

Public Papers of the Presidents

April 20, 1999

CITE: 35 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 681

LENGTH: 1741 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Former Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany

BODY:

The President. Secretary Cohen, Mr. Berger, distinguished Ambassadors, Senator Roth, Congressman Pickett, other Members of the Congress, retired Members of Congress, present and former members of the diplomatic corps, and to our German and American exchange students who are here: Welcome to the White House.

Today it is my privilege to confer America's highest civilian honor on a great statesman of the 20th century, the Federal Republic of Germany's longest serving Chancellor, Helmut Kohl.

President Kennedy first saw the design for the Medal of Freedom on July 3, 1963, just a week after he had gone to Berlin and challenged a new generation of Germans to forge a future of freedom and unity, of European integration and American partnership. No one did more to fulfill the hopes that President Kennedy expressed on that trip than Helmut Kohl.

Very few non-Americans have received the Medal of Freedom. The last year a foreign leader was honored was 1991, when President Bush presented the award to Margaret Thatcher. That day we celebrated a partnership among nations and leaders that helped to end the cold war with a victory for freedom.

Today we honor a partnership dedicated to building a 21st century Europe that can preserve the freedom and peace and find genuine unity for the first time. Today we honor the leader whose values and vision have made that possible.

In 1991 the world was very different. The Berlin Wall had come down, but a profound gulf separated the eastern half of Europe from its more affluent neighbors to the West. Everyone agreed that something had to be done to bring Europe together, but not everyone had a clear idea of what that something should be.

Some people thought NATO should go the way of the Warsaw Pact, and that in its place we had to build something new, untested, unproven, a community that embraced everyone but imposed no true obligations on anyone. Others felt that our challenges in Eastern Germany and Eastern Europe consisted simply of sending assistance and plenty of advice. They were in no hurry to open our institutions to nations and people they thought of as distant and foreign.

But Helmut Kohl understood that we needed a bold vision, backed by a practical blueprint, grounded in the institutions that had served us so well for so long. He said, "We are all called upon to construct a new architecture for the European house, a permanent and just peace order for our continent."

Consider the splendid house that has risen since then. Germany is united. Europe has achieved economic and monetary union. NATO has three new members. The European Union soon will embrace nations from the Baltics to the Balkans. What a remarkable few years it has been.

The story of Helmut Kohl is the story of 20th century Germany. He was born in 1930 in Ludwigshafen, a small city on the Rhine. He saw firsthand the ravages of nazism. His brother, Walter, perished in the war that tore Europe apart. But the young man, then called "der Lange," the tall one, was quick to see the possibilities of hope and rebirth in the postwar world.

Through the Marshall plan, he saw firsthand what Europeans and Americans could do together to spread good will and support for democracy among young people.

When he was only 16, he was one of the very first people to join the Christian Democratic Union. Indeed, his membership number was 00246. And 50 years ago, at the age of 19, he and his friends were actually briefly detained at the French border for causing what must be the friendliest border incident in history: they tried to remove some of the barriers between the countries and carried banners in support of Franco-German friendship and European unity. "Der Lange" was not your everyday teenager.

As Helmut Kohl's political star rose, he never wavered from those convictions. He believed young people were crucial to the future. He still believes that. And we thank him, and we thank the young Germans and Americans who are here to honor him.

He championed the Franco-German friendship as the linchpin of the new Europe, a friendship crystallized in the unforgettable moment he and Francois Mitterrand clasped hands at Verdun. He always maintained that the new architecture of Europe must be built on the foundation of transatlantic partnership. And he reached out to Russia, to Ukraine, to the other former Communist countries, to make them a part of 21st century Europe.

He served as Chancellor for 16 years. Future historians will say Europe's 21st century began on his watch. In the months that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, he conceived a generous vision for Germany's unification and for a new partnership between the West and a democratic Russia. He saw the imperative of Europe's unification, politically and economically. He saw the need to embrace other nations into Europe's family, putting Germany in the center, not on the edge any longer, of a united, democratic Europe, a Europe where borders do not limit possibilities and where nationhood is a source of pride, not a crucible of conflict.

It is to protect that vision that the NATO allies are in Kosovo today, to defeat the cynical vision embodied by Mr. Milosevic in which the most primitive hatreds and brutal oppression are more important than mutual respect and common progress.

Anyone who respects the legacy of Helmut Kohl knows that for peace to survive in Europe our alliance of democracies must stand, and stand together, against dictators who exploit human differences to extend power. And we must stay true to our vision long after we achieve military goals. Germany was buoyed by hope through the Marshall plan; Greece and Turkey, rescued by the Truman doctrine;

central Europe, helped by the West in this decade, after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Those were wise investments. We must be equally farsighted toward southeastern Europe.

Among all the success stories of the later 20th century, none is more dramatic or instructive than the rebirth of Germany as a free and democratic nation. Germany's story has taught the world two profound truths: First, that it is possible for a people who love light and laughter to descend into the blackest darkness; and second, that it is also possible for a people to return to the light and lead others by their example.

Germany is proof that war and ethnic hatred are not inevitable; that they do not represent a permanent aspect of the human condition; that the unacceptable is not written by fate into our destiny. But we can and must remain willing to act, because the work of building a new world never ends. That is the lesson of America, the lesson of Germany, the lesson of the 20th century.

In 3 days the leaders of NATO and its partner nations will gather in Washington to mark the 50th anniversary of our alliance and to chart NATO's future path. The challenge we face in Kosovo has demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that America and Europe need an alliance that combines our strength to protect our values and project stability eastward in Europe; an alliance ready to meet new challenges to our security, with allies able to contribute to the effort; an alliance open to new democracies making the right choices; an alliance that continues to work with Russia despite tensions that arise when we disagree.

As Helmut understood so well, our vision of a Europe whole and free will not succeed unless it embraces a partnership with democratic Russia. And it will not succeed unless it is embraced by Russia. That is the kind of alliance that must and will emerge from the Washington summit.

I can think of no better way to begin this week of allied solidarity than by honoring Helmut Kohl. When I was elected President, Helmut had been Chancellor for a decade. Seven years later, I find myself the senior leader of the G -- 8. In countless ways, I learned from him. In Bonn, I once told an audience that my opinion on most issues could be summed up in four words: I agree with Helmut. [Laughter] Those words have never failed me.

After our first meeting in 1993, he summed it up when he said, "the chemistry is right." Well, the chemistry was right every time we met: Right when we planned NATO enlargement; right when we discussed our shared hopes for Russia; right when we talked about multilateral issues over a multi-course dinner at Helmut's favorite Washington restaurant, Filomena's -- [laughter] -- even right when he made me eat Saumagen -- [laughter] -- and in spite of that -- [laughter] -- I hope our dinners continue far into the new century.

With the 21st century breaking over the horizon, we can look back on the 20th Century, with its grave threats to our common humanity and its great leaders -- Churchill, Roosevelt, de Gaulle -- for unifying Germany and Europe, for strengthening the Western alliance and extending the hand of friendship to Russia, Helmut Kohl ranks with them. His place in history is unassailable. And he has been a true friend of the United States.

In 1989, the year of Germany's rebirth, we heard Beethoven's ninth symphony as if for the first time, with Schiller's "Ode to Joy" capturing the feeling of a world coming together. In that same poem, ironically written just after the American Revolution, Schiller wrote that the circle of universal freedom begins very simply with the friendship linking two people.

Helmut, President Kennedy stirred the world at the Berlin Wall when he said, along with freedom-loving people everywhere, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Today a grateful United States says to you, "Du bist ein Americaner."

In countless ways you have been an American. It is my honor to award you the Medal of Freedom.

Commander, read the citation.

[At this point, Comdr. Michael M. Gilday, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medal. Chancellor Kohl then made brief remarks.]

The President. I would like to invite all of you to join us in the State Dining Room for a reception in honor of Chancellor Kohl.

Thank you very much, and we're adjourned.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 12, 1999

Public Papers of the Presidents

March 17, 1999

CITE: 35 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 458

LENGTH: 2129 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to George J. Mitchell

BODY:

The President. Well, thank you very much. I am very grateful for your warm reception. I take it you had a good time inside. [Laughter] You not only put me out of the White House, you put all of yourselves out, too, because we wanted to be here where we could sit as one, to participate in this very important ceremony.

I thank you, Taoiseach, Celia. I thank all the party leaders who are here: Mr. Trimble, Mr. Mallon, John Hume, Gerry Adams, all the others. I thank Mo Mowlam for her tireless work. And the members of the Irish Government who are here, I thank all of them.

Mo Mowlam has got a great sense of humor, so I'm going to tell you a story she told me upstairs, and I'll never live over it, I know. But she said one night she spent the night here with Hillary and me, and she got in rather late. We stayed up rather later speaking. And then she went to sleep, and something happened, and she had to get on the phone early in the morning, London time, which is in the middle of the night our time. And the operator called back and said that she was having trouble finding Secretary Mowlam; she was in Mr. Lincoln's bedroom. [Laughter] She said it was quite obvious the operator did not know who Mr. Lincoln was or that he had been deceased for quite some time. [Laughter] But she at least felt that she was in good company. [Laughter]

I would like to thank the members of our administration who are here and the rather astonishing number of Members of Congress who are here. I'd like to ask all the Members of the United States Congress who are here to please stand, wherever you are. [Applause] Thank you. Many have come with their spouses. Congressman King came with about 15 members of his family -- [laughter] -- represents about 5 percent of the total brood. [Laughter] We're delighted to see them all.

I'd also like to say a special word of welcome to Senator Mitchell and to Heather and to all of George's family and friends who are here. As all of you know, in addition to the entertainment, which we'll talk about in a moment, our primary purpose here is to give me the opportunity, in front of the Irish-American community and so many of our friends from Ireland, north and south, to present the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Senator George Mitchell. [Applause] Thank you.

I really don't know if this is going to mean anything to George anymore; he's gotten so many honors lately. He can't walk two blocks down any street without someone throwing some sort of trophy at him -- [laughter] -- Irish-American of the Year, Honorary Degree from Dublin's Trinity College. He even got an honorary knighthood from the Queen of England. George Lucas offered to give

him "the Force" -- [laughter] -- but he said "the Force" was already with him. [Laughter]

Few Americans have served with such distinction in so many different capacities: prosecutor, judge, Senator, Presidential envoy, chair of Northern Ireland's historic peace talks. His, as most of you know, is a great American story. His father, born to Irish immigrants, adopted by Lebanese immigrants; his mother herself born in Lebanon. She worked a night shift at a textile mill; his father cleaned the buildings at Colby College. They stressed education and hard work, and George supplemented his scholarships with jobs as steward, dorm proctor, construction worker, night watchman, truck driver, and insurance adjustor.

Now we all know why he fought so hard for the working people of our country. At one time or another, he did everything that they do all day, every day.

I've heard George say on more than one occasion that his favorite part of being a Federal judge was administering the citizenship oath to new American citizens. He said he was very moved when one of them told him, "I came here because in America, everybody has a chance."

Well, this son of immigrants has done his dead-level best to make sure that in our country everybody does have a chance. And he replaced a remarkable man, Senator Edmund Muskie, in the Senate and in just 8 years became the majority leader.

In our time together, he pushed through crucial laws that enabled us to turn around our horrendous deficit, get our budget in order, and start to grow our economy again, to give tax breaks to working people, to broaden voter registration, to give 20 million people, now, access to the family and medical leave law, to put 100,000 police on the street, protect religious freedom, clean up the environment, stand up for our veterans. That's just a few of the things that he did.

When he announced his retirement, it was a bittersweet moment, for friends and colleagues wished him well but also knew we would miss him dearly in this town. And I devised a scheme, the dimensions of which George would only later appreciate. [Laughter] I think it is the only time in our long relationship where I outsmarted him, instead of the other way around. [Laughter]

I asked him to take a small, part-time commitment as my special economic adviser to Northern Ireland. [Laughter] Then the British and Irish Governments stepped in and asked him to chair talks on disarmament and then on bringing a comprehensive peace after a generation of bloodshed. The small, part-time commitment became more all-consuming than being Senate majority leader. I got even with him for leaving me. [Laughter]

He drew up principles of nonviolence, aimed at preventing further tragedies while the talks proceeded. In building common ground among longtime antagonists he was a patient listener when he needed to be and a decisive leader when he had to be. He earned the respect of all parties for fairness, integrity, and judgment. And he built the trust necessary to move toward an agreement.

Through more than 100 trips across the Atlantic, shall I say that again? -- through more than 100 trips across the Atlantic, he continued to press ahead

in the cause of peace. Northern Ireland learned what its sister and brothers knew from endless nights of cribbage, what his college basketball team-mates saw from their tenacious starting guard, what his fellow legislators learned on the Senate floor and on the tennis court, and what I learned as his friend and colleague: Don't be fooled by the calm demeanor; this guy is a ferocious competitor, determined to succeed.

During the course of this endeavor, George and Heather's son, Andrew, was born. George thought of Andrew, and also of the 61 children born in Northern Ireland on the same day. He wanted to champion their future as well, to give them the same chance for a good life he wanted for his own son.

What motivated George brought to mind for me a letter I read last summer at Omagh when, together, we met with survivors of the bombing there. It was sent to our then-Ambassador to Ireland, Jean Kennedy Smith, who is also with us tonight, and thank you, Jean.

I want to read this to you so you will understand from a personal point of view why I'm giving this medal to George tonight and why I want every person who is a part of this process to leave here tonight determined to get over this last hurdle and to remember that we do not have a day to waste. Easter is coming again. Good Friday is coming again.

We have to give an accounting of ourselves. So remember this: "Dear Ambassador, you may not know me. You may not even get this letter. But after yesterday's tragedy, I wanted to do something. I'm 29 years old, an Irishman to the very core of my being. But throughout my life, there has never been peace on this island. I never realized how precious peace could be until my wife gave birth to our daughter, Ashleen, 20 months ago. We don't want her to grow up in a society that is constantly waiting for the next atrocity, the next batch of young lives snuffed out by hatred and fear.

"Ashleen's name means 'vision' or 'dream,' and we have a dream of what Ireland might be like when she grows up. Ireland could be a place where dreams would come true, where people would achieve things never imagined before, where people would not be afraid of their neighbors. We know America has done much for Ireland and all we ask is that you keep trying. Please keep Ireland in mind because Ashleen and all Irish children need to be able to dream."

Well, my thanks go to the Taoiseach, to Prime Minister Blair, to Mo Mowlam, the leaders of the parties, our Government, but especially to my good friend George Mitchell, who never meant to sign on for quite the job he got but who did it as an act of love and devotion.

George, thank you for your service to our Nation. Thank you for your wisdom. Thank you for being so tenacious. Thank you for your friendship and for being a truly fine human being.

Major Everhart, read the citation.

[At this point, Maj. Carlton Everhart, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citation. The President then presented the medal, and George Mitchell made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you, George, for your service and your remarks tonight.

You know, when you stay in this work as long as Senator Mitchell and I have, you're not often moved by what other people in public life say. And even sometimes when you're moved, you doubt the ability of one person's words to move another. Tonight I think I can speak for all of us when I say we were genuinely moved by what George Mitchell said.

And I believe I can speak for all of us who are not parties and will have no direct say, that we hope and pray that they were moved and emboldened and redetermined by Senator Mitchell's words. I will say what I have said from the beginning: The United States will support all sides in Ireland that take honest steps for peace. And I hope and believe that the necessary steps can be taken before we pass another Good Friday.

Thank you very much.

Now, enough of this really too serious stuff. Now we're going to have St. Patrick's Day fun. Let me begin by thanking the performers who already have been entertaining you here and in the White House. Let me mention them all, and then I think we should give them a round of applause: the Irish Fire band and dancers from the O'Hare School of Irish Dance; the Culkin School of Traditional Irish Dance and The Next Generation Band; the harpists, Ellen James and Michael O'Hanlan; the Prince George's County Police Pipe Band; and the U.S. Marine Band Irish Ensemble. Thank you very much. Hillary and I appreciate it. [Applause]

There is another great performance ahead: Both Sides Now, music and spoken words celebrating the people of Northern Ireland. You will hear the great music from our friends Phil Coulter and James Galway, two of Ireland's and the world's great musicians. Last December they performed together in Oslo on a great day, the day John Hume and David Trimble received the Nobel Peace Prize.

They are joined by some familiar faces, Roma Downey and Aidan Quinn. We thank them for being here. And you will hear from the musicians of Different Drums of Ireland, whose sounds represent a melding of Ireland's traditions.

Finally, you will hear from a truly beautiful and remarkable young woman, Claire Gallagher. She lost her sight in the terrible bombing at Omagh, but she did not lose the vision and strength of her spirit and soul. And her mission for peace is powerful and clear.

Claire came here tonight with her parents, her siblings, her teacher, and we are genuinely honored to have her. Hillary was so moved by her before in Northern Ireland, and I can't say enough about my respect for what she has done to carry on with what will still be a genuinely remarkable life.

I thank all of our performers in advance. And again, I say I hope the music and the spirit embodied by the Irish who are here will also help to give us the strength and resolve to fulfill the final promises of the Good Friday accord.

Thank you, and God bless you

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. in a pavilion on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; Celia Larkin, who accompanied Prime Minister Ahern; First Minister

David Trimble and Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon of the Northern Ireland Assembly; Social Democratic and Labour Party leader John Hume; Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams; Queen Elizabeth II, Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Marjorie Mowlam of the United Kingdom; "Star Wars" creator George Lucas; and actors Roma Downey and Aidan Quinn. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Mitchell.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 13, 1999

Public Papers of the Presidents

January 15, 1998

CITE: 34 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 66

LENGTH: 3278 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom

BODY:

The President. Thank you very much. I want to begin with a warm welcome to all of our guests here, our honorees and their family members, members of the administration, Members of Congress, other distinguished officials.

It is fitting that today this ceremony occurs on the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who 21 years ago was granted this award by President Carter posthumously, to ensure that his legacy would live on. Until every child has the opportunity to live up to his or her God-given potential, free from want in a world at peace, Dr. King's work and our work is not yet done. He once said that "No social advance rolls on the wheels of inevitability." After 5 years in Washington, I know that is true. [Laughter] Humanity makes progress through decades of sweat and toil by dedicated individuals who give freely of themselves and who inspire others to do the same, the kind of heroic men and women we honor today.

All of our honorees has helped America to widen the circle of democracy by fighting for human rights, by righting social wrongs, by empowering others to achieve, by preserving our precious environment, by extending peace around the world. Every person here has done so by rising in remarkable ways to America's highest calling, the calling, as the First Lady said, of active citizenship.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I would like to bestow the Presidential Medal of Freedom on these courageous citizens. Let me say, as I begin, that I am grateful to all of them who are here and those who are not.

First, Arnie Aronson, who unfortunately is ill and is represented here by his wife, Annette, his son, Bernie, his granddaughter, Felicia. Arnie Aronson, a glowing symbol of the coalition of conscience linking black and white communities, began his career in civil rights in 1941 when he and A. Philip Randolph secured a landmark Executive order banning discrimination on the basis of race. He later cofounded the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, helping hundreds of disparate groups keep their eyes on the prize and speak with one booming voice. As the legendary leader Clarence Mitchell, Jr., said of him, "There would not have been a civil rights movement without the Leadership Conference, and there would not have been a Leadership Conference without Arnie Aronson."

Commander Huey, please read the citation.

[At this point, Comdr. Wes Huey, USN, Navy aide to the President, read the citation, and the President congratulated Mr. Aronson's family and presented the medal.]

The President. I never contradict my wife in public, but I couldn't help thinking when she said we were honoring 15 ordinary American citizens today, I thought, yes, people like Brooke Astor and David Rockefeller. [Laughter] But I say that to make this point: In some ways, we honor them more, because they certainly had other options. [Laughter] And that is important to remember.

At the age of 15, about eight decades ago, Brooke Astor wrote a wise poem. In that poem, an elderly man implores a young girl, "Take thy spade and take thine ax. Make the flowers bloom." With her legendary largesse and unequalled grace, she has made more flowers bloom than anyone, not only at such recognizable landmarks as the New York Public Library and the Metropolitan Museum of Art but also in forgotten homeless shelters, youth centers, and nursing homes. She is not only New York's unofficial First Lady, she has become America's guardian angel.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Ms. Astor and presented the medal.]

The President. In 1961, a young Air Force psychiatrist in New Orleans saw a 6-year-old black girl being heckled by an angry crowd. The girl -- Ruby Bridges was her name -- did not yell back but instead knelt down to pray. The doctor, Robert Coles, was greatly moved. From that moment on, he dedicated his life to healing racial wounds, aiding children in crisis, and inspiring Americans to answer the call of citizen service. As a Harvard professor and a prolific documentarian of the American spirit, he has been the beacon of social consciousness for more than two generations of Americans, from Robert Kennedy to the freshmen in college today. There is hardly a person I know who has ever read his books who has not been profoundly changed. Hillary and I are personally grateful to him just for those books, but his life has elevated the morality and the spirituality of the United States.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Dr. Coles and presented the medal.]

The President. Justin Dart literally opened the doors of opportunities to millions of our citizens by securing passage of one of the Nation's landmark civil rights laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act. Throughout his career, he has worn many hats, and he's wearing one of them today. [Laughter] At the University of Houston, he led bold efforts to promote integration. He went on to become, in his own words, "a full-time soldier in the trenches of justice," turning every State in the Nation to elevate disability rights to the mainstream of political discourse. He once said, "Life is not a game that requires losers." He has given millions a chance to win. He has also been my guide in understanding the needs of disabled Americans. And every time I see him, he reminds me of the power of heart and will. I don't know that I've ever known a braver person.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mr. Dart and presented the medal.]

The President. In the spring of 1942, a man fresh out of theology school sat down at the counter of Chicago's Jack Spratt Coffee Shop and ordered a doughnut. Because he was black, he was refused. Because his name was James Farmer, he did not give in. He and the other founders of the Congress of Racial Equality organized the Nation's first sit-in and launched an era of nonviolent protests for civil rights. He went on to help bring down Jim Crow by leading freedom rides, voter drives, and marches, enduring repeated beatings and jailings along the way. He has never sought the limelight and, until today, I frankly think he's never gotten the credit he deserves for the contribution he has made to the freedom of African-Americans and other minorities and their equal opportunities in America. But today he can't avoid the limelight, and his long-overdue recognition has come to pass.

Read the citation, Commander.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mr. Farmer and presented the medal.]

The President. In 1976 the Girl Scouts of America, one of our country's greatest institutions, was near collapse. Frances Hesselbein, a former volunteer from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, led them back, both in numbers and in spirit. She achieved not only the greatest diversity in the group's long history but also its greatest cohesion and, in so doing, made a model for us all. In her current role as the president of the Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management, she has shared her remarkable recipe for inclusion and excellence with countless organizations whose bottom line is measured not in dollars but in changed lives. Since Mrs. Hesselbein forbids the use of hierarchical words like "up" and "down" when she's around -- [laughter] -- I will call this pioneer for women, voluntarism, diversity, and opportunity not up but forward to be recognized.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mrs. Hesselbein and presented the medal.]

The President. In 1942 an ordinary American took an extraordinary stand. Fred Korematsu boldly opposed the forced internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. After being convicted for failing to report for relocation, Mr. Korematsu took his case all the way to the Supreme Court. The high court ruled against him. But 39 years later, he had his conviction overturned in Federal court, empowering tens of thousands of Japanese-Americans and giving him what he said he wanted most of all, the chance to feel like an American once again. In the long history of our country's constant search for justice, some names of ordinary citizens stand for millions of souls: Plessy, Brown, Parks. To that distinguished list, today we add the name of Fred Korematsu.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mr. Korematsu and presented the medal.]

The President. As our mutual friend Mack McLarty once said, "Receiving advice from Sol Linowitz on international diplomacy is like getting trumpet lessons from the Angel Gabriel." [Laughter] Sol Linowitz has answered his call -- his

Nation's call many, many times. Over his distinguished career, he has always been willing to extend the hand of peace, freedom, and prosperity to our neighbors all over the world. With his admired style of quiet and conciliatory diplomacy, he has helped President Carter negotiate the Panama Canal treaties. He made great strides in the peace process in the Middle East. He worked to provide aid to starving Cambodians. He has been our administration's guiding spirit for expanding cooperation throughout our hemisphere. If every world leader had half the vision Sol Linowitz does, we'd have about a tenth as many problems as we've got in this whole world today. He's also lead here at home, working to address problems of racism and poverty, always giving generously of his time no matter how busy he is. Sol Linowitz is an American patriot of the highest order.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mr. Linowitz and presented the medal.]

The President. When Wilma Mankiller was 10, she and her family were relocated from Cherokee lands in Oklahoma to San Francisco. But it was in San Francisco during the civil rights era that she found her voice and a belief in the power to make change. Later, Wilma Mankiller returned to Oklahoma and became chief of the Cherokee Nation. During her two terms in office -- and I might add, she won reelection by 82 percent -- [laughter] -- she was not only the guardian of the centuries-old Cherokee heritage but a revered leader who built a brighter and healthier future for her nation. When she stepped down as chief, the Cherokee Nation wept. We know today's honor will bring tears of joy to many in both our Nations.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Ms. Mankiller and presented the medal.]

The President. For Mardy Murie, wilderness is personal. She and her husband, Olaus, spent their honeymoon -- listen to this -- on a 550-mile dogsled expedition -- [laughter] -- through the Brooks Mountain Range of Alaska -- fitting for a couple whose love for each other was matched only by their love of nature. And they certainly must have known each other better after the trip was over. [Laughter] After her husband died, Mrs. Murie built on their five decades of work together. She became the prime mover in the creation of one of America's great national treasures, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and blazed trails for generations of conservationists. Today, amidst the fir and spruce of the high Tetons, she shares her wisdom with everyone who passes by, from ordinary hikers to the President and the First Lady, inspiring us all to conserve our pristine lands and preserve her glorious legacy.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mrs. Murie and presented the medal.]

The President. In 1970 Mario Obledo received a complaint that a public swimming pool in Texas was barring Mexican-Americans at the gate. He decided to travel 200 miles to take a swim. [Laughter] He was turned away and he filed

suit. When Mr. Obledo won, even the joy in the courthouse could not match that of Mexican-American children whose civil rights had been defended as, finally, they had a chance to jump into that public pool. As cofounder of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund and the National Hispanic Bar Association, as chairman of the Rainbow Coalition, Mario Obledo has expanded opportunity for Americans of every race and ethnic background. Through the force of law and the power of the vote, he has enhanced the character and condition of America.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mr. Obledo and presented the medal.]

The President. After he was decorated on the beaches of Normandy and had begun to serve as a law clerk for Justice Felix Frankfurter, Elliot Richardson had a strange request for his distinguished boss. The brilliant young Renaissance man asked if he could have an uninterrupted hour every morning to read poetry. Alas, he was refused. [Laughter] That effort failed, but little else has failed in Elliot Richardson's versatile, indefatigable career. He gave courageous and deeply moral service to our Nation as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare; Secretary of Defense; Ambassador to the United Kingdom; Secretary of Commerce -- where he actually painted his own official portrait -- [laughter] -- and of course, as Attorney General, where on one difficult Saturday night, he saved the Nation from a constitutional crisis with his courage and moral clarity. No public servant is more beloved by those who have served him. No public servant has shown greater respect for the Constitution he has served. And it is my great honor to award him the Medal of Freedom today.

Commander, please read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mr. Richardson and presented the medal.]

The President. Rockefeller is a name that resonates throughout American history. It means not only private success and wealth but also an abiding sense of public responsibility. David Rockefeller is the standard-bearer of this family and this tradition for making unprecedented commitments to biomedical research, to sending tens of thousands of retired executives -- all volunteers -- to developing nations in need of advice and skills. In every region of the world, heads of state seek his counsel. But whether he is addressing the King of Spain or a fellow beetle collector he meets by chance, he treats everyone with exactly the same impeccable courtesy and respect, as I learned when I met him a good while before anyone but my mother thought I could become President. [Laughter] David Rockefeller is a gentleman, a statesman, a scholar, and most important, a genuine humanitarian of the likes our Nation has rarely seen.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mr. Rockefeller and presented the medal.]

The President. You know, I hate to break the gravity of the moment, but I have now something else to thank you for. David, I've been wondering how we can get this ceremony out into the popular consciousness. And with the mention in

the citation of the Trilateral Commission, I know we're going to be on talk radio all over America today, so thank you very much. [Laughter]

Albert Shanker illuminated our Nation's path toward educating our children with devastating honesty, sharp wit, and profound wisdom. He was one of the most important teachers of the 20th century. In 1983, when the "Nation At Risk" report challenged us to do far more to raise educational standards for all our children, Al Shanker was one of the very first to answer the call. That began for me, a young Governor who cared a lot about education, one of the most remarkable working relationships of my entire life. For Al Shanker was for me and so many others a model, a mentor, a friend, a leader of immense stature who always spoke his mind, no matter how unpopular the thought. We miss him dearly, but we are comforted to know that many others carry on his mission and that his wife, Edie, is here with us today to accept this award, which he so richly deserves, in his honor.

Commander, read the citation.

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Mrs. Shanker and presented the medal.]

The President. These days, Elmo, "Bud" Zumwalt introduces himself as "a former sailor." That's sort of like calling Henry Ford a former car salesman. [Laughter] In 1970 Bud Zumwalt became the youngest man in our country's history to rise to the rank of Commander of Naval Operations, the Navy's top post. There, he earned billing as the Navy's most popular leader since World War II for his bold efforts to modernize Navy life. He is a genuine patriot with an astonishing life story that includes a remarkable wife, whom we met a year or two ago in Russia -- in China, I'm sorry. But more than most Americans who have served our country with distinction, Admiral Zumwalt paid a deeply personal price for his leadership of the Navy during the Vietnam War, for his son, a junior officer in the war, died of a cancer linked to his exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam. The remarkable thing was Admiral Zumwalt's response. He dedicated himself to fighting for those with war-related ailments. He established the first national marrow donor program to help cancer patients in need. He never stopped fighting for the interests, the rights, and the dignity of those soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines and their families. Hillary and I have been deeply blessed to know Bud Zumwalt and his wife, Mouza, and their family very well. Yes, he is a former sailor. He is also one of the greatest models of integrity and leadership and genuine humanity our Nation has every produced.

Commander, please read the citation.

Did you think I was going to change my mind? [Laughter]

[Commander Huey read the citation, and the President congratulated Admiral Zumwalt and presented the medal.]

The President. Before we move to the State Dining Room for the reception in honor of our awardees, I'd like to close with a brief note about the future.

Hillary and I and the Vice President -- indeed, our entire administration -- are going to be working hard in the coming months to help the American people imagine what the 21st century can bring. As of today, that new century is

just a little more than 700 days away -- which, as you reflect on the remarkable lives we have celebrate today, is not a lot of time.

But I went back and checked. It's about the same amount of time that, from 1961 to 1963, an active citizen named King helped James Meredith go to college, stood up to Bull Connor, wrote a letter from a jail in Birmingham, helped to organize the March on Washington, and gave a little speech -- his main line was "I have a dream." Not a bad 700 days' work.

We must resolve to use our time just as wisely. As we have learned today from the remarkable lives of the people we celebrate, some of whom span nearly this entire century, even a long, long life doesn't take long to live, and passes in the flash of an eye. They have shown us that if we live it well, we can leave this Earth better for our children.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 11, 1998

Public Papers of the Presidents

September 9, 1996

CITE: 32 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1687

LENGTH: 1673 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom

BODY:

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. It's a great pleasure for Hillary and for me to welcome all of you here, but especially our distinguished honorees and their families; Members of Congress who are here, Senator Lugar, Congresswoman Collins, Congressman Conyers, Congressman Dellums; Secretary Christopher, Secretary Shalala, and Secretary Cisneros.

We're here to award the highest honor our Nation can bestow on a citizen, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. President Harry Truman established these awards as a tribute to those who helped to win the fight for democracy in World War II. President Kennedy elevated the medals to honor contributions by citizens to all aspects of American life.

Although we confer these medals today on worthy individuals, we recognize even more than individual achievement. We honor the American values that unite us as a people: opportunity and responsibility; a community in which all have a part; determination, dedication, and loyalty; faith, courage, and country. We are honoring renewed faith in the freedom that has brought this Nation this far and the freedom that will sustain us into the next century.

William Faulkner once said that we must be free not because we claim freedom but because we practice it. The 11 men and women we honor today have raised the practice of freedom to new heights. I would like to introduce each of them to you now.

As the Archbishop of Chicago, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin is one of our Nation's most beloved men and one of Catholicism's great leaders. When others have pulled people apart, Cardinal Bernardin has sought common ground. In a time of transition in his church, his community, his Nation, and the world, he has held fast to his mission to bring out the best in humanity and to bring people together. Throughout his career, he has fought tirelessly against social injustice, poverty, and ignorance. Without question, he is both a remarkable man of God and a man of the people.

Fifteen years ago, James Brady was at President Reagan's side when a would-be assassin nearly killed them both with a handgun he had purchased at a gun shop. But Jim Brady is living proof that courage and determination were stronger than the assassin's bullet. Since that day, Jim and his wonderful wife, Sarah, who is with us today, have waged a moral and political battle to save lives and keep handguns out of the hands of criminals. His life is a testament to bravery, and every American family and every American child is safer because of it.

I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that Millard Fuller has literally revolutionized the concept of philanthropy. Twenty years ago he founded Habitat For Humanity to provide decent homes for disadvantaged people. To fund his

plan he didn't ask people for their money; instead, he asked for the sweat of their brows. In return he gave them something no tax deduction ever could, tangible proof that they had improved someone else's life with a home.

Hillary, the Vice President, Tipper, and I, like so many Americans, have all swung hammers for Habitat For Humanity, and I was honored to sign a law passed earlier this year to provide the first Federal support for land and infrastructure for Habitat. It's an interesting testament to Millard, to his wife, Linda, to all the wonderful people at Habitat that the three people who testified in favor of the law were Millard Fuller, Henry Cisneros, and Newt Gingrich. They did a good job at bringing America together, and we are all the beneficiaries of Millard Fuller's vision.

Physician, scientist, and educator, David Hamburg has devoted his life to understanding human behavior, preventing violent conflict, and improving the health and well-being of our children. At Stanford he did pioneering work in the biology of mental illness and went to Tanzania to rescue four biology students who had been kidnapped there. He has worked to avoid all kinds of violent conflict, from nuclear war to ethnic strife. He has used his presidency of the influential Carnegie Corporation to support efforts for better parenting, strong families, and stronger childhoods, focusing especially on early childhood and adolescence. He is a truly remarkable man and a genuinely effective humanitarian.

Ten years ago I had the honor of recognizing John Johnson for his contributions as a native of our native State, Arkansas. John rose from poverty in Arkansas and Illinois to become one of the world's greatest pioneers in media, founding the landmark magazines Ebony and Jet. He gave African-Americans a voice and a face, in his words, "a new sense of somebody-ness," of who they were and what they could do, at a time when they were virtually invisible in mainstream American culture. A humble man despite becoming the most influential African-American publisher in history, he continues to inspire young African-Americans to succeed against the odds and to take advantage of their opportunities.

Speaking of opportunity, hardly anyone has ever done more personally to give people who didn't have it, opportunity, than Eugene Lang. In 1981 he made a simple promise to pay the college tuition of every student from his East Harlem alma mater who graduated from high school and wanted to go to college. Since then, his I Have a Dream Foundation has opened the doors of college for thousands of young people who seize the opportunity he offered. He has helped to make the most of their God-given abilities. We are all the beneficiaries of Eugene Lang's innovative vision, and it is a great tribute to him that since 1981 other philanthropists, many State governments, and now, I hope, our National Government, have joined him in trying to guarantee the dream of a college education to all people. He began it, and we are all in his debt.

Jan Nowak has dedicated his life to the fight for freedom. In World War II, he risked everything to carry vital information to the Allies. After the Nazis' defeat, he saw his native Poland once again in the grip of oppression, and he vowed to break it. For 25 years he was a dominant voice in Radio Free Europe, the great beacon of hope that brought so many people through the dark hours of communism. He continued to fight until the day he saw freedom triumph over tyranny. In America, his commitment to the ideal of democracy continues to inspire us all, and I can tell you that his inspiration is still felt in his

native Poland where the people will never forget what he did and what he stood for.

Paz y respecto, peace and respect: These are the values that define the life and work of Antonia Pantoja. Her efforts to create educational and economic opportunity for all Puerto Ricans have made her the most respected and beloved figure in the Puerto Rican community. Through a Aspira, the educational program she helped to found 35 years ago, she still dares young Puerto Ricans to dream and to work to achieve their dreams. Her dedication to her people and, therefore, her contribution to our country is unsurpassed.

When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus 40 years ago, she ignited the single most significant social movement in American history. When she sat down on the bus, she stood up for the American ideals of equality and justice and demanded that the rest of us do the same. When our descendants look back in time to trace the fight for freedom, Rosa Parks will stand among our Nation's greatest patriots, the legendary figures whose courage sustained us and pushed us forward. She is, and continues to be, a national treasure.

Ginetta Sagan's name is synonymous with the fight for human rights around the world. In World War II, she paid dearly for her dedication to the cause of freedom. For more than a year, she was imprisoned and tortured but not broken. Instead, she devoted her life after the war to saving others from the ordeal she had endured. Through her tireless work with Amnesty International and her Aurora Foundation, she has drawn the world's attention to the plight of prisoners of conscience and of their families. Amnesty International has created a fund named in her honor designed to help stop torture and especially to stop the persecution of women and their children. She represents to all the triumph of the human spirit over tyranny.

Morris Udall represents everything a lawmaker should be: dedicated to seeking common ground, committed to improving the political process, and singularly possessed as no one in my adult lifetime has been of the one trait no Member of Congress should be without, an extraordinary sense of humor.

Mo was fond of quoting Will Rogers, who once advised us that in life you ought to get a few laughs and do the best you can. Well, he got a lot of laughs, and he did better than most. He set a standard few could match by his passionate commitment to preserve our national resources and to leave our children a safer environment. His life is an inspiration and more. His work is a gift to all Americans, and we are especially grateful that his son could be with us today.

Now it is my great honor and privilege to present to each of you the Presidential Medal of Freedom with great respect for your work, your dedication, the example you have set for all your fellow Americans.

I ask now the military aide to read the citations.

[At this point, Lt. Col. Michael G. Mudd, USA, Army Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

Ladies and gentlemen, we're going in for a reception now. But I wanted to say one thing. Rosa Parks was delayed in Detroit just as many of these people

were delayed trying to get here because of the traffic. So we will have another time to give her her medal. We're sorry she couldn't be here. We're delighted everyone else is here. Please come in for the reception.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: November 28, 1996

Public Papers of the Presidents

September 29, 1995

CITE: 31 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1734

LENGTH: 3872 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom

BODY:

Good morning, and welcome to all of you, especially to the honorees, their family members, their friends, the distinguished Members of Congress.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the highest honor given to civilians in the United States. It has a special history, established 50 years ago by President Truman, to honor noble service in time of war. In 1963, President Kennedy expanded its purpose, making it an honor for distinguished civilian service in peacetime. The 12 Americans we honor today embody the best qualities in our national character. All have committed themselves, both publicly and privately, to expanding the circle of freedom and the opportunities the responsible exercise of freedom brings, at home and around the world.

In this time of change, where people's living patterns and working patterns are undergoing such dramatic transformation, it is necessary and fashionable to focus on new ideas and new visions of the future. We are here today to celebrate people who have always been for change and who have changed America for the better but who have done it based on the enduring values that make this country great: the belief that we have to give all of our citizens the chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given capacities; the conviction that we have to do everything we can to strengthen our families and our communities; the certainty that when the chips are down, we have to do what is good and right, even if it is unpopular in the short run; the understanding that we have the obligation to honor those who came before us by passing better lives and brighter opportunities on to those who come after.

This medal commemorates the remarkable service and indelible spirit of individual Americans. But it also serves as a beacon to all Americans and especially to our children. For our children, especially now when so many of their lives have been darkened by violence and irresponsible or absent role models, the robbers of innocence, is poverty and drug abuse and gang life, the excesses of our modern commercial media culture and other forces that are undermining the fabric of good lives, all of these things require more and more people to live by the values and measure up to the example of the winners of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. They represent in so many ways the true face of American heroism today.

Let me begin now by introducing each of them in turn.

As a young mother 27 years ago, Peggy Charren took a good look at her children's frequent companion, television. And she did not like what she saw. But unlike others who simply bemoan the problem, she actually did something about it. She took a stand against entrenched and powerful institutions in Government and in business, and she made them listen. She started Action for Children's Television. As a result, she uplifted the quality of what comes

into our homes and inspired a whole generation of citizen activists. In 1990, the campaign that began in front of Peggy Charren's television set reached Capitol Hill when Congress passed the Children's Television Act. And for the first time, the television industry was challenged to fulfill its responsibility to educate our children, not just to entertain them. Peggy Charren, mother and now grandmother, leader and reformer in the best American tradition, has put all of our children first, and we thank her for it.

Now, I'm going to change the order here a minute, just a little, and go to Joan Ganz Cooney. While Peggy Charren forced television to change its ways from the outside, Joan Ganz Cooney did the same thing from the inside. In 1968, she launched the Children's Television Workshop, and a whole new landscape of joyful education opened up before our children's eyes. Out of this effort came "Sesame Street," "The Electric Company," "3-2-1 Contact," and other programs that enlighten not only our youngsters but older people as well. With a host of lovable characters like the Cookie Monster and Big Bird, who became as familiar to me at one point in our family life as the people I grew up with -- [laughter] -- these shows have helped teach a generation of children to count and to read and to think. They also teach us more about how we should live together. We all know that Grover and Kermit reinforce rather than undermine the values we work so hard to teach our children, showing kids every day what it means to share, to respect differences, and to recognize that it's not easy being green. [laughter]

Joan Ganz Cooney has proven in living color that the powerful medium of television can be a tool to build reason, not reaction, for growth, not stifling, to help build young lives up rather than tear them down. We all know that TV is here to stay. Most of us, frankly, love it even when we curse it. But we also know that there are clear damaging effects to excessive exposure to destructive patterns of television. As the Vice President and Mrs. Gore have pointed out on so many occasions and as their recent family conference on media and the family demonstrated, the numbing effects of violence or the numbing inability to concentrate that comes from overexposure to mindless, repetitive programming are things that we have to fight against.

Peggy Charren sounded the alarm; Joan Ganz Cooney developed an alternative. And even today as we grapple with this challenge -- how to get the best and repress the worst -- we know that we would be nowhere near where we are were it not for these two remarkable American heroes. We thank them. Thank you so much.

William T. Coleman, Jr.'s first public act to advance equal opportunity came early in his life. He tried out for his high school swim team, and in response, the school disbanded the team. [laughter] For four decades in the courtroom, the boardroom, the halls of power, Bill Coleman has put his brilliant legal intellect in service to our country. He was the first African-American accepted on the Harvard Law Review, the first to serve as a clerk on the United States Supreme Court, the first to serve in the President's Cabinet -- the second to serve in the President's Cabinet, and the first to reach the pinnacle of the corporate bar. As Secretary of Transportation to President Ford, he helped to open the doors of opportunity to thousands of black entrepreneurs. As a corporate director, he broke the color barrier in the Nation's executive suites. Today, as chairman of the board of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, he continues the fight.

I have known Bill Coleman for a long time. I had the honor and pleasure of being his son's roommate for a year in law school. I think it is fair to say that the first time we saw each other, he never dreamed that I would be here and he would be there. [laughter]

But I can honestly say, if you are looking for an example of constancy, consistency, disciplined devotion to the things that make this country a great place, you have no further to look than William Coleman, Jr. Thank you.

Fifty years ago, John Hope Franklin was on a train in North Carolina, jammed into a compartment reserved for baggage and for African-Americans. When he asked the conductor if he and his fellow passengers could move to a near-empty car occupied by just five white men, he was told it couldn't be done, for the men, the conductor said, were German prisoners of war. John Hope Franklin and those with him were prisoners of something else, American racism.

John Hope Franklin has both lived and chronicled the history of race in America. He is the author of many books, including the classic "From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African-Americans." He provided Thurgood Marshall with critical historical research for the landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education. He has taught throughout America and around the world, and he has influenced countless, countless students of the American scene with his profound scholarship.

"I look history straight in the eye and call it like it is," John Hope Franklin has said. This has meant telling the untold stories of northern racism and of slaves successfully striking for better conditions under the sinful confines of slavery. It has meant blazing a trail through the academy, but never confusing his role as an advocate with his role as a scholar. It has meant holding to the conviction that integration is a national necessity if we are to truly live by the values enshrined in the Constitution.

John Hope Franklin, the Son of the South, has always been a moral compass for America, always pointing us in the direction of truth. I think I can speak for Hillary and for the Vice President and Mrs. Gore in saying that one of the most memorable moments of our campaign in 1992 was having John Hope Franklin take a ride with us on our campaign bus. And he sat in the front. [laughter]

In 1994, at the age of 16, Leon Higginbotham arrived at his midwestern college only to be pushed back by the icy hand of racism. There, he and 12 other African-American students were housed in an unheated attic. Fed up with sub-zero nights, Leon Higginbotham went to the university president to protest. "Higginbotham," the president said, "the law doesn't require us to let colored students in the dorm, and you either accept things as they are or leave the university." So Leon Higginbotham set out to change the law. He went to Yale Law School, and after he was rejected by every major Philadelphia law firm because of his race, he turned to public service, working as a community lawyer and a State and Federal official.

When Leon Higginbotham was named to the Federal bench at the age of 36 by President Kennedy, he was the youngest Federal judge to be appointed in three decades. He served with distinction and eventually became judge of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. He also found the time to write and speak with idealism and rigor on the great dilemmas of race and justice.

His retirement has been spent, remarkably, helping to draft the constitution for a democratic South Africa and teaching a fresh generation of students at Harvard. We honor Judge Higginbotham whose life as much as his scholarship has set an example of commitment, enlargement, and service to new minds at home, and now, thank God, to a newly free South Africa an ocean away.

Thank you, Leon Higginbotham.

Judge Frank Johnson could not be here today and so had to send the young gentleman to my left to receive his award for him. He was advised by his doctor not to travel. I admire that doctor. I imagine that he is the first person who ever got Frank Johnson to do something he did not want to do. [Laughter]

For his steadfastness, his constitutional vision, his courage to uphold the value of equal opportunity, even at the expense of his own personal safety, for these things, we honor Frank Johnson with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

During 40 years on the bench, Judge Johnson made it his mission to see to it that justice was done within the framework of law. In the face of unrelenting social and political pressure to uphold the traditions of oppression and neglect in his native South, never once did he yield. His landmark decisions in the areas of desegregation, voting rights, and civil liberties transformed our understanding of the Constitution. He fought for the right of Rosa Parks to sit where she wanted on the bus and battled for the right of Martin Luther King and others to march from Selma to Montgomery.

Armed with a gavel and the Constitution, Frank Johnson changed the face of the South. He challenged America to move closer to the ideals upon which it is founded and forever will be an inspiration to all who admire courage and value freedom. We wish you were here with us today, but his spirit is in this place, and we thank him.

For a good long while now, Dr. C. Everett Koop, as Surgeon General of the United States and afterward as America's most wellknown private doctor, has told the Nation the truth as he sees it, whether we want to hear it or not. In so doing, he has saved countless lives and left an enduring legacy of the doctor as a healer in the broadest and deepest sense of the word.

Dr. Koop's life has been defined by doing the right thing. He chose children's medicine for the simple reason that his colleagues were ignoring it. He refused to let political considerations leave Americans vulnerable to the epidemics of AIDS and teen pregnancy. He fought for sex education knowing that if he were to be true to the value of protecting our children, we could not let them live in perilous ignorance. He told America that tobacco is addictive, that it kills, and that we have to get cigarettes out of our children's hands.

He helped us to come to grips with the painful shortcomings in America's health care delivery system and what it means for children that over 40 million of our people have no health insurance. And we value his support for the action now being taken to try to protect children's lives from the epidemic of smoking, which embraces 3,000 of them a day and will shorten 1,000 of their lives every day.

Dr. Koop's record is a priceless reminder that disease is immune to ideology and that viruses do not play politics. Over the course of his career, I have

seen him attacked from both the left and the right for his strong convictions. But all of us who have watched him, not only in public but as Hillary and I have had the chance to do in private, know that in the very best sense, he stands for life in America and for the potential of all of our children. And for that, the United States should be eternally grateful to C. Everett Koop.

Twenty-five years ago this year, Americans came together for the very first Earth Day. They came together to make it clear that dirty air, poison water, spoiled land were simply unacceptable. They came together to say that preserving our natural heritage for our children is a national value. And they came together, more than anything else, because of one American, Gaylord Nelson. His career as Wisconsin's Governor, United States Senator, and now as counselor of the Wilderness Society has been marked by integrity, civility, and vision. His legacy is inscribed in legislation, including the National Environmental Education Act and the 1964 Wilderness Act,

As the father of Earth Day, he is the grandfather of all that grew out of that event: the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act. He also set a standard for people in public service to care about the environment and to try to do something about it. And I think that the Vice President would want me to say that young people like Al Gore, back in 1970, realized, because of Gaylord Nelson, that if they got into public service, they could do something to preserve our environment for future generations.

In the 1970's, when a river was so polluted it actually caught on fire, Gaylord Nelson spoke up. He insisted that Americans deserved the safety that comes from knowing the world we live in will not make us sick. He warned that our leaders should never let partisan politics divert us from responsibility to our shared environment. He inspired us to remember that the stewardship of our natural resources is the stewardship of the American dream. He is the worthy heir of the tradition of Theodore Roosevelt, and the Vice President's work and that of all other environmentalists today is the worthy heir of Gaylord Nelson.

Today as much as at any time in modern American history, we need to remember what we share on this precious planet and in this beloved country. And I hope that Gaylord's Nelson shining example will illuminate all the debates in this city for years to come.

Walter Reuther was an American visionary so far ahead of his times that although he died a quarter of a century ago, our nation has yet to catch up to his dreams. A tool and die maker by trade, Walter Reuther built a great union that lifted industrial workers into the middle class. But he always understood that the UAW stood for something greater and nobler than a few more dollars in the paycheck. So he fought for causes on the edge of America's horizon, from racial justice to small cars that would conserve fuel and compete successfully both here and abroad.

He wanted America to create an economy strong and supple enough to convert from peacetime production to defense work and back again without costing workers and their families their livelihoods. As the journalist Murray Kempton said later, "Walter Reuther was one man who could reminisce about the future." The union he led and the future he built stand as a memorial to what is bravest and best in the American spirit. Would that we had more people like him today. We are honored that his daughters are here and that his award will be received by

his young grandson. Walter Reuther.

Our homes, our cities, our neighborhoods, our communities, all these represent who we are. With the helping hand of James Rouse, many of these places have come to reflect our best values. In the 1960's, James Rouse saw a problem. Poorly planned suburban neighborhoods did more than take away from the landscape, they had a corrosive effect on our sense of community. So he did something about it; he conceived and built Columbia, Maryland. By updating the colonial village for modern times, he gave a generation of architects and designers a blueprint for reviving community all across our Nation.

A decade later, James Rouse turned to another monumental task, healing the torn-out heart of America's cities. He met the challenge head-on. With Boston's Faneuil Hall, Baltimore Harbor Place, and other developments, he put the town square, squarely back into America's urban life. He proved that we could reclaim and recreate our urban frontiers. Adviser to Presidents, foe of economic and racial segregation, champion of highquality, affordable housing, James Rouse's life has been defined by faith in the American spirit. He has made our cities and our neighborhoods as beautiful as the lives that pass through them.

He has shown us that we can build communities worthy of the character and optimism of our people. I know that he has had a special impact on our Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Henry Cisneros. And I can tell you that he has had a very special impact on my life. Every time I see James Rouse I think, if every American developer had done what James Rouse has done with his life, we would have lower crime rates, fewer gangs, less drugs; our children would have a better future; our cities would be delightful places to live; we would not walk in fear, we would walk in pride down the streets of our cities, just as we still can in the small towns in America. James Rouse has changed this country. And if more will follow his lead, we can do the entire job we need to do in our cities. Mr. James Rouse.

His name was William C. Velasquez, but everyone knew his as Willie. Willie was and is now a name synonymous with democracy in America. Through the organization he founded, the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, he nearly doubled Hispanic voter registration, and dramatically increased the number of Latino elected officials in this Nation. His appeal to the Hispanic community was simple, passionate, and direct: "Su voto es su voz," your vote is your voice.

The movement he began here at home went on to support democracy abroad in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Mexico, and in South Africa. From the farm fields of California, where he organized workers with Cesar Chavez, to the halls of Harvard, where he taught politics, Willie Velasquez was driven by an unwavering belief that every American should have a role in our democracy and a share in the opportunities of our great Nation.

Willie Velasquez died too young. He was just 44 when he passed away in 1988. But in his vibrant life, he restored faith in our ideals and in ourselves. And no person in modern America who has run for public office wherever Hispanic Americans live has failed to feel the hand of Willie Velasquez. He made this a greater country and we're honored that his wife is here with us today.

It is not surprising that Lew Wasserman has devoted his life to helping others to see. For it was his vision that led him from the streets of Cleveland to the top of Hollywood and his perspective that inspired him to give so much back to a nation that had given so much to him. Lew Wasserman helped to build MCA from a small booking agency into a vast multimedia company. His feat awakened the world to the infinite promise of the American entertainment industry.

It also showed a new generation of American business leaders that a company's success can be measured by the depth of its values as well as by the size of its revenues. In honor of MCA's founder, the eye doctor Jules Stein, Lew Wasserman has made an astonishing contribution to treat and to cure blindness. He has devoted himself to strengthening the American community through his role as citizen adviser to almost a half century of Presidents, of both parties, and with his support for countless humanitarian efforts.

Never for a moment has he forgotten his roots, the value of hard work, or the importance of giving people in far, far less fortunate conditions a chance to make something of their lives. The story of Lew Wasserman is the story of the American dream, not -- not -- just for what he has achieved but far more important for what he has given back. I have met a lot of philanthropists and successful people in my life. I don't know that I ever met anybody that more consistently every day looked for another opportunity to do something for somebody else, to give somebody else the chance to enjoy the success that he had in life.

I thank you, Lew Wasserman.

Let me close, before we hear from the official citation and present the medals, by saying that I think that all the people who are here, were they to speak, would tell you that they did not come here alone. They were guided by parents and teachers, by neighbors and mentors. Many were inspired by other great Americans who themselves at some time in the past received this very medal.

The miracle of American life is that this cycle can be repeated over and over again with each succeeding generation; and that with each succeeding generation, we make freedom a little more real and full to all Americans. I ask all of you to think about that. You couldn't help feeling, when you heard these stories, that this is a very great country. And we do not have to give in to our lesser selves. We do not have to be divided. We do not have to achieve less than we can. If we will follow their examples, we will make sure that in the next century, this country will be all it was meant to be for all of our children.

I'd like to now ask the Military Aide to read the citations as I present the Medals of Freedom.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: August 29, 1996

Public Papers of the President

August 8, 1994

CITE: 30 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1646

LENGTH: 1878 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medals of Freedom

BODY:

The President. Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. As you might imagine, one of the great pleasures of the Presidency is selecting recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to civilians by the United States of America.

If I might begin on a very personal and immediate note, last fall this annual ceremony was held on a very happy day for me and for those of us who want a safer and more humane United States. It was the day we made the Brady bill the law of the land. Today as we gather here, Congress is on the verge of voting on the most comprehensive anticrime bill in history. But that bill has been held hostage for 11 days by certain special interest groups. So as we recognize the contributions of civilians to our country's way of life, I'd like to take this opportunity to call on those groups who are blocking the crime bill to let it come to a vote and ask the other citizens of the United States to ask the Congress for the same thing. Many people we honor here today have given their whole lives to enriching the fabric of the future, and we can do no less.

This afternoon we will present the Presidential Medal of Freedom to nine remarkable individuals whose service to our democracy and to humanity has advanced the common interest of freedom-loving people, not only here at home but throughout the world: Herbert Block, the late Cesar Chavez, Arthur Flemming, Dorothy Height, Barbara Jordan, Lane Kirkland, Robert Michel, and Sargent Shriver.

The medals these Americans receive today has a special history. It was established by President Truman in 1945 at first to reward notable service in the war. In 1963 President Kennedy amended the award for distinguished civilian service in peacetime. The honorees that year included the singer Marian Anderson, Justice Felix Frankfurter, diplomat John McCloy, labor leader George Meany, the writer E.B. White, playwright Thornton Wilder, and the artist Andrew Wyeth. By the time that first ceremony was held here in the White House in December of 1963, President Johnson had added to the roll of names President Kennedy and His Holiness Pope John XXIII.

Listen to this: At that time, Under Secretary of State George Ball said that the President is establishing what we can proudly call an American civil honors list. How many of our greatest citizens, who went on to achieve other things, said that the greatest thing that could ever be said about them was that they were good citizens. That is true in every way of those we honor today.

Herbert Block, or "Herblock" as we know him, became an editorial cartoonist with the Chicago Daily News in 1929, not a very good year to begin writing funny cartoons. [Laughter] His long and prolific career has spanned the Presidencies of 11 different Presidents. The fact that he gets to choose the targets in

cartoons may have something to do with the longevity of his career. His cartoons have appeared in the Washington Post since 1946, the year I was born. [Laughter] He educates and persuades public opinion with effectiveness, artistry, warmth, and great good humor. He has a big heart. He sides with the little guy, people of common sense, and all who hold healthy irreverence for any sort of pretensions.

Cesar Chavez, before his death in April of last year, had become a champion of working people everywhere. Born into Depression-era poverty in Arizona in 1927, he served in the United States Navy in the Second World War and rose to become one of our greatest advocates of nonviolent change. He was, for his own people, a Moses figure. The farm workers who labored in the fields and yearned for respect and self-sufficiency pinned their hopes on this remarkable man, who with faith and discipline, with soft-spoken humility and amazing inner strength led a very courageous life and in so doing brought dignity to the lives of so many others and provided for us inspiration for the rest of our Nation's history. We are honored to have his wife, friend, and longtime working partner, Helen Chavez, to be with us today to receive the award.

Arthur Flemming served every President from Franklin Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan as the Republican member of the Civil Service Commission, as a member of the Hoover commission on the executive branch established by President Truman, as Director of Defense Mobilization and a member of President Eisenhower's National Security Council, and as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. In addition to being an able administrator, Dr. Flemming is also a respected educator and former journalist. Over the course of his long and eminent career in public service, he contributed to the struggles for Social Security, civil rights, and most recently health care reform, something for which the First Lady and I are particularly in his debt. These three struggles he calls the greatest domestic crusades of his lifetime.

James Grant is the remarkable executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, where he has tirelessly waged a global crusade on behalf of the world's children. Like his father before him, he was born and raised in China, where he took up his family's tradition of offering assistance abroad and first went to work for the United Nations at the end of World War II. In the fall of 1992 he helped to broker a brief ceasefire during the siege of Sarajevo and personally directed the safe passage of a convoy carrying winter supplies of clothing, blankets, and food. As the international community's guardian of innocent children in troubled regions, he oversees the delivery of humanitarian assistance that without him might otherwise never reach those in need.

Dorothy Height is one of the world's most tireless and accomplished advocates of civil rights, the rights of women, and the health and stability of family and community life. From the days when she helped Eleanor Roosevelt to organize the World Youth Conference in 1938, she has remained engaged in the public arena for 60 years and more. As a leader of the National Council of Negro Women and the Young Women's Christian Association, she's been a powerful voice for equal opportunity here and in developing nations around the world. In recent years, her Black Family Reunion celebrations have reminded our society that self help and self reliance within loving extended families are the dominant cultural traditions of the African-American community.

For 20 years Barbara Jordan has been the most outspoken moral voice of the American political system, a position she reached soon after becoming the first black Congresswoman elected from the deep South from her native Texas in 1972. From national platforms she has captured the Nation's attention and awakened its conscience in defense of our Constitution, the American dream, and the commonality we share as American citizens. As professor of ethics and public policy at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, she ensures that the next generation of our public servants will be worthy of the legacy she has done so much to build.

Lane Kirkland has been at the center of the American labor movement for almost 50 years. After serving in the merchant marine during the Second World War and his subsequent graduation from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, he became a researcher for organized labor in the same year that he worked as a 26-year-old speechwriter in the 1948 campaign of Harry Truman and his running mate, Alben Barkley. Throughout the cold war, when some leaders saw only the threats to our freedom overseas and neglected the barriers to freedom and inequality within our own land, Kirkland showed America that you can stand up to communism abroad just as forcefully as you can stand up for working men and women here at home. As president of the AFL-CIO for the last 15 years, he has helped to teach us that solidarity is a powerful word in any language and that a vibrant labor movement is essential to every free society.

Robert Michel has served in the United States House of Representatives since 1957. That is the second longest tenure of any Republican in American history. As minority leader in the House for the last 13 years, he has served his party well, but he has also served our Nation well, choosing the pragmatic but harder course of conciliation more often than the divisive but easier course of confrontation. In the best sense he is a gentleman legislator who, in spite of the great swings in public opinion from year to year, has remained always true to the midwestern values he represents so faithfully in the House. He retires at the end of this year, generally regarded by Democrats and Republicans alike as one of the most decent and respected leaders with which any President has had the privilege to work.

Sargent Shriver is the man who launched the Peace Corps 33 years ago. Because of his creativity, his idealism, his brilliance, the Peace Corps remains one of the most popular Government initiatives ever undertaken. From the time he and his wife, Eunice, helped to organize a conference on juvenile delinquency for the Attorney General in 1947 to his efforts for public education in Chicago in the 1950's, to his leadership of Head Start and legal services and now the Special Olympics, Sargent Shriver has awakened millions of Americans, including many in this administration, to the responsibilities of service, the possibilities of change, and the sheer joy of making the effort.

These recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom represent different political parties, different ideologies, different professions, indeed, even different ages. Their different eras, different races, different generations in American history cannot be permitted to obscure the fact of what they share in common: an unusually profound sense of responsibility to improve the lives of their fellow men and women, to improve the future for our children, to embody the best of what we mean by the term "American citizen." By their remarkable records of service and by their incredible spirit, we have all been enriched.

And now I would ask the military aide to read the citations as I present the Medal of Freedom.

[At this point, Major Leo Mercado, Jr., USMC, Marine Corps aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, in closing let me say that I couldn't help thinking, as the citations were read and I looked into the faces of our honorees and their families, friends, and admirers here, that we too often reserve our greatest accolades for our citizens when they are gone. I wish that Cesar Chavez could be here today. I am grateful that his wife is here, and I am so grateful that all these others are here.

Let us remember today that the greatest gift any of us can give the Founders of this Constitution and this Republic is to emulate the work of these citizens whom we honor today, every day, each in our own way.

Thank you for being here. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 6, 1994

Public Papers of the Presidents

November 30, 1993

CITE: 29 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 2479

LENGTH: 1968 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medals of Freedom

BODY:

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, all. We have Members of Congress here, members and former members of the United States Supreme Court, and a number of distinguished Americans who share in common a friendship with one or more of our distinguished honorees today. I welcome you all here.

One of the greatest pleasures of being President is the authority to choose recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to civilians by the United States. And so today it is my honor to award the Medal of Freedom to five great reformers of the 20th century who changed America for the better: Mrs. Marjory Stoneman Douglas, the late Joseph Rauh, Judge John Minor Wisdom, the late Justice Thurgood Marshall, and Justice William Brennan.

Today they join a distinguished list of citizens in a process initiated by my great predecessor Harry Truman in 1945. Like Harry Truman, all five of them rank among our Nation's great champions of the underdog. Indeed, most of their lives are stories of underdogs themselves. Two of them are sons of immigrants. Justice Brennan's parents came here from Ireland near the time that Mr. Rauh's father and grandfather came here from Germany. One, Justice Marshall, was the great-grandson of slaves. And one, Mrs. Douglas, is descended from a founder of the Underground Railroad. America gave them the freedom to be their best, and they honored our country by becoming five legendary defenders of our freedoms in return.

When this medal was created at the end of World War II, America had great decisions to make about what kind of nation we wanted to be. The postwar years were those which unlocked great forces that would transform our society profoundly and permanently. A baby boom and a development boom brought Americans more mobility and more economic opportunity than they had ever enjoyed before. But this new mobility also opened our eyes to problems we had been previously unwilling to acknowledge: the legal barriers set up to prevent black Americans and working people from sharing in the opportunities afforded to others; the growth that devoured the value of our disappearing regional identities and fragile natural landscapes.

It was during this time in 1947 that Marjory Stoneman Douglas published her bestselling book, "The Everglades: River of Grass," a monumental work on Florida's unique ecosystem, one of our Nation's greatest natural resources. The next year, 1948, gave us the Democratic National Convention that nominated Harry Truman, where Hubert Humphrey delivered one of the earliest and most impassioned speeches on behalf of civil rights ever given from a national platform. There Joseph Rauh, Jr., won his fight to make civil rights a part of the National Democratic Party platform and an indelible part of our national agenda.

In 1954 Thurgood Marshall won a case before the United States Supreme Court called *Brown v. Board of Education*, the decisive blow against legal segregation, a decision that would have more impact on civil rights in America than any other single action since President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation just upstairs in this White House.

In 1955, Joe Rauh and others celebrated victory over McCarthyism, whose abuses of freedom they had fought so fearlessly.

In 1956, President Eisenhower named New Jersey Supreme Court Justice William Brennan to the United States Supreme Court, launching one of the most influential careers in the Court's entire history. And the following year, in 1957, Eisenhower named John Minor Wisdom to the U.S. Court of Appeals, where he and his colleagues pioneered our Nation's landmark decisions on civil rights. He made a lot of good appointments, Mr. Eisenhower.

We honor these people not for any private success, not for any personal pursuit of glory but for their selfless devotion to the public interest and their tireless lifetime of achievement in the public arena. Because of what they did, our Nation is a better place, and our lives, all of us, are richer. I'd like to briefly review that before the official citations are read.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas, all of 103 years old, has always been ahead of her time. She was born in Minneapolis on April 7th, 1890, raised in Massachusetts, graduated from Wellesley College in 1912, and moved to Florida. She was one of the pioneering women in journalism when she joined the staff of the *Miami Herald* in 1914. She served the Red Cross in Europe during World War II and returned to the United States to wage a campaign for the passage of the women's suffrage amendment -- I said World War II; I meant World War I -- and to continue a career writing about the distinctive regional character of southern Florida.

Her advocacy on behalf of the Everglades in Florida long before there was ever an Earth Day is legendary. It has been an inspiration to generations of conservationists, environmentalists, and preservationists throughout our Nation and especially to my administration, in the work of Vice President Gore and the Administrator of the EPA, another woman from Florida, Carol Browner. She is much admired by the Attorney General who shares her south Florida roots, and I am glad to see her here today, also.

Beyond Florida, Marjory Stoneman Douglas is a mentor for all who desire to preserve what we southerners affectionately call "a sense of place." And Mrs. Douglas, the next time I hear someone mention the timeless wonders and powers of Mother Nature, I'll be thinking about you.

Joseph Rauh grew up in an immigrant family to become America's leading labor lawyer and advocate of civil liberties. He studied under Felix Frankfurter, clerked for Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo and then Frankfurter when he was named Cardozo's successor by President Franklin Roosevelt. He was a champion of working people and labor movement reforms. Among his clients were Walter Reuther's United Auto Workers, A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and Joseph Yablonski's wing of the United Mine Workers.

When he returned from the Army after the Second World War, he rounded Americans for Democratic Action to help stem the influence of communism in the United States, and he was elected its vice chairman, a post once held by Vice

President Humphrey, Arthur Schlesinger, and the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr.

Later, as the group's chairman, he called the ADA a group of independent-minded people grappling with the old line machines of both parties on behalf of good government, not a bad slogan. He represented playwright Arthur Miller against the Government intrusion of the McCarthy committee and was an outspoken champion of civil liberties until his death last year. He may have left us with the most appropriate quotation for this ceremony when he said, "What our generation has done is bring equality into law. The next generation has to bring equality in

John Minor Wisdom, a senior judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals at 88 1/2 years old, still handles a caseload as large as any active judge on the bench. But he stands out among his peers as a truly first-class legal scholar who writes brilliant opinions, including his landmark opinion on voting rights in *United States v. State of Louisiana* in 1963, and his historic opinions to open the University of Mississippi to black students in *Meredith v. Fair* in 1962. He is a son of the Old South who became an architect of the new South. His father attended Washington College in Virginia when its students marched in the funeral of its president, Robert E. Lee. His background makes his progressive decisions all the more remarkable. Because I don't think the South could have made it through those trying times without leaders like Judge Wisdom.

He may be the only medal recipient today who was once a member of the Republican National Committee. He became the father of the modern Republican Party in Louisiana when he moved it away from reactionary isolationism to the moderation of President Eisenhower. His outspoken calls for reform in government and public education and civil rights are something of which all southerners and members of both political parties can justly be proud.

None of our advances in civil rights would have been possible without the indefatigable energy of the late Thurgood Marshall. As an attorney and later as Solicitor General of the United States under President Johnson, he presented the most monumental arguments before the Supreme Court since Daniel Webster in the early years of our Republic, more than a century earlier. If President Kennedy had not named him an appeals court judge in 1961 or President Johnson had not named him the first black Justice on the United States Supreme Court in 1967, his mark on America would still loom very, very large today.

He gave his career to defend black people from violence carried out by mobs in the name of justice. As founder and chief counsel of the NAACP's Legal Defense and Education Fund, he waged systematic war against laws that kept black people out of voting booths and their children out of publicly funded schools. He did more to make Martin Luther King's dream of equality real in the lives of our people than anyone in our time. Together, he and Justice Brennan became the twin pillars of liberty and equality on the Court.

Justice Marshall's son, Thurgood, Jr., who coordinates legislative affairs in the office of the Vice President, said his father would have been most proud of this award by being honored alongside Justice Brennan, his close friend and colleague through so many years of battles.

Justice Brennan is the author of the most enduring constitutional decisions of our last decades, including *Baker v. Carr* on one person, one vote, and *Times v. Sullivan* which brought the free speech doctrine into the latter half of the

20th century. He's already been acknowledged by friends as well as foes as one of the most pivotal giants in the history of the Court, perhaps its staunchest defender of freedom of the individual against Government intrusions. As he once told Bill Moyers, the role of the Constitution is, and I quote, the protection of the dignity of the human being and the recognition that every individual has fundamental rights which Government cannot deny.

Justice Brennan served longer than any Justice in this century but two, and his impact and legacy have changed the Court in our country for all time.

For all these people here, it must be a great sense of honor to be joined by so many distinguished Americans, members of the Cabinet, former members of the Cabinet, members of the Supreme Court, former members of the Supreme Court, and Members of the Congress. I thank all of you for being here. But I think we should all recognize that the people who should really be grateful to all of them are ordinary Americans, many of whom may not even know their names but whose lives have been forever changed by their labors.

I'd like now to ask my military aide to read the citations.

[At this point, Maj. Leo Mercado, Jr., USMC, Marine Corps aide to the President, read the citations.]

My fellow Americans, we often pay our debts by acknowledging it to our Founders. In the beginning of this country, Thomas Jefferson told us something we dare never forget, which is that we must also pay our debts to our reformers, for all the Founders did was to give us something that has to be recreated in every age and time. Today we have acknowledged that debt to five great reformers. We can only repay it if we follow in their footsteps.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:48 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 18, 1994

Public Papers of the Presidents

January 13, 1993

CITE: 29 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 36

LENGTH: 678 words

HEADLINE: Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to President Ronald Reagan

BODY:

President Reagan, you can see from that welcome how we all feel about your and Nancy's return to this house that you graced. We're delighted to welcome you back here. And of course, I want to send my special greetings to those who served in the Reagan Cabinet and to the Reagan family. And it's a pleasure to welcome all of you back here to the White House.

Being President has its privileges. And this morning I have the privilege to present America's highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, with distinction, to my predecessor, the 40th President of the United States. Today we honor the American life of an American original. We all remember the movie in which he once said, "Win one for the Gipper." Well, as President, Ronald Reagan helped win one for freedom, both at home and abroad. And I consider him my friend and mentor, and so he is. And he's also a true American hero.

Just think of the whistlestops that ring unsummoned, like a postcard from the past: Dixon, Tampico, Eureka College, WHO radio in Des Moines. Always Ronald Reagan embodied the heart of the American people. And once he described it as "hopeful, big-hearted, idealistic, daring, decent, and fair."

Ronald Reagan didn't just make the world believe in America; he made Americans believe in themselves. And I remember Inauguration Day in 1981 and how the clouds -- maybe you remember it -- of a gloomy morning gave way as he began his speech. He turned that winter of discontent into a springtime of possibility.

President Reagan believed in the American people, so he helped the private sector create 19 million new jobs. He knew that Government was too big and spent too much, and so he lowered taxes and spending, cut redtape, and began a peacetime boom, the longest in American history.

Some men reflect their times. Ronald Reagan changed his times. And nowhere was that more true than abroad where he championed the holy grail of liberty. Mr. President, you helped make ours not only a safer but far better world in which to live. And you yourself said it best. In fact, you saw it coming. We recall your stirring words to the British Parliament. Here were the words: "The march of freedom and democracy will leave Marxist-Leninism on the ash heap of history."

Few people believe more in liberty's inevitable triumph than Ronald Reagan. None, none was more a prophet in his time. Ronald Reagan rebuilt our military; not only that, he restored its morale. And when I became President, President Reagan passed on to me the most dedicated and best equipped fighting force

that the world has ever seen.

He signed also the INF treaty, the first agreement to eliminate a whole category of nuclear weapons. And it was a treaty that lay the foundation then for START I and the historic START II agreement that President Yeltsin and I signed 2 weeks ago.

Ronald Reagan sought a world where nations could talk, not die, over differences and a world of prosperity, peaceful competition, and freedom without war. And he helped achieve it, helped end the cold war.

When Ronald Reagan's favorite President died in 1945, the New York Times wrote, "Men will thank God on their knees a hundred years from now that Franklin D. Roosevelt was in the White House." Well, Mr. President it will not take a hundred years; millions thank God today that you were in the White House.

You loved America, blessed America, and with your leadership certainly helped make America that shining city on a hill. All this explains why today Ronald Reagan becomes only the third President to receive the Medal of Freedom, the first to receive it in his own lifetime. He's a man whose life embodies freedom, who nurtured freedom as few Presidents ever have.

And so now, Mr. President, let me invite you, sir, to join me as Major Wissler reads the citation for the Medal of Freedom. Please come up.

Note: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. Maj. John Wissler, USMC, is Marine Corps Aide to the President.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 9, 1993