, cultural organizations, colleges and

universities. Over the next two years, I plan to continue speaking out on this topic. I want to talk with those parents, teachers, businesses -- anyone who will listen...and help you enlist their support.

And, that's why I am so pleased to announce today new commitments from people who understand how important the Arts Education Partnership is...and wanted to join the fight. Between this school year and next, the Mr. Holland Opus Foundation is doubling its goal to provide instruments to school music programs and young soloists.

Ovation, a new cable channel for the arts, is asking kids around the nation to respond to the theme "I love art -- here's why" by writing an essay or poem, composing a song or drawing a picture. The Artists Rights Foundation is enlisting famous directors to help teenagers in six

cities learn the art of film making.

The Private Sector is stepping up to the plate -- including Binney and Smith, which is echoing our White House Millennium theme by developing 13 art exercises that ask students to Honor the Past and Imagine the Future. And our Maestro, Leonard Slatkin, is touring in Europe, but he wanted me to send you this message today: "I will do everything in my power to fulfill the mission of this project and bring the arts back to our schools."

Looking back over the last 20 years, I think we have started to come to our senses. We have eloquent evidence that the arts -- always worthy studies themselves -- are essential to how our children learn and

develop and dream. The question is, what will they say when they look back on this day 20 years from now? I hope they will say it was a turning point. Not just an occasion for more studies and conversations. But the start of a national movement where every single person says, “Yes, our nation’s creativity and future is at stake. Yes, our children must learn from the arts. And, yes, I will answer this call to action and do my part.”

With all of you continuing to lead the way, I know it will happen. And, now it is now my great honor to introduce someone who has

already answered that call. People in the corporate world know Michael Jordan as the Chairman and CEO of the CBS Corporation. People in the arts world know him as the Chairman of the Americans for the Arts. Now, I hope people all over will know him as the leader who brought AFA and CBS together to raise public awareness about the value of arts for our children. It is my pleasure to introduce, Michael Jordan.

[Jordan speaks and you return to intro Sykes]

Over the last year, I've had the pleasure of getting to know our next speaker, John Sykes the President of VH-1. He comes here today with background in music and artist management, with a extraordinary commitment to putting instruments back in our schools; and a distinction few, if any, can match: he convinced my husband to give away a Saxophone. As I mentioned this morning, John has even donated, though not by choice, a staff member to the cause. It seems the woman who used to head up his Save the Music campaign was so inspired by the educators she met around the country, that she has gone back to school to become an educator herself.

It is my great honor to introduce John Sykes.

[Sykes speaks and you return to intro Ambach]

For the last 30 years, our next speaker has been part of every step forward for education...and pretty much held every job. He's been a teacher, principal, superintendent, state commissioner. And, he's done it all with graciousness, steady vision, and exemplary leadership. Now, as the Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, he is helping to steer the Arts Education Partnership to great success...and I'm so pleased that he is here to tell us more about it today. I am thrilled to introduce, Gordon Ambach.

[Ambach speaks and you return to intro Valerie and Ken Cohen]

Our next speakers have been involved with our public school system for their entire lives. They are products of public schools. They are parents of two public school students, and they are powerful voices for the arts in their school districts. [In fact, their district is featured in the best practices report I mentioned earlier.] No couple probably has a clearer sense of what parental involvement in education means: Ken is a school board member of Queens District 25 and Valerie is the President of the PTA at Public School 154. It is my great honor to introduce Valerie and Ken Cohen.

[Cohens speak and you return to intro Andrew Rose and Fillmore Arts Center Band]

The only way to really understand the arts is to experience them...and I have a feeling all of us are in for a real treat. The Fillmore Arts Center Jazz Band is supported by the Thelonius Monk Institute of Jazz, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and the NEA. Its members are all in school arts programs. And its music has touched the lives of people in D.C. and all over the region. Here to introduce the band and tell us what music has meant to him is Andrew Rose. A graduate of the Fillmore Arts Center, he is now a senior at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts. Please welcome Andrew Rose.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
NATIONAL HISPANIC FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS
SEPTEMBER 22, 1998

Thank you, Jimmy. It's a great pleasure to join all of you tonight -- and I want to thank everyone here for making this evening -- and the progress it celebrates -- possible: Members of Congress; members of the entertainment industry; corporate leaders (including Richard Parsons, President of Time/Warner Inc -- and the recipient of the 1998 Raul Julia Award for Excellence); members of the Administration; and all of the friends of the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts. Thank you for recognizing the important roles all of you can --and must -- play in bringing more opportunities to Hispanic performers and artists.

I want to offer a special tribute to Jimmy [Smits] -- not only for that kind introduction -- but most of all for what you are doing on and off the screen to lift up the lives of Hispanic Americans in this country. At the ballot box and the box office, you are raising the voice of the Hispanic community -- and serving as a role model to us all.

I remember when you first told me about the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts at a White House event last year -- and was so pleased to have been able to join you at your first Gala Fundraising Dinner a year ago. I am even more pleased to hear about the remarkable progress you have made in such a short time. I want to thank you -- and Felix Sanchez, Esai [EE-SIGH] Morales and Sonia Braga -- for the time, and energy, and passion that you have brought to the Foundation and its work.

After clearing so many professional hurdles and knocking down stereotype after stereotype to get where you are today -- there are some who would be tempted to rest on their laurels. But as pioneers in your fields, you are doing what American pioneers have always done -- you are making sure the doors you have forced open stay open -- and get wider and wider for every generation.

As the boundless gifts and talents of the people in this room can attest -- we have much to celebrate tonight. There's an explosion of Hispanic culture -- from the streets to dance clubs to recording studios to the movie screen to curtain calls on Broadway. And the singular grace, style, swing -- and smile -- of Sammy Sosa has almost made the world stand still -- and shown the extraordinary power of one individual to raise hopes -- and unleash dreams. (As a Cub's fan -- I couldn't resist.)

This is a time of such great possibilities for the Latino community. You are the fastest growing ethnic group in the nation. There are now over 10 million Hispanic children under 18 -- and in only a few years -- Hispanics will become the largest minority group in the country.

Never before have you been in a stronger position to improve your families; your community, and your nation. Never before has there been such a need to promote positive role models in our communities -- particularly for our children. Never before has the work that you are doing at the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts been so important.

America's greatest strength has always been the rich diversity of its people -- which touches and enriches every aspect of our lives. The arts in particular have helped us understand the beliefs and cultures that are different from our own -- and appreciate the common bonds that bind us together.

Yet as you know all too well -- some of the most powerful forces in our world today -- the images we see on our television and movie screens -- don't reflect the contributions and talents of all Americans. And we know that those images -- which for so long have either distorted or ignored Hispanic culture -- have had a particularly harsh impact on our young people's sense of self worth. As Victor Luna, a 14-year old Latino, said recently: "A lot of Latino kids look up to black or white people because that's the only thing they see on TV. There are no Latino people for them to look up to."

That's why the work of this Foundation -- to improve how Hispanics and other minorities are portrayed in film and the media -- and how they're represented behind the camera -- and in the board rooms -- is so critical today.

We've seen what can happen when young people are exposed to the arts -- and given a chance to follow a career -- and make a difference. I've heard about how Rene Lavan [LE-VAHN] fled Cuba at the age of 11 with his parents in a 49-foot boat -- as they sought freedom and a better life for their children. After having difficulties adjusting to his new life and school -- Lavan discovered the world of acting. He is now a popular actor in a daytime drama -- and starred in an internationally successful film about life in his native Cuba.

Kamar [Ka-MAR] de los Reyes [RAY-AS]-- was born in Puerto Rico -- and was only four when his father -- a Cuban-born drummer -- gave him his first trumpet. He became a musical child prodigy -- playing alongside such legends as Dizzy Gillespie -- and is now a film and TV actor.

These young, up-and-coming stars are committed to more than advancing their careers. They are also determined to advance the lives and careers of a new generation of Hispanic artists and actors. And thanks to the work of the Foundation -- their remarkable success stories will become more commonplace -- as more young Hispanic actors and artists get the encouragement and training they need to pursue their talents -- both in front of and behind the camera.

I want to offer a special welcome and congratulations to the talented young people here tonight -- the recipients of the National Hispanic Foundation on the Arts scholarships. You are not only the next generation of artists -- you are the next generation of leaders. And we welcome you here this evening.

I want to commend the Foundation for awarding you and the other 23 students scholarships to America's leading schools (University of Southern California; UCLA; and Yale, Columbia, and New York Universities.) With these opportunities, you will not only transform your own lives -- but ours as well.

I've read the essays some of you wrote to apply for this scholarship -- and was struck by the story of Joe Sanchez. He's in his second year of the masters program in acting at Columbia University, but he has other gifts to offer as well. In Chicago's Mexican American community -- he tutored students in acting -- and took pleasure in seeing -- in his words -- "young people freed by the acting exercises ... and beginning to understand themselves in a new way."

If America's children are to live up to the extraordinary possibilities and opportunities now available to them -- then we must drive home the message -- in our films and media coverage -- that they have something valuable to contribute; that they are part of the solution -- not the problem. And I believe our scholarship honorees have a special role to play in helping to create those positive images and role models for the next generation.

The challenge before all of us is daunting -- because we know that America will never realize its full promise unless All Americans are given the opportunity to realize theirs. And I'm pleased that this Administration has been such a strong partner with the Hispanic community to open up those opportunities -- particularly for our young people. We have:

- ** made an unprecedented commitment to boost the educational opportunities for Hispanic children -- (\$600 million request for the Hispanic Education Action Plan to improve reading and writing skills; also increased funding for bilingual and immigrant education by 35%);

- ** provided \$24 billion for health care coverage to millions of uninsured children -- and many of those covered will be Latino children.

- ** created over 12.3 million new jobs -- 40% of which are filled by Hispanics, and raised the minimum wage -- directly benefitting 1.6 million Hispanic workers;

- ** More than doubled small business loans to Hispanic Entrepreneurs;

- ** continued to fight for fair and accurate census -- (the 1990 census missed 8.4 million people -- and Hispanics were undercounted by 5%.)

This President has also changed the face of government -- by appointing the most diverse Cabinet and Administration in history: Hispanic leaders include: Bill Richardson -- our UN Ambassador to the United Nations and now Secretary of Energy; Cabinet members Henry Cisneros and Frederico Pena; SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez; top staff -- Janet Murguia -- Deputy of the white House Legislative Affairs office -- and Maria Eschaveste -- the President's deputy chief of staff. He's also appointed more Hispanics to the federal bench than the past 2 presidents combined.

And speaking of commitments -- I want to underscore that this President will never back down on his commitment to federal funding of the arts -- which as he says -- "are crucial to our creative spirit as a nation." And I'm pleased that the funding for the National Endowment for the Arts this year -- while not all that we asked for -- is looking promising.

All of you know better than I the challenges that lie ahead -- to break down the barriers that are holding back full minority participation in all aspects of American life. But we also know that this country has survived and thrived for more than two centuries because people have always imagined -- through our poetry, our music, our dreams -- that there was a better future. "Si lo guieres -- si se puede" -- If you want it, it can be done."

By working to bring more Hispanic faces, voices, and talents to the stage and screen; and by increasing Hispanic ownership in the broadcast and entertainment industries -- you are not only opening up doors and erasing stereotypes. You are helping to create the next generation of leaders. And perhaps most important, you are moving us closer to our ideals -- to become what the President calls "One America" in the 21st century.

Thank you for what all of you have done -- and will continue to do -- to ensure that the remarkable talents and contributions of the Hispanic community are reflected in the artistic and cultural institutions of our nation; and also in our board rooms, our classrooms; our courtrooms and in the halls of our elected representatives. And most importantly -- in the dreams our young people aspire to every day.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

DRAFT REMARKS AT THE DOWNTOWN ARTS SUMMIT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MAY 5, 1998

[Acknowledgments -- Mrs. Chretien, Doug Waddell and the entire Canadian Embassy for hosting us in this spectacular building. Mayor Barry; Bob Peck; Calvin Cafritz; Jim Gibson and the Downtown Arts Committee; Alexander Garvin; Lois Weisberg; Marjorie Rendell; Carol Brown, who will talk about the role the arts played in revitalizing their cities; the Federal City Council for your tireless efforts in organizing this event; Carol Thompson Cole, who will speak later; and the Duke Ellington Choir and Brenden Conway for your gift of music.]

I am honored to join you this afternoon. As we listened to those extraordinary performances by the next generation of D.C. musicians, I thought about a wonderful friend of the arts, who we lost this weekend. No one cared more than Patrick Hayes about filling this city with the sounds and sights and spirit of great art. Now, if he were here...for more than five minutes...we would have undoubtedly heard an odd word -- EINO, which stood for "Everybody In, Nobody Out." That was Patrick's way of saying that, when it comes to promoting the arts, when it comes to improving the quality of life in D.C., everybody needs to be at the table. He would have been very proud of this gathering...proud of all you've accomplished together, but mindful, as all of us are, of how far we have yet to go to

bring the arts into a living downtown.

For our family, one of the greatest privileges of living in Washington has been the opportunity to experience the diversity of art and music and sculpture and dance that graces this city -- and has been supported by Presidents throughout history. I'm told that Abraham Lincoln ordered work to go forward on the Capitol Dome during the Civil War. FDR dedicated the National Gallery of Art in 1941, when the world was engulfed by war. These leaders, President Kennedy said, "understood that the life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction in the life of a nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose, and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilization."

That is why, at a time when the NEA has just survived its strongest challenge from Congress, my husband has made it clear that the Federal government must continue to support the arts. It's why we've made the celebration of American culture an integral part of our White House Millennium activities, as we honor the past and imagine the future...which is exactly what we're doing today.

Because in the year 2000, we will also celebrate the 200th anniversary of the

White House, the Library of Congress, and D.C.'s role as our nation's capital. The story of the last 200 years is, in many ways, the story of dreams borne of inspiration and reached with old-fashioned hard work and team work.

On the district's 100th birthday, we remember the McMillan Commission's vision for a monumental center of Washington. A vision inspired by the beautiful city movement. A vision that has largely been realized in the greatest concentration of museums and galleries in the world.

In 1961, we remember President Kennedy's dream of a Pennsylvania Avenue that would be turned into America's Main Street. When you walk along Pennsylvania Avenue today, what you see is a wonderful mix of historic preservation, residential development, the arts, open spaces and streetscapes. In a few years it will be done...and you will see a bridge between the Mall and Downtown, which is what the Pennsylvania Avenue Plan envisioned.

Now, my husband and I are sort of partial to bridge metaphors. But bridges are only helpful if people actually want to get to the other side. So, today, as we look to the 200th anniversary of our capital city, we have many challenges. We

must create schools that set high standards for children and teachers alike. We need safe communities where parents can get jobs and children are free to play outside.

And, we must create a downtown that make people want to reach the other end of the bridge -- a place for tourists and residents, for small children and older Americans, a place to eat and play and work, to be entertained and inspired. A downtown worthy of a world-class city.

When I met late last year at the White House with leaders from businesses, civic organizations, foundations, and arts organizations, we talked about the projects already underway to restore economic vitality to downtown Washington...from the new MCI center to a revitalized Chinatown. We talked about the importance of the federal government's continuing commitment to our city's nerve center. And I'm pleased that this year, the President's budget targets \$100 million to improve the district's economic development infrastructure. This includes \$50 million for a locally-chartered economic development corporation and

\$25 million for the Metro Station at the proposed Washington Convention Center.

And, most important, on that day, we talked about the role that the arts must play in lifting up downtown D.C. The arts must be central -- not peripheral -- to rebuilding downtown and lifting up the entire district...just as they are central to who we are....they must be woven into retail, offices, entertainment, restaurants, hotels, schools, and child care centers.

There are still some who say the arts are a luxury we can't afford. We must be clear: they are a necessity we must afford. It is a necessity to inspire the creativity and challenge the minds of every generation.

I have seen junior high students in southeast Washington, participating in what is called a "poetry slam." Almost like Olympic Gymnastics, the students take turns reading their own poems -- poems about their names, the plight of a homeless man, the legacy of Duke Ellington, and their fears and hopes about the future. They talked about how writing poetry helped them put their anger on the paper instead of acting it out. How it helped give them confidence and express thoughts they never knew existed.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
Millennium Initiatives

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The National Endowment for the Arts is helping to lead the nation in celebrating the year 2000 through funding the very best in performing, literary and visual arts nationwide. During 1998, the NEA will award nearly \$3 million in Millennium funds to support projects in all fifty states and the District of Columbia, which highlight the agency's strong commitment to honoring the past and creating the future.

Each Millennium Project works to engage the community in preserving existing artworks and commissioning new works, thereby resulting in a greater awareness and appreciation of our cultural heritage.

Announced by the President and the First Lady, **The Favorite Poem Project** will receive \$500,000 from the NEA and create an audio and video archive of over 1,000 Americans reading aloud their favorite poems. The archive will include not only readers from all fifty states from a variety of ages and backgrounds, but eminent Americans such as the President, members of Congress and other civic leaders.

- As one of the Endowment's largest public-private Millennium Initiatives, the NEA is proud to join with Target Stores in providing funds to **SOS/ - Save Outdoor Sculpture** (totaling \$1.4 million) which will restore artistically and historically significant outdoor public sculpture nationwide and help to ensure the preservation of our cultural heritage by providing lasting gifts for future generations.
- Reaching rural, underserved and small towns across the country, **Continental Harmony** will place composers in residence during 1999-2000. Directed by Minneapolis based American Composers' Forum, this project will engage both the community and composer by supporting the commission of new works for annual festivals, town celebrations and school bands.
- In addition, later this summer, the Endowment will announce a number of other major Millennium Initiatives serving communities throughout the country, including those in the field of dance, media, visual arts, and music.

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