FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

AFRICAN MEETING HOUSE

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

DECEMBER 5, 1998

It's a great pleasure to be here on Beacon Hill -- at the African Meeting House -- a place that holds such significance not only for African Americans and their enduring struggle for justice -- but for all of us who believe that learning about our past can guide and inspire us toward a better future.

First, I want to thank Mayor Menino and the people of Boston for their warm hospitality. I want to thank Sylvia Watts McKinney for her extraordinary contributions to keeping this historic place alive -- and her leadership at the Museum of Afro American History. Deep appreciation to Bob Stanton, our director of the National Park Service -- which is playing such a pivotal role in protecting and restoring these historic landmarks; Ken Heidelberg -- the site manager here; and John Burchill, superintendent of Boston National Historic Park. Appreciation to Professor Horton -- for his keen knowledge and insights into our African American heritage and the significance of this remarkable place.

I also want to acknowledge the members of the Black Legislative Caucus -- for their support of this Meeting House. Thank you also to Ira Jackson of Banc Boston -- for our delicious refreshments.

I want to say a particular word of appreciation to Senator Kennedy for his unique and powerful leadership in promoting human rights and equal justice -- here in this country and around the globe. Senator Kennedy has helped shape America's future in so many ways. But he also cares deeply about preserving our past. Thanks to his labors and personal commitment, Congress recently approved $1.4 million for the Boston African American National Historic Site -- to carry out a major restoration of this Meeting House. I know that Congressman Moakley provided strong leadership in the House for this initiative as well -- and we are all in your debt.

Senator Kennedy and Sylvia McKinney and so many others here in the public and private sector are determined that this building not only be preserved for its historic significance -- but continues to play an active role in the modern life of this city. And from what I've heard -- this place is always jumping with activity -- from community meetings to race discussions to cultural workshops to plays.

So this simple structure -- America's oldest standing black church -- tells a story of enormous breadth and complexity -- a story that continues to this day. As we've already heard -- this meeting house offered both slaves and free people of color a place to worship in dignity, to celebrate their African roots, and to nurture their future leaders. But we also know this was more than a church -- it was a school, a political and social gathering place; a sacred and secular center from which to battle the racial injustices of the day.

Standing here within these walls -- you can almost hear the voices of the past. The joyful voices of children's choirs and glee clubs -- who would come here from across the city to sing and perform. The thunderous music and powerful words of the preachers which filled the church meetings here. The measured tones of the Young Men's Literary Debating Society -- which was actually forced to meet in the basement because so many activities were going on up here. The hushed voices of young students at work -- the first generation of Boston's free people of color who attended school here.

But perhaps the most stirring voices of all were from those who stood in this hall to denounce the evils of slavery, and to call for a new freedom. Those voices were filled with a new kind of power -- because for the first time in our nation's history -- black and white voices were raised together in their demands for justice and equality.

We know that the white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison -- who wrote of the "unbending spirit of liberty" of those seeking their freedom -- had been searching in vain for a meeting place for anti-slavery reformers. No hall in the city opened its doors to him -- except this African Meeting House.

I've read about how William C. Nell, as a young boy, stood outside this house on that snowy, cold evening in 1832, straining his ears to hear abolitionists like Garrison debate the issue of slavery -- and the need for abolition. That night, they established the New England Antislavery Society. William Nell would later become a leading abolitionist, community leader, and historian.

It was here -- as well -- that Frederick Douglass raised his voice, urging black men to answer the nation's call for recruits for the 54th Massachusetts Infantry -- many of whom would die for the cause of freedom on the battlefields of the Civil War -- even as so many of their people remained in bondage. Sometimes the voices in this Meeting House were muffled -- as runaway slaves used this building as a safe haven -- an important stop on the undergound railroad, and ultimate freedom. For most of the 20th century -- when this building housed a synagogue -- the sounds of Jewish prayers would fill this room -- once again confirming this site as a symbol of the determination and resilience of all who struggle for freedom and human rights.

I have just come from a visit to another historic site -- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's House in Cambridge. As one of America's leading poets, he raised his voice as well against social injustice, never hesitating to denounce the racial prejudice of those days.

These two sites are bound together in other ways as well. Phyllis Wheatley -- a runaway slave from the Colonial era who went on to become a renowned poet and author -- held an historic meeting with George Washington in the Longfellow House. The first collection of her poems -- which so enthralled our nation's president and others -- are housed here, at this meeting house.

In one of Longfellow's many poems and writings against slavery, he said: "Shame that the great Republic -- the 'refuge of the oppressed' -- should stoop so low as to become the Hunter of Slaves." As we seek to learn from and grapple with our past -- it is this constant measuring of how we are living up to our ideals as a nation -- as Longfellow does here -- that can help us navigate a new century -- and a new millennium.

The President and I have been thinking a great deal about how to mark this milestone in human history that takes place once every 1,000 years. So last year, we created the White House Millennium Council -- to set the themes, and stimulate activities in which all Americans can participate -- projects that will help us learn lessons from our past, and prepare us for the 21st Century. Our national theme is honor the past, imagine the future.

These visits today -- and my trip to the home of Louis Armstrong in Queens yesterday -- are part of a larger millennium project to "Save America's Treasures." It's a public private partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the new Save America's Treasures Committee to preserve for future generations the memories, artifacts, historical sites, and documents that tell the story of our nation, and embody our ideals.

This year I have been touring sites like this one that are vital to our national heritage -- to spotlight not only famous monuments and political leaders, but also the literary, religious, and musical pioneers who have shaped our history. These sites and artifacts are irreplacable. We lose them, and we lose our history.

Almost 200 years ago, the funds to build this meeting house were raised by an interracial committee. So it seems particularly fitting that the people of Boston -- rich and poor, black and white -- have come together once again to preserve its history-- and to ensure that it continues to serve the community around it. I applaud the Afro American Museum's commitment to preserving and using this house -- and its ambitious $3.8 million capital campaign -- which I hear has already passed the 85% mark.

Today, I'm very pleased to announce an additional $40,000 which will help this community continue this vital preservation work. These funds -- which will go toward an endowment -- will be used to protect the priceless collections in this building. Deep appreciation to the National Association for African American Heritage Preservation -- for its $10,000 gift. I want to thank NAP's president, Claudia Polley Love -- who is with us today -- and the organizations that made this gift possible -- American Express and Alamo Rent-A-Car.

I also want to acknowledge the individual contributors today: Alan and Susan Solomont -- who are here with their two children; our friends Mack and Donna McLarty; Steve and Joan Belkin; and Donna Harris Lewis. Thank you all for these gifts to the future.

As I stand here today -- in front of these extraordinary photographs by Hamilton Sutton Smith -- a turn-of-the-century African American photographer whose father fought against slavery and lived a few blocks from here -- and as I looked earlier at the historic collection of papers and other artifacts housed in this building -- I see us truly fulfilling our mission: of honoring the past -- so that we can imagine a better future.

As we celebrate the importance of preserving our history, I wanted to note with sadness the recent death of Henry Hampton -- whose groundbreaking series "Eyes on the Prize" opened all of our eyes to both the tragedy of racism and the triumph of the human spirit. It is up to all of us -- government, business, artists, individual citizens -- to become the caretakers of our heritage, and to pass that history on to our children and grandchildren. I want to thank everyone here today for taking on that important mission.

This house is a powerful reminder of how the events and passions of another time can still speak to us today -- and how important it is to keep places like this alive -- inspiring us to work even harder to create a more perfect union here in America.

Thank you.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

WARNER BROTHERS ANNOUNCEMENT

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

DECEMBER 10, 1998

I'm so glad to be here at this beautiful LA Theater, and to be introduced by one of my true heroes, Stevie Wonder. It's a pleasure to join all of you for this important preservation event: I want to thank Councilman Richard Alatorre for his support and concern for preservation in this community; Dick Moe of the National Trust for Historic Preservation -- who is doing such an extraordinary job of saving America's Treasures; David Altschul of Warner Brothers Records for his creative and generous leadership; and all of you here in this community who treasure this historic theater district -- including our young performers. And I want to thank the Delijani familyu for their personal investment in restoring so much of the elegance of this Theater.

I must admit that I'm overwhelmed by the glorious architecture and lavish details of this theater -- one of LA's -- and the world's -- great movie palaces. Even the floor in the lady's room is an artistic masterpiece.

But I'm impressed as well by how forward looking its creators were - by putting in an electrical indicator to monitor available seats -- and building soundproof "Crying Rooms" so that parents holding noisy babies could still watch the films -- and a staffed playroom in the basement for older kids. Who says we can't still learn from the past?

There are so many extraordinary theaters in this one small area -- from the Orpheum with its rare Wurlitzer organ to the Million Dollar Theater, which has played such an important cultural role in the Hispanic community -- and so many others, all filled with the memories of dazzling performances and legendary stars; where careers were launched; and fortunes made. But as we all know -- only two of the dozen historic theaters are now open, and this area has lost much of its former sparkle. And that's why we are all here today.

This historic district may contain the highest concentration of movie palaces in the world -- but I would argue it also contains the highest concentration of culture buffs, preservationists and arts advocates in the world. People who really care about preserving the past -- to benefit and enrich the lives of future generations. And I'd like to recognize the many public and private partners who are coming together to restore and revitalize this Broadway Theater District.

The LA Conservancy -- the largest local non profit of its kind in the country -- has made a longstanding commitment to revitalize this area, and has opened it up to new audiences and supporters through walking tours and annual film series. And now, by working with the city to produce a comprehensive "action plan" for Broadway -- the Conservancy will serve as a catalyst for economic development and preservation.

(We've seen the progress than can be made -- in places like New York's Times Square -- when non profits and others come together to pave the way for major companies to invest in revitalizing communities like this one. And I am hopeful that such investors here in LA will step up to the plate and join this important public/private partnership).

I want to recognize other partners like "Friends of the Orpheum" -- which worked on the lighting here -- and is reclaiming the Orpheum theater for live performances and special events -- much to the delight of LA's young people. I've heard that much of the restoration work being done there is by skilled theater workers and technicians who are volunteering their time and talents.

The wonderful performance of the Living Literature Colors United -- which as some of you may remember performed at the ' 92 Inauguration -- demonstrates the vital role that the arts and literature can play in transforming the lives of our young people -- and how committed this city is to providing these opportunities for creative, positive expression. (Let's give them another round of applause). So I'm particularly pleased to hear the LLCU has plans to purchase and renovate the Palace Theater -- so that it can again become a vibrant and profitable performance site -- and more young people can have the opportunity to learn these life-changing skills.

Individual citizens have also stepped forward to contribute to this conservation effort. Bruce Corwin and his family have deep roots in this community -- having managed theaters in the district for three generations -- and I want to thank Bruce, Ira Yellin, and other theater owners who have made such personal commitments to this effort.

Thanks to this impressive cast of government and business leaders, non profits, and individuals -- curtains are rising not only here in the Broadway District -- but in other cultural centers of LA. I heard there was a gala evening in the Hollywood District last week celebrating the opening of the Egyptian Theater -- which had been closed for 8 years. And that just a few nights ago -- an agreement was reached to preserve and restore the Cinerama Dome Theater -- another one-of-a-kind theater in Hollywood.

When we see our history come alive like this — we see so much of what makes us the people and the country that we are today.

Restoration efforts like the ones you are all engaged in have a long and honored tradition in this country. By 1850 -- we had already established George Washington's headquarters at Newburgh New York as our first state historic site -- a place I just visited last summer.

What they knew then -- and what we have continued to learn through successes and failures such as the destruction of Penn Station in New York -- is that we can never own our nation's past. We're caretakers of it. And we all have a responsibility to future generations to be good caretakers.

When people ask me, "what does it mean to save an old building like this one? Aren't there a lots of other important things we should be worried about?" I first give a very practical answer. We know from our experience that when a city like Los Angeles, with the rich history that you have, is able to revitalize that history, you become a beacon for economic development and tourism that creates jobs and opportunities for people who live here.

But we're also talking about saving America's treasures for everyone. This is not just a beautiful historic building. It has a history; and it teaches us. And by preserving our buildings, our documents, our cultural and artistic sites -- we are preserving what we value -- and what we want to bring with us into the next millennium.

We are connected to each other by shared values, shared experiences, and shared hopes. It is time to look toward the next century and the new millennium, to think about what those values mean to us, and to carry them forward. That was the idea behind the White House Millennium Council that the President and I created last year. We wanted to engage all Americans in thinking about what defines us as a nation, and gifts we could all give to the future. The theme we chose for the Millennium Council is to honor the past, imagine the future.

My visit here today -- and to the Conservatory of Flowers in San Francisco tomorrow -- another historic site in need of repair -- is part of a larger millennium project that Dick Moe talked about -- a public/private partnership to "Save America's Treasures." The National Trust for Historic Preservation -- as he said -- is the private sector partner in that campaign, along with the Committee to Save America's Treasures that has recently been established. I'm glad that committee members have joined me today. Their work is vital. These sites and artifacts are irreplaceable. We lose them, and we lose our history — and our national memory.

This national effort to "Save America's Treasures" received a wonderfully creative boost today — with the announcement of the "Sing America" CD. I want to thank David Altschul and Warner Brothers Records for making that remarkable contribution. And I want to thank David personally for being such a generous and creative member of the Save America's Treasures committee.

When music lovers buy this CD, the proceeds will go to the National Trust to establish the Fund to Save America's Treasures. The new fund will be an endowment — a permanent grant fund to help neighborhoods and towns all over America to save their own treasures. The grants will provide that all-important seed money to get the advice and expert assistance needed to preserve a site or a collection that is important to that community. We all know about the Star-Spangled Banner, now being conserved at the Smithsonian Institution.

We all know about the great Park Service sites at Gettysburg and Independence Hall in Philadelphia. But every town has a treasure in its back yard: the statue on the town green, the historic schoolhouse or home of a famous resident. Now the Fund to Save America's Treasures will help preserve the legacy of all of us — and for generations to come.

(I'd like to note that one of the performances that people will hear on this album will be by Louis Armstrong -- whose archives of music at Queens College in New York I visited last week -- to support efforts in that community to ensure the music and spirit of "Satchmo" can live on for our children and grandchildren.)

All of us -- from the volunteer electrician who is helping to replace the thousands of light bulbs in the Orpheum Theater to the young people who performed for us today to city agencies to powerful companies like Warner Brothers -- can become the caretakers of our heritage. We can all make gifts to the future. Thank you all for playing your part in this exciting national effort.

Thank you.

FEMA | Office of the Director 20472 | 500 C Street, S.W. | Washington, DC

FAX

Date: 12/2/98

Number of pages including cover sheet: 3

To: Ann Donovan

Phone:

Fax phone: (202)456-2008

CC:

From: Jane Bullock

Phone: 202.646.3923

Fax phone: 202.646.3930

REMARKS: ☐ Urgent ☐ For your review ☐ Reply ASAP ☐ Please comment

Attached are the talking points for the First Lady. You may need some additional material, which we will be happy to provide. Also, do you need anything else on the Conservatory of Flowers. Sorry this is late. Please call if you need anything else. Jane

Christy, in case you need info on FEMA. Linda

FEMA's Commitment to Protecting Our Nation's Heritage

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) complies with the National Historic Preservation Act to evaluate its undertakings that affect historic properties.

In time of disaster, FEMA works closely with its Federal counterparts, State and local government, and national and regional organizations to ensure that historic and cultural resources receive appropriate and timely attention.

To meet its historic preservation responsibilities, FEMA has executed Programmatic Agreements with respective State Historic Preservation Offices, State Emergency Management Agencies, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The Agreements enable FEMA to meets its preservation responsibilities while facilitating delivery of its disaster assistance programs. Since 1989, FEMA has executed more than 40 Programmatic Agreements.

FEMA's work to protect historic and cultural resources was further strengthened by the commitment made by Director Witt at the December 1994 *National Summit on Emergency Response: Safeguarding Our Cultural Heritage*.

As a result of the summit, FEMA, in partnership with the Getty Conservation Institute and Heritage Preservation, formed the National Task Force on Emergency Response to assist museums, libraries, archives and the public in time of natural disaster.

The task force is comprised of thirty Federal agencies and national organizations and meets periodically to review and coordinate preservation assistance activities.

Among FEMA's task force achievements are:

creating a database of historic preservation and art conservation experts from other federal agencies that FEMA can mission assign when a disaster threatens cultural resources.

publishing recommendations by preservation and conservation experts in FEMA's various media outlets about caring for damaged family heirlooms and collectibles.

As the Millennium approaches, FEMA in coordination with its public and private partners is doing its part to ensure that this nation's cultural heritage is preserved and protected.

In the words of Cathryn Slater, Chairperson of the Advisory Council, "The entire preservation and cultural community has benefited from FEMA's leadership."

SUCCESS STORIES IN THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES IN CALIFORNIA

Loma Prieta Projects

The Green Library at Stanford involved both FEMA funds and private funds from Stanford for repair and hardening against earthquake hazards.

The Greene Library in Oakland was repaired and converted to a museum.

The San Francisco City Hall and Oakland City Hall received funds for retrofit, base isolation and restoration.

The Mexican Art Museum was the first cultural institution to receive funds for the conservation of museum objects. The request for assistance from the Mexican Museum changed FEMA's view on conservation of museum objects.

Northridge Projects

San Francisco Civic Center Historic District Properties are a National Historic Landmark. FEMA provided for the seismic repair, strengthening and rehabilitation of the War Memorial Veterans' Building, Opera House, Department of Public Health, Main Library, and the Civic Auditorium.

The Powell Library at UCLA was undergoing repair at the time of the earthquake. The beautiful plaster ceiling was severely damaged. Molds were made of the ceiling and hazard mitigation initiatives were used to reduce the hazards associated with the suspended ceiling.

The Royce Hall, located across from the Powell Library also received damage to the plaster ceiling. Although the damage was not as extensive, similar techniques were used to repair the damage. Two brick towers at Royce Hall were seismic retrofitted.

Los Angeles Coliseum is a National Historic Landmark and the site of two Olympic Games. FEMA provided funds for the repair, restoration and seismic strengthening of the facility.

REMARKS FOR FIRST LADY'S VISIT TO SAN FRANCISCO
Conservatory of Flowers
11 December 1998

San Francisco is one of America's most historic cities, and its citizens have a strong tradition of keeping its past alive so that future generations can live with it and learn from it. That's good news for everybody, because there's much to be learned from an evocative place like this conservatory. Places like this are more than ornaments on the landscape. They're a doorway into our past, a reminder of who we were, how we lived, what our technology was like, what was important to us. They tell us where we came from, and that knowledge can help us figure out where we're going. Places like the Conservatory of Flowers are treasures, and saving them is one of the most important things we can do for Americans of the new millennium.

That's what the Save America's Treasures program is all about. The program calls on Americans to "honor the past and imagine the future" by saving the important buildings, objects, documents and works of art that tell our nation's story. I believe the First Lady got it just right when she described it as "an opportunity for us to take stock of who we are as Americans...and what we want to carry into the next century." The program is a call to action that embraces everyone: If these treasures disappear, they're gone forever--and saving them isn't someone else's job.

I believe Save America's Treasures has the potential to become the most ambitious nationwide preservation effort ever undertaken. The National Trust is honored to have been selected as the private-sector partner of the White House to coordinate a public awareness campaign and to assist in

identifying urgent preservation needs and directing funds to them. We're already hard at work--and we're already enormously impressed by the enthusiasm and vision that local groups are showing in identifying potential projects.

The story of historic preservation in America has always been the story of productive partnerships. That's certainly true of the Save America's Treasures initiative, which offers an unprecedented opportunity for state and local preservation groups, public agencies and religious organizations to work together to focus attention and resources on saving the treasures that tell the community's story. It's happening here in San Francisco, where agencies of the federal, state and local governments are working with leaders in the business and philanthropic communities and hundreds of private citizens to develop a strategy and identify sources of funding for saving the Conservatory of Flowers.

We hope that the effort underway here will be a model for others. We hope that every community in the country will adopt its own millennium project. We hope that they'll apply for official Save America's Treasures Project designation, and that they'll use that designation as a means of publicizing their efforts, preparing careful preservation plans and securing financial support to convert the plans into reality.

To help that process along here in San Francisco, I have a presentation to make:

In recognition of the importance of this place and in support of the

current efforts to return it to its important role as a focus of community life, it's my pleasure today to present to Donna Ernston this certificate designating the Conservatory of Flowers an official Save America's Treasures Project.

[present certificate to Donna Ernston]

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the work of the First Lady. Hillary Rodham Clinton is the most effective and articulate champion of the Save America's Treasures program. Her vision helped shape the program at the outset. Her visits to historic places in recent months have generated greater media coverage of heritage-related issues than any other event in recent memory. Her thoughtful and articulate public statements have helped thousands of people to understand the importance of preserving the buildings, objects, documents and works of art that tell America's story. Just as the preservation of our heritage will be a gift of enormous value and lasting benefit to Americans of the new millennium, the First Lady's work on behalf of this program represents an enormous gift to the nation. On behalf of all of us who are the beneficiaries of that gift, I'm delighted to have this opportunity to say a public and sincere "thank you."

It is a great honor to introduce the best friend historic preservation has ever had in any White House, the First Lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
TALKING POINTS FOR GOVERNOR'S SPOUSES LUNCH
THE WHITE HOUSE
FEBRUARY 23, 1998

- It's an honor and a pleasure to welcome all of you to the White House, for this Governor's Spouses luncheon. Each one of you has contributed your unique skills, talents and energy to a common cause: improving and enriching the lives of citizens across your state. It always inspires me to hear about the innovative and effective programs you are pioneering in your local communities -- efforts which so often help shape our federal response to these same challenges.

- Today, I want to talk about a subject that I know is already engaging your collective energies and thoughts: preparing for the arrival of the new millennium. The President and I created the White House Millennium Council last August, to make sure that in addition to all the New Year's eve parties and rejoicing that will take place as we enter the year 2000 that we make this historic moment a meaningful time as well.

- This is a natural time to reflect on what kind of society we want to live in, and what kind of future we want to create for our children. We hope the White House Millennium Council will help set the tone for these next three exciting years, with its overall theme to "Honor the past; imagine the future." The President has invited all Americans to participate, and to think about leaving a legacy for the next generation.

- We've already launched a series of Millennium Evenings here at the White House -- lectures and cultural events that will showcase America's creators, thinkers, and visionaries. But this is not just about what the President and I are doing to commemorate the millennium. It's about how Americans, of all walks of life, can come together to celebrate who we are, and who we want to become.

- States, communities, non profit organizations, federal agencies, and individuals are all invited to participate in activities that strengthen our democracy, revitalize our communities, and give those lasting gifts to the future. And I know that a number of states have already begun to plan those activities. For example:

  ** Indiana's Governor Frank O'Bannon has named a task force, under the leadership of his wife Judy, to help citizens envision what they want their state to be in the year 2000. Among their projects: expanding opportunities for people to appreciate their diversity, while reinforcing their common bonds; and finding better ways to administer the state's historic resources. Maryland's Governor Glendening has established the Maryland Commission for Celebration 2000. Plans include developing public service announcements reflecting Maryland's past, and preserving Francis Scott Key's original manuscript of the national anthem.

- One of the best ways to imagine the future is to preserve what we value of our past. Unfortunately, our history and culture are literally disintegrating in our nation's libraries, museums, and archives, and at our historic sites and monuments. So a major part of our Millennium efforts will be to "Save America's Treasures."

- That is why the President's Fiscal '99 budget includes funds for the National Archives to re-encase the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, before these precious founding documents are endangered. The restoration of the Star Spangled Banner is the highest priority millennium project at the Smithsonian.

- In states and communities across the country, we are facing similar losses:
  ** In Pennsylvania, a large number of artifacts from the Gettysburg Battlefield are undocumented and disintegrating for lack of proper storage:
  ** In New Jersey, Thomas Edison's laboratory and house are in "dire" condition;
  ** In New Mexico, some of America's most treasured prehistoric sites, such as Chaco Canyon, need to be preserved.

- The President is committed to helping states and communities restore some of these historic sites and documents. As he said in the State of the Union, "Our culture lives in every community, and every community has places of historic value that tell our stories as Americans. We should protect them." He's proposed a Millennium Fund -- $50 million in each of the next three fiscal years -- to stimulate public-private partnerships throughout the country in an effort to "Save America's Treasures." The fund will be administered through the Department of the Interior, with half the money going to support urgent preservation projects of regional and national significance, and half to the states, through the Divisions of Historic Preservations.

- So today, I'm urging all of you -- as First Ladies of your states -- to join me in celebrating our nation's past, and imagining her future, by promoting Millennium projects in your states that commemorate your local history and traditions, and preserve what is unique and treasured in your own communities.

- And since we're talking about the best ways of "imagining the future" in the next millennium, I want to spend a moment on the most powerful symbol of that future -- our children. Here's another area in which the states have led the way -- developing innovative programs that have made positive changes in the lives of our youngest citizens -- particularly in critical areas like early learning and child care.

- We've learned so many valuable lessons from all of you. In North Carolina, Smart Start helps children enter school healthy and ready to learn; the Ohio Family and Children First initiative promotes a partnership strategy to expand child care and early learning opportunities; in Georgia, Governor Miller has sponsored two statewide initiatives to ensure young children get a healthy, positive start in life.

- So in closing, I want to encourage you to be partners with us as America celebrates the new Millennium. And I want to congratulate you, once again, for not only helping us imagine a better future for our children -- but ensuring those dreams become a reality for the next generation.

Leela deSouza
12/08/98 10:23:04 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Laura E. Schiller/WHO/EOP, Christine N. Macy/WHO/EOP

cc:
Subject: HRC request

Hi Laura and Christy,
Ellen just passed on some important speech comments from HRC.....HRC wants there to be a drumbeat message throughout these SAT speeches that more strongly set the context of the site specific announcements within the Millennium and the Save America's Treasures national campaign. She wants to be able to connect these events to the larger vision of the campaign such that it inspires/instructs the audience to get involved in saving treasures and the public/private partnerships (LAURA, I KNOW YOU'RE WINCING AT THAT PHRASE, BUT IT'S THE MESSAGE WE NEED TO WEAVE IN!) that ultimately support the project.
I've attached the thoughts Ellen had quickly drafted for the Armstrong speech (Laura, you had received this earlier). They are long but the idea is right. What may work is to put 2-3 short sentences up front and then repeat the message with 2-3 sentences at the end of speech to hit the point home.
Each of the individual sites that make up this second SAT tour are important, but without the context the national initiative gets lost.
Please call me if you need additional fodder for this message or you have questions about this.
Leela
---------- Forwarded by Leela deSouza/WHO/EOP on 12/08/98 09:57 AM ----------

Ellen M. Lovell
12/02/98 06:23:54 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Jeffrey A. Shesol/WHO/EOP, Leela deSouza/WHO/EOP, Laura E. Schiller/WHO/EOP

cc:
Subject: context

We need a good P of context to put this event in the millennium, Save America's Treasures context. Can't find a good generic one - so here are the main points, which I hope you can improve on.
We are here today, near the end of the 20th century, to honor a great artist. And soon, when 1999 apprears on the calendar, we will be even more aware than we are today, that the odometer of time is about to change the nines to zeroes - and the new millennium will arrive. Already we are hearing about it...we hear millennium minutes, we see ads for millennium mufflers...friends are asking each other where they will be on New Year's Eve - both in 1999 AND 2000. We are also aware that this is an historic time -- a milestone -- aftr all, it only happens once every 1,000 years.

So last year the President and I created the White House Millennium Council, to set the themes, and stimulate activities in which all Americans can participate: projects that help us learn lessons from our past and prepare us for the 21st c. Our national millennium theme is: Honor the Past -- Imagine the Future.

And one of our signature projects is Save America's Treasures -- a public -private partnership to preserve the collections, art, documents, monuments and historic sites that tell America's story. How can we imagine the future, if the legacy of the people and events that shaped our democrcay and our culture do not come with us into the next millennium? This year Congress agreed to the president's request for $30 million to help save our most importatnt national treasures. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is our partner in supporting many sites and artifacts all over the nations, with its partners, the National Park Foundation and Heritage Preservation. The Trust has created a new Millennium Commitee to Save America's Tresures whcih I am pleased to chair and I welcome the members of that committee here today and thank them for their generosity.

Last summer, The WH Millennium Council and I went on my first SAve America's Treasures Tour, visiting 13 historic sites in four days. On Saturday, I will travel to Cambrige, Mass., to visit the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow House, then to Boston to an event honoring the African Meeting House, the oldest standing African- American church in the US. Then next week, I will be in California, to recognize and to make announcments at three other historic places.

When we think about historic sites, we oftern think of the military and political leaders who made history. But our artists make history too, and change our country for the better. This certainly was the case with Louis Armstrong.

sorry this is rough.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS AT QUEENS COLLEGE
QUEENS, NEW YORK
December 3, 1998

Acknowledgments: Michael Mossman and the Queens College Jazz Orchestra (for the pre-show performance); Dr. Allen Lee Sessoms, Pres. of Queens College; Michael Cogswell, Dir. of the Armstrong House & Archives; Claire Shulman, Queens Borough Pres.; Wynton Marsalis; Ar-VELL Shaw; Bill Ferris, Chairman of NEH; Ronnie and David Ginott [guh-KNOT]

First, I want to thank all of you for showing me such warm and wonderful hospitality here at Queens College, and

earlier today at the Louis Armstrong House -- truly, the House that Jazz Built. I know at least one First Jazz Fan who wishes he could have joined us today. I know my husband will be eager to hear a few stories of Satchmo when I return to the White House.

Amazingly, more than a quarter-century has passed since Louis Armstrong lived here in Queens. It doesn't seem it could possibly be that long ago. That's because, in so many ways, Louis Armstrong still lives here. His music still swings and his spirit soars -- in Queens; and across the East River in Manhattan; and across our nation and around the world.

We hear the legacy of Louis Armstrong in the modern masterworks of Wynton Marsalis. We see it in the neighborhood schools sponsored by the Armstrong Educational Foundation. We find it in the cadence of our speech and feel it in the quickened tempo of our own times.

It is a rich cultural heritage, truly an American treasure, and one well worth preserving. At the Armstrong House and here at the Armstrong Archives, I have been privileged to see the work being done to carry Louis's legacy into the next century. That effort began, of course, with Satchmo himself. When we recall the vast range of his vocations -- from instrumentalist to vocalist, from actor to author, from composer to cultural ambassador -- we often forget that he was also a great preservationist.

As Michael Cogswell just told us, Louis Armstrong made a record of everything. He preserved papers. Photographs. Scrapbooks. Collages. Correspondence. He saved the charts

that Wynton will play from today. Satchmo even saved menus, their margins scribbled full of commentary on the soup du jour. ("Dee-licious," he wrote.)

On reel after reel, he made priceless recordings of jam sessions, backstage chatter, and parties. This is Armstrong on Armstrong -- a vital record of invention and improvisation, an essential glimpse of an artist at work and at play.

Louis Armstrong collected and preserved these artifacts. Now that he is gone, though, these precious, sometimes fragile, gifts cannot care for themselves -- a point that Michael Cogswell made poignantly clear. We are all, now, their caretakers. And that is why the efforts of Ronnie Ginott are so important: I am pleased to announce that she has raised $100,000 for the Armstrong Archives.

[Ronnie has received commitments from the Sam Ash Music Co.; the Carl Fischer Music Publishers; Cynthia Friedman; the Gemeinhardt Flute Co.; Safra National Bank of NY; the Selmer Co.; United Musical Instruments; the Winston Band Instrument Co. and Rayburn Musical Instrument Co.; and Yamaha Band and Orchestral Instruments.]

I also want to acknowledge Bill Ferris, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for supporting a project that, as he has told me, is close to his heart. The NEH

has given a big financial boost to the Louis Armstrong Collection, helping not only to save these treasures but also to share them, by funding a traveling exhibit. And soon, in the Armstrong House I visited today, there will be a permanent Armstrong Museum. Thanks in no small part to a gift of $30,000 by Thomas Lee and Ann Tenenbaum, and the ASCAP Foundation, the museum will open to the public on July 4, 2000, the hundredth anniversary of what Louis celebrated as his birthday.

Generosity like this makes it possible for us to continue this vital work -- preserving the art and artifacts that define our nation and our future. Such efforts are all part of our larger project to Save America's Treasures. Saving our treasures depends on both public support and private partners. Our partner in this millennium program is the National Trust for Historic Preservation and its new Save America's Treasures Committee. I'm glad some of the Committee members are with us today.

As we approach the new millennium, we should think of that milestone as more than a New Year's celebration -- it should be a celebration of our national culture, an opportunity to honor our past and, at the same time, imagine our future. This year, I have been touring sites that are vital to our national heritage. During the next week, I will travel to Massachusetts to visit the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow House as well as the African Meeting House, the oldest standing African American church in our country. The point is to spotlight not just famous monuments, and not just political leaders, but also the literary and religious and musical pioneers

who have shaped our history.

By highlighting our heritage, we make it more accessible to all. It is worth mentioning that the Armstrong Archives aren't open only to music scholars; they're open to music lovers the world over. Visitors come from countries as far away as Japan and Argentina to slip on a pair of headphones and listen to some of the rare recordings housed here in Queens -- maybe to take a look at that menu I described. We are reminded that Louis Armstrong isn't just America's treasure; since 1932, when he first set foot overseas, he has belonged to the world.

Louis Armstrong's message of hope and goodwill knew no national boundaries. His was Gideon's trumpet, and could not be contained by even the mightiest walls of oppression. In Berlin, during the height of the Cold War, "Ambassador Satchmo" played and simply charmed his way across Checkpoint Charlie, from West to East and back again. In a *New Yorker* cartoon of that era, a State Department official says, "This is a diplomatic mission of utmost delicacy. The question is: who is the best man for it -- [the Secretary of State] or Satchmo?"

Back at home, Louis Armstrong was an ambassador of another kind -- between the races. A dangerous assignment in his day. Satchmo risked his own safety to sound a clear, resonant note for civil rights, blasting those who stood for segregation. As the nation's most prominent African American, his words carried special weight -- and so did his music, and his films, and the greatness of his gifts. One white

Southerner, as a boy, had seen Armstrong play at a dance; later, that man joined the NAACP legal team that won *Brown v. Board of Education*. His inspiration? The genius of Armstrong. This lawyer later wrote: "Louis opened my eyes wide, and put me to a choice. Blacks, the saying went, were 'all right in their place.' What was the 'place' of such a man, and of the people from which he sprung?" Through the darkest days of racism, Satchmo was an eloquent voice for diversity and dignity.

In a sense, Louis Armstrong felt at home everywhere. He was certainly welcome in every country, on every continent. But from 1943 until his final days, there was only one place he and his wife Lucille truly called "home." I was honored to visit there today -- the modest brick house at 3456 107th Street. Of course, he could have lived in Manhattan, Hollywood, anywhere. But he chose Corona, Queens -- along what we now call the "Jazz Trail." Dizzy Gillespie was his neighbor, less than three blocks away. Ella Fitzgerald was nearby. So was Billie Holiday.

But what Louis really liked about Queens was doing his own shopping at the local grocer's... stopping by the barbershop... watching Westerns in his living room with the neighborhood kids. It was the perfect respite from a life spent mostly on the road. Satchmo said, "We're right out here with the rest of the colored folk and the Puerto Ricans and Italians and the Hebrew cats. . . The frigidaire is full of food. What more do we need?"

Louis Armstrong needed nothing more. But he could see that wasn't the case for everyone in Corona; and, to those families, Satchmo was more than a neighbor. He was a friend.

When he had a brick facade built onto his own house, he walked from door to door and offered to do the same for every family on his block. That same spirit guides the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, which Louis founded in 1969. He said then: "I wanna give back to the world some of the goodness the world gave me."

In addition to the profound musical legacy he has left us, Louis Armstrong has indeed given back much goodness -- through music history programs and workshops, through student exchanges and scholarships, through concerts for neighborhood children, and so much more. Twenty-seven years after Louis Armstrong was laid to rest at Flushing Cemetery, his spirit is as bright and vibrant as the music he made. The work you do here at Queens College -- and the children of Satchmo's beloved borough -- will help carry the tune into the next millennium.

Now let's hear a little more of that wonderful music, from the children of Queens. I am honored to introduce the student choir of Louis Armstrong Elementary and Intermediate Schools.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 22, 1998

REMARKS AT
MILLENNIUM LECTURE SERIES

The East Room

7:30 P.M. EDT

MS. LOVELL: Welcome to the third Millennium Evening at the White House. We are glad to know that outside this room, so full of anticipation, are thousands of Americans who are watching, listening and having your own discussion.

We begin this evening with a short film in which our Librarian of Congress tells us about the Poet Laureate Consultant Program, and the three most recent Poets Laureate speak about their work as writers, but also as voices of poetry.

At the same time, we are here to honor all of you, poets of the world, listeners, readers, you whose curiosity and love of language is alive. Where the voice that is in us makes a true response; where the voice that is great within us rises up.

(A film is shown.)

MRS. CLINTON: Who can remember back to the first poets, the greatest ones, greater even than Orpheus? No one has remembered that far back, or now considers among the artifacts and bones and cantilevered inference the past is made of, those first and greatest poets, so lofty and disdainful of renown, they left us not a name to know them by.

They were the ones that, in whatever tongue worded the

world, that were the first to say, star, water, stone; that said the visible and made it bring invisibles to view in wind and time and change. And in the mind itself, that mind of the hitherto idiot world, and spoke the speechless world, and sang the towers of the city into the astonished sky.

They were the first great listeners, attuned to interval relationship and scale; the first to say, above, beneath, beyond. Congerers with love, death, sleep, with bread and wine; who, having uttered, vanished from the world leaving no memory but the marvelous, magical elements -- the breathing shapes and stops of breaths we build our babbles of.

To you, who speak the speechless world, and to the great listeners who hear it, we are honored to welcome you to the White House.

Just like Howard Nemerov in "The Makers," we are here on this Millennium Evening to celebrate the timeless power of poetry and poets as our American memory, our purveyors of insight and culture, our eyes and ears who silence the white noise around us and express the very heart of what connects us, plagues us, and makes us fully human.

I want to thank everyone who has made this celebration possible -- especially Ellen Lovell, the Director of the White House Millennium Council; our Poets Laureate, Robert Pinsky, Rita Dove, Bob Hass, Anthony Hecht, and William Meredith. What better way to commemorate National Poetry Month than by gathering our nation's poetry and poets in our nation's home.

When Stephen Hawking gave the second Millennium Lecture here, I'd said that there had never been more physicists in the White House. I don't believe there have ever been more poets in the White House than this evening. (Laughter.) I hope you will also get a chance to visit the foyer and see some of the extraordinary works that capture America's role in poetry and poetry's role in America. For that exhibit and so much more, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Dr. James Billington, the center for the book, the curators, and the entire Library of Congress.

Let me also thank Bill Ferris and the National Endowment for the Humanities, state humanities councils, the Howard Gilman Foundation, Phi Theta Kappa, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Sun Microsystems for bringing this event to people throughout our nation and the world, first via satellite to more than 200 sites in 44 states, and also via the Internet on the White House web site and the Sun Microsystems site.

This is the third of many Millennium Evenings we will be holding with scholars, artists, scientists, and other creative individuals to help our nation explore who we are, who we want to be

as we enter the next century. The goal of all of our White House Millennium activities is to honor the past and imagine the future, and that is what we are doing tonight, with both poetry and prose, with cutting-edge technology and the torn pages of old books.

Like many of you, I suppose my first real introduction to poetry took place in a classroom. I remember standing before what looked to be a sea of other children and reciting poems I'd memorized by saying them out loud at the kitchen table on the way to school before going to sleep, over and over again. That is how I and so many learned to feel the music and rhythm and inspiration of poetry, to understand its window onto our experiences as Americans, individuals and communities. Whether we sang the Star-Spangled Banner or recited in Emma Lazurus' words inscribed in the Statue of Liberty, or asked Langston Hughes' haunting question, what happens to a dream deferred, we were being influenced by poetry.

We know that happens every day, not just while we're still in school -- when we fall in love or see loved ones die, when our hopes are realized or dashed; we tuck our children into bed, perhaps to a favorite rhyme or walk through a garden. In every moment of our lives the poems we read or write or remember speak to us, often transforming us, comforting us. And we pass that love for them down from generation to generation.

It's important that we touch not just the lives of the few through poetry, but the everyday life of all of us. That's what the Poet Laureate Joseph Brodsky was talking about when he said that, an anthology of American poetry should be found in the drawer in every room in every motel in the land. Seven years later, we see that dream being fulfilled in truck stops, supermarkets and train stations, where thousands of copies of 101 Great Poems are being handed out by his American Poetry and Literacy Project every April.

This afternoon, we saw poetry in action at Johnson Junior High School in Southeast Washington. We saw students who were practicing for a poetry slam taking place tonight. Now, for those of you who have never seen a slam, it's a high-speed, high-spirited competition where students face off against each other, reading their own poems and receiving scores like at the Olympics from a group of judges.

Using their voices as an instrument and their souls as a library, these students read poems about the beauty of their names, the plight of a homeless man, the contributions of Duke Ellington, their pride, and their pains. And they talked about how poetry had helped put their anger on paper, instead of acting it out; how it had opened up thoughts they never knew existed and given them confidence. One young man stood up and said as part of his poem, I'm so musical that when I write a song you sing it for the rest of your life. (Laughter.)

No one has worked harder to ensure that children and young people and all of us throughout America sing poetry for the

rest of our lives than our two former and current Poets Laureate. Whether by promoting literacy and celebrating our environment, or by bringing poetry to everyone and putting everyday life into poetry, they have been on the front lines.

We are also very grateful that Robert Pinsky has created a program for recording poems, the poems that help define us as individuals and as a nation. And just this morning I was pleased to announce that the National Endowment for the Arts is awarding $500,000 to support the Favorite Poem Project.

So tonight it is my great honor to introduce three of Howard Nemerov's "makers" who will speak the speechless world and bring it to all of us -- in other words, their own version of the poetry slam -- our Poets Laureate, Bob Hass, Rita Dove and Robert Pinsky, who will start things off with a few comments.

Please welcome them. (Applause.)

MR. PINSKY: We're here to honor our ancestors -- not our literal ancestors, but our ancestors in poetry -- and to imagine ways that we can give the gift that they gave to us to the young.

I'll start with just a few lines from Harriet Converse's 19th century translation of an Iroquois Thanksgiving Song:

> We give thanks that the voice of the Great Spirit can still be heard through the words of ganay-oh-day-ho. We thank the Great Spirit that we have the privilege of this pleasant occasion. We give thanks for the persons who can sing the Great Spirit's music and hope that they will be privileged to continue in his faith. We thank the Great Spirit for all the persons who perform the ceremonies on this occasion.

We're going to try to give a fast, representative reading from the great heritage of American poetry. And the place to begin seems to be with the poet who embodies the sweep and embrace and cultural appetite of American art and American life at its best. I'll read a few lines from the opening from "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," by Walt Whitman, and then my friends will continue in that vein.

> Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me. On the ferry boats, the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose. And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to

me, and more in my meditation than you
might suppose.

The others that are to follow me, the
ties between me and them, the certainty
of others, the life, love, sight,
hearing of others.
Others will enter the gates of the
ferry and cross from shore to shore.
Others will watch the run of the flood
tide. Others will see the shipping of
Manhattan, north and west, and the
heights of Brooklyn to the south and
east. Others will see the islands
large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them
as they cross, the sun half an hour
high. A hundred years hence, or ever
so many hundred years hence, others
will see them, will enjoy the sunset,
the pouring in of the flood tide, the
falling back to the sea of the ebb
tide.
It avails not, time nor place; distance
avails not. I am with you, men and
women of a generation, or ever so many
generations hence.
Just as you feel when you look on the
river and sky, so I felt. Just as any
of you who is one of a living crowd, I
was one of a crowd. Just as you are
refreshed by the gladness of the river
and the bright flow, I was refreshed.
Just as you stand and lean on the rail,
yet hurry with the swift current, I
stood, yet was hurried. Just as you
look on the numberless masts of ships
and the thick-stemmed pipes of
steamboats, I looked.

MS. DOVE: From Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself."

A child said, What is the grass?
fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not
know what it is any more than he.
I guess it must be the flag of my
disposition, out of hopeful green stuff
woven.
Or I guess it is the handkerchief of
the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer
designedly dropped,
Bearing the owner's name some way in

the corners, that we may see and remark
and say, Whose?
Or I guess the grass is itself a child,
the produced babe of the vegetation.
Or I guess it is a uniform
hieroglyphic,
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad
zones and narrow zones,
Growing among black folks as among
white, Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman,
Cuff, I give them the same. I receive
them the same. And now it seems to me
the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

And Langston Hughes' "The Negro Speaks of Rivers."

I've known rivers. I've known rivers
ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns
were young. I built my hut near the
Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the
pyramids above it. I heard the singing
of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen
its muddy bosom turn all golden in the
sunset.
I've known rivers, ancient, dusky
rivers. My soul hath grown deep like
the river.

MR. HASS: We move from Walt Whitman's Atlantic to Langston Hughes' Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean of Robinson Jeffers. I'm going to read a poem written after the death of his wife, in the late 1950s, and it's called "Vulture."

I had walked since dawn and laid down
to rest on a bare hillside above the
ocean. I saw through half-shut eyelids
a vulture wheeling up in heaven. And
presently it passed again, but nearer
and lower, its orbit narrowing.

I understood then that I was under
inspection. I laid death-still and
heard the flight feathers whistle above
me and make their circle and come
nearer. I could see the naked red head
between the great wings bear downward,
staring.

I said, `My dear bird, we are wasting

time here. These old bones still work.
They are not for you.' But how
beautiful he looked gliding down on
those great sails. How beautiful he
looked veering away in the sea light
over the precipice. I tell you
solemnly that I was sorry to have
disappointed him. To be eaten by that
beak and become part of him, to share
those wings and those eyes, what a
sublime end of one's body, one an
enskyment, what a life after death."

MR. PINSKY: I hope you all noticed how artfully we went from the east coast to the midwest to the Pacific. (Laughter.) I hope it's not a complete bromide to say that if Whitman embodies an audacious sweep and cultural appetite and cultural omnivorousness, Emily Dickinson embodies other characteristics of American art, an audacious individuality and boldness and concentration. And we thought it would be appropriate to do some of those.

Further in summer than the birds,
pathetic from the grass
A minor nation celebrates its unobtrusive mass.
No ordinance be seen
So gradual the grace a pensive custom
it becomes, enlarging loneliness.
Antiquest felt at noon
When August burning low
Arise this spectral canticle,
Repose to typify.
Remit as yet no grace,
No furrow on the glow
Yet a Druidic difference

Enhances nature now.

MR. HASS: Much madness is the vinest sense to the discerning eye. Much sense the starkest madness. Tis the majority prevails; tis the majority in this as all prevails. Assent and you are sane; demure, you're straight way dangerous and handled with a chain.

MS. DOVE: I heard a fly buzz when I died;
The stillness in the room was like the
stillness in the air between the heaves
of storm.
The eyes around had wrung them dry, and
breaths were gathering firm for that
last onset, when the king be witnessed
in the room.
I willed my keepsakes, signed away what
portion of me be assignable. And then

it was there interposed a fly,
With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz,
between the light and me.
And then the windows failed, and then I
could not see to see.

MR. PINSKY: After great pain, a formal feeling comes. The nerves sit ceremonious, like tombs. The stiff heart questions, was it He that bore, and yesterday, or centuries before? The feet, mechanical, go round of ground or air or ought. A wooden way, regardless grown. A quartz contentment, like a stone. This is the hour of lead,

Remembered, if outlived, as freezing
persons recollect the snow.
First chill, then stupor, then the
letting go.

We could be all Dickinson, couldn't we? (Laughter.) I said that these are poems of the past, but we are imagining them for future generations. So we thought we'd read a group of poems to do with children and families and the passing on of culture. I think this is the only commissioned poem that will be read tonight. This is a poem by William Carlos Williams that his grandson asked him to write. (Laughter.)

The Turtle (For My Grandson.)

Not because of his eyes, the eyes of a
bird but because he is beaked,
bird-like, to do an injury, has the
turtle attracted you. He is your only
pet. When we are together you talk of
nothing else, ascribing all sorts of
murderous motives to his least action.
You ask me to write a poem, should I
have poems to write about a turtle.
The turtle lives in the mud, but is not
mud-like.
You can tell it by his eyes, which are
clear. When he shall escape his
present confinement he will stride
about the world destroying all with his
sharp beak. Whatever opposes him in
the streets of the city shall go down.
Cars will be overturned. And upon his
back shall ride to his conquests my
lord, you. You shall be master.
In the beginning there was a great
tortoise who supported the world. Upon
him all ultimately rests. Without him,
nothing will stand. He is all wise and
can outrun the hare. In the night, his
eyes carry him to unknown places. He
is your friend.

MR. HASS: Anne Bradstreet was, I guess, the first American poet. She was the first English colonist to publish a book of poems. She came to New England on the ship Arabella, the first ship that brought the Puritans to New England, in 1630. And her book was published in 1650, but the poem I'm going to read was not in that book. She thought it was too personal to be printed, and it wasn't, in fact, printed until 1865. It was a poem that she wrote to her husband in the ninth month of a pregnancy.

Giving birth in that wilderness in those years was a risky business, and she feared she wouldn't survive it, and she wrote this poem to speak to him. It begins, as Puritan poems often did, in adages and platitudes, but listen to what happens. The Victorian editor gave it the title "Before the Birth of One of Her Children."

All things within the fading world hath
end. Adversity doth still our joys
attend. No ties so strong, no friend
so dear and sweet,
But with death's parting blow is sure
to meet.
The sentence passed is most
irrevocable, a common thing, yet, oh,
inevitable.
How soon, my dear, death may my steps attend.
How soon't may be thy lot to lose thy friend.
We're both ignorant, yet love bids me these farewell lines to recommend to thee,
That when that knot's untied that made us one,
I may seem thine, who in effect am none.
And if I see not half my days that's due,
What nature would, God grant to yours and you.
The many faults that well you know I have
Let be interred in my oblivious grave.
If any worth or virtue were in me,
Let that live freshly in they memory.
And when thou feelst no grief as I no harms,
Yet love they dead who lay long in thine arms.
And when thy loss shall be repaid with gains,
Look to my little babes, my dear remains.
And if thou loves thyself or lovest me,
These, oh, protect from stepdame's injury.
And if chance to thine eyes shall bring this verse,
With some sad sighs, honor my absent hearse.
And kiss this paper, for thy love's dear sake,
Who, with salt tears, this last farewell did take.

MR. PINSKY: I'll read a poem by one of our predecessors as consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress, Robert Hayden. The poem is a memory of his childhood.

Those Winter Sundays

Sundays, too, my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blue-black cold,
then with cracked hands that ached from labor
in the weekday weather made banked fires blaze.
No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm he'd call
and slowly I would rise and dress, fearing
the chronic angers of that house,

speaking indifferently to him who had driven out the cold and polished my good shoes as well.

What did I know, what did I know of
love's austere and lonely offices?

MS. DOVE: Many of us know Sylvia Plath as a writer of wonderful and troubled poems. And what some people do not realize is that she wrote some of the most beautiful love poems to her children, poems about being a mother, all of that joy, and that anguish.

"Child"

Your clear eye is the one absolutely
beautiful thing.
I want to fill it with color and ducks,
The zoo of the new
Whose names you meditate,
April snowdrop, Indian pipe,
little stalk without wrinkle,
Pool in which images
Should be grand and classical
Not this troublous wringing of hands,
this dark ceiling without a star.

MR. PINSKY: One of the things that Americans should perhaps be most patriotic about is our impurity. Cultural blendings, collidings, crazy mixes and improvisations are behind our distinctive works -- such as jazz and the American feature film and, indeed, American poetry as well as American music, of country music, things. And we thought we'd try to read a few poems that suggest some of that genius for unexpected and impure cultural mixes and ways that we're related to the cultures of other continents in ways that are unexpected.

MS. DOVE: I'll start with a poem by County Cullin, who was a great proponent of the Harlem Renaissance, that magnificent explosion of music, of poetry, art and just plain good fun in the '20s. In this poem, though, County Cullin, who's an African American poet, writes to another poet, to John Keats, the English poet.

To John Keats, poet, at springtime. I

cannot hold my peace, John Keats.
There never was a spring like this. It
is an echo that repeats my last year's
song and next year's bliss. I know, in
spite of all men say of beauty, you
have felt her most. Yea, even in your
grave, her way is laid. Poor, troubled,
lyric ghost, spring never was so fair
and dear as beauty makes her seem this
year.

I cannot hold my peace, John Keats. I
am as helpless in the toil of spring as
any lamb that bleats, the field of
solid earth recoil beneath his puny
legs. Spring beats her toxin call to
those who love her and, lo, the dogwood
petals cover her breast with drifts of
snow and sleek white gulls fly
screaming to her and hover about her
shoulders and kiss her cheek, while
white and purple lilacs muster a
strength that bears them to a cluster
of color and odor. For her sake, all
things that slept are now awake.

And you and I, shall we lie still, John
Keats, while beauty summons us?
Somehow I feel your sensitive will is
pulsing up some tremulous sap road of a
maple tree, whose leaves grow music as
they grow, since your wild voice is in
them -- a harp that grieves for life,
that opens death's dark door. Though
dust, your fingers still can push the
vision splendid to a birth. Though now
they work as grass in the hush of the
night on the broad, sweet page of the
earth.

John Keats is dead, they say. But I,
who hear your full, insistent cry in
bud and blossom, leaf and tree, know
John Keats still writes poetry.

And while my head is earthward bowed to read new life sprung from your shroud, folks seeing me must think it's strange that merely spring should so derange my mind. They do not know that you, John Keats, keep rebel with me, too.

MR. PINSKY: A whole tremendous weight of European thought and religion and philosophical questioning is dealt with in a

very irreverent and saucy way in this poem by Wallace Stevens.

"The Pleasures of Merely Circulating."

The garden flew round with the angel.
The angel flew round with the clouds.
And the clouds flew round and the
clouds flew round and the clouds flew
round with the clouds.

Is there any secret in skulls, the
cattle skulls in the woods? Do the
drummers and black hoods rumble
anything out of their drums?

Mrs. Anderson's Swedish baby might well
have been German or Spanish
But the things go round and again go
round Has rather a classical sound.

MR. HASS: Since Rita read County Cullin's tribute to John Keats, I thought that I'd read the tribute of an Irish American poet to a great black American artist. It's Frank O'Hara's elegy for Billie Holiday, called, "The Day Lady Died." And you should probably know that Billie Holiday used to sing at the Five Spot and that her accompanist was named Mal Waldron. This is the saucy, circumstantial American poetry of the New York art scene in the 1950s.

"The Day Lady Died"

It is 12:20 in New York, a Friday,
three days after Bastille Day. Yes,
it's 1959 and I go get a shoe shine
because I will get off the 419 in
Easthampton at 7:15 and then go
straight to dinner and I don't know the
people who will feed me.

I walk up the muggy street beginning to
sun and have a hamburger and a malted
and buy an ugly New World Writing to
see what the poets in Ghana are doing
these days.
I go to the bank and Mrs. Stillwagon
(first name Linda, I once heard)
doesn't even look at my balance for
once in her life. And in the Golden
Griffin Bookstore I get a little
Verlaine for Patsy with drawings by
Bonnard although I do think of Hesiod
translator Richmond Lattimore or
Brendan Behan's new play or Le Balcon
or Les Negres of Genet,
But I don't, I stick with Verlaine after practically

going to sleep with quandariness.

And for Mike I just stroll into the
Park Lane Liquor Store and ask for a
bottle of Strega and then I go back
where I came from, to 6th Avenue and
the tobacconist in the Ziegfeld
Theatre, and casually ask for a carton
of Gauloises and a carton of Picayunes
and a New York Post with her face on
it.

And I am sweating a lot now and
thinking of leaning on the john door in
the 5 Spot while she whispered a song
along the keyboard to Mal
Waldron and everyone and I stopped
breathing.

MR. PINSKY: We'll read a series of poems that have to do with imagination, I think in an American context. The poem I'm going to read to you has a lot in common in American country music. It's basically kind of a "somebody done somebody wrong" narrative in which the extraordinary nature of the woman who chooses very badly in love becomes part of the pride of a town. And the relationship between the gossip, or the preoccupation of the town and her heroism makes something of the story that's a little more significant to the imagination than the story would be in itself, for her, or than the town would be.

And the rhymes -- it's Edwin Arlington's "Eros Turannos" -- Love the Tyrant. The rhymes in the poem are like a somewhat, somewhat longing notion of a ballad, but it's like a hyper-ballad. It's a ballad straining to be a ballad in a community that is partly too lonely to be the adequate community.

"Eros Turannos"

She fears him, and will always ask
What fated her to choose him;
She meets in his engaging mask
All reasons to refuse him;
But what she meets and what she fears
Are less than are the downward years
Drawn slowly to the foamless weirs
Of age, were she to lose him.

Between a blurred sagacity
That once had power to sound him,
And love that will not let him be
The Judas that she found him,
Her pride assuages her almost,
As if it were alone the cost.
He sees that he will not be lost

And waits and looks around him.
A sense of ocean and old trees

Envelops and allures him;
Tradition touching all he sees
Beguiles and reassures him;
And all her doubts of what he says
Are dimmed with what she knows of days
--
Ill even in prejudice delays
And fades, and she secures him.

The falling leaf inaugurates
The reign of her confusion;
The pounding wave reverberates
The dirge of her illusion;
And home, where passion lived and died,
Becomes a place where she can hide
While all the town harbor side
Vibrate with her seclusion.

We tell you, tapping on our brows,
The story as it should be,
As if the story of a house
Were told, or ever could be;
We'll have no kindly veil between
Her visions and those we have seen,
As if we guessed what hers have been,
Or what they are or would be.

Meanwhile we do no harm; for they
That with a God have striven,
Not hearing much of what we say,
Take what the god has given;
Though like waves breaking it may be,
Or like a changed familiar tree,
Or like a stairway to the sea
Where down the blind are driven.

MS. DOVE: Elizabeth Bishop wrote one of the most amazing sestinas I think of the English language. The sestina is a lot like a household as seen by a child. Words keep popping up, objects, and you try to make sense of them. And just as a sestina uses those six words over and over again, a child will find a way to piece together the puzzle of its existence and its place in the world.

This is Elizabeth Bishop's "Sestina."

September rain falls on the house.
In the failing light, the old
grandmother sits in the kitchen with
the child

beside the Little Marvel Stove,
reading the jokes from the almanac,
laughing and talking to hide her tears.

She thinks that her equinoctial tears
and the rain that beats on the roof of
the house
were both foretold by the almanac,
but only known to a grandmother.
The iron kettle sings on the stove.
She cuts some bread and says to the
child, It's time for tea now; but the
child is watching the teakettle's small
hard tears dance like mad on the hot
black stove,
the way the rain must dance on the
house.
Tidying up, the old grandmother hangs
up the clever almanac on its string.
Birdlike, the almanac hovers half open
above the child, hovers above the old
grandmother and her teacup full of dark
brown tears.
She shivers and says she thinks the
house feels chilly, and puts more wood
in the stove.

It was to be, says the Marvel Stove.
I know what I know, says the almanac.
With crayons, the child draws a rigid
house and a winding pathway. Then the
child puts in a man with buttons like
tears and shows it proudly to the
grandmother.
But secretly, while the grandmother
busies herself about the stove, the
little moons fall down like tears from
between the pages of the almanac into
the flower bed the child has carefully
placed in the front of the house.

Time to plant tears, says the almanac.

The grandmother sings to the marvelous
stove and the child draws another
inscrutable house.

MR. HASS: Wallace Stevens probably thought longer and more directly about imagination, about the American imagination, about the relationship of the imagination to reality than any other American poet. And this is his last -- possibly his second to last, poem on the subject. It's either the last poem he wrote, or very near it -- this man who spent 30 years walking from his house to his job as an executive vice president of the Hartford Insurance Company,

musing on his own mind. And this last poem he called, "Of Mere Being."

I should say that it's a man who lived through hard winters Floridian imagination of mere being. (Laughter.)

The pond at the end of the mine, beyond
the last thought rises in the bronze
decor. A gold feathered bird sings in
the pond without human feeling, without
human meaning, a foreign song. It is
then you know it is not the reasons
that make us happy or unhappy.

The tree stands at the edge of space.
The wind moves slowly through the
branches. The birds' fire-fangled
feathers dangle down."

MR. PINSKY: What we've been doing is seeking inspiration and sustenance and comfort from our past, from the ancestors. The last poem that we're going to read for this part of the evening is a poem about that journey, how mysterious and difficult and stressful and challenging and, the end, restorative, that search into the past is. And we'll share the reading of the poem amongst the three of us.

So the final poem, this part of the evening, is Robert Frost's poem, "Directive."

Back out of all this now too much for
us. Back in a time made simple by the
loss
Of detail, burned, dissolved and broken
off Like graveyard marble sculpture in
the weather.
There is a house that is no more a
house, Upon a farm that is no more a
farm,
And in a town that is no more a town.
The road there, if you'll let a guide
direct you
Who only has at heart your getting
lost, May seem as if it should have
been a quarry,
Great monolithic knees the former town
Long since gave up pretense of keeping
covered.

And there's a story in a book about it;
Besides the wear of iron wagon wheels
The ledges show lines ruled southeast,
northwest,
The chisel work of an enormous glacier

That braced his feet against the Arctic
Pole.
You must not mind a certain coolness
from him
Still said to haunt this side of
Panther Mountain.
Nor need you mind the serial ordeal of
being watched from forty cellar holes
As if by eye pairs out of forty
firkins.

MS. DOVE: As for the woods excitement
over you that sends light russell
rushes to their leaves, charge that to
upstart inexperience. Where were they
all not twenty years ago. They think
too much of having shaded out a few old
pecker-fretted apple trees.

Make yourself up a cheering song of how
someone's road home from work this once
was, who may be just ahead of you on
foot or creaking with a buggy-load of
grain. The height of the adventure is
the height of country where two village
cultures faded into each other. Both
of them are lost.

And if you're lost enough to find
yourself by now, pull in your ladder
road behind you and put a sign up:
Closed to all but me. Then make
yourself at home. The only field now
left no bigger than a harness gall.

First there is the children's house of
make-believe, some shattered dishes
underneath a pine, the playthings in
the playhouse of the children. Weep
for what little things could make them
glad.

MR. HASS: Then for the house that is
no more a house but only a bililacked
cellar hole now slowly closing like a
dent in dought. This was no playhouse
but a house in earnest. Your
destination and your destinies, a brook
that was the water of the house, cool
as a spring as yet so near its source,
too lofty and original to rage.

We know the valley streams that when
aroused will leave their tatters hung

on barb and thorn. I have kept hidden
in the instep arch of an old cedar at
the waterside a broken drinking goblet
like the grail, under a spell so the
wrong one's can't find it, so can't get
saved, as St. Mark says they mustn't.
I stole the goblet from the children's
playhouse.

Here are your waters and your watering
place. Drink and be whole again,
beyond confusion. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't mean to be heretical, but I was transported by Robert and Robert and Rita. And I was thinking, this really is an historic moment: first, there were the three tenors --(laughter) -- then there were three sopranos, but nobody ever had three such poets before. and we thank them. (Applause.)

A few years ago there was an interesting article in the Atlantic Monthly, which asked whether poetry could matter in the 21st century. I reread it a few moments before coming down tonight. You know, in this crazy world we're living in, everything's running around so fast. If it could matter, how could we revive the human value of poetry -- its importance to our culture, to our sense of who we are and who we are becoming as individuals and as a people?

Well, tonight there is a poet who was not an American, but was very much of the Americas, and I think we would be remiss not to acknowledge. Here's what Octavio Paz said about his craft: "Between what I see and what I say, between what I say and what I keep silent, between what I keep silent and what I dream, between what I dream and what I forget, poetry."

That is what we celebrate here tonight. Does it have any value? Of course, it does. It made us happy. It made us nostalgic. It made us sad. It made us wiser tonight.

When I was a boy in high school I was once required to memorize 100 lines from MacBeth -- hardly designed to entice me to a public career. (Laughter.) But then again, I learned about the dangers of blind ambitions -- (laughter) -- the fleeting nature of fame -- (laughter) -- the ultimate emptiness of power disconnected from higher purpose. Mr. Shakespeare made me a better President. (Applause.)

Something quite a lot to be said for all this, and I welcome you here tonight. Tonight, we have honored the poetry of our nation's past. Now, I'd like for you to see some of the poets of our future, people whom Hillary and our Poets Laureate visited with today at Johnson Junior High School.

(A video is shown.)

THE PRESIDENT: Now I'd like to turn the discussion over to the Director of our White House Millennium Project, Ellen Lovell.

MS. LOVELL: Thank you, Mr. President. We invited some other Americans who love poetry to come here and read us their favorite poems. And the first is Barry Norkin from the Veterans Nursing Home program in Silver Spring, Maryland.

MR. NORKIN: Hello, I am Barry Norkin, and I would like to share with you Robert Frost's beautiful poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
to watch his woods fill up with
snow.
My little horse must think it queer
to stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
this darkest evening of the year.
He gives his harness bells a shake
to ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
of easy wind on downy flake.
Ah, the woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
but I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
and miles to go before I sleep. (Applause.)

MS. LOVELL: Thank you, Mr. Norkin. I know that poem means a lot to you.

We have Internet questions now from all over the world, Mrs. Clinton, from Germany and Australia, Saudi Arabia, England, and India, but let's take the first one from the United States.

MRS. CLINTON: This question is from Rebecca Sue Olson from Chapin, South Carolina. And it's for any of the poets. "As we become more and more of a sound-bite society and rely upon technology for communication, will poetry even be relevant in the new millennium?"

Robert, Bob, Rita?

MR. HASS: Someone asked me that the other day. In fact, poets often get asked that in interviews, and I always think it's such a curious question. Technologies are media. They have content. I was with the grand old Nobel Laureate, Czeslaw Milosz, a couple of weeks ago on a spring afternoon in Portland. And we walked into a restaurant, and a very fresh-faced young waitress came toward us with a tray full of fruit. And he turned to me and said, you know, life is so pleasant it's a pity one has to die. (Laughter.)

One needs a language in which to say those things whatever the technologies are. I don't understand how human beings will have any less need to think strange thoughts and feel their way into the strangest and funniest and happiest and weirdest feelings because they're using some other media. (Applause.)

MS. LOVELL: Reverend Michael Haynes from the Twelfth Baptist Church in Boston, I know that poetry is intertwined with your life and work.

REVEREND HAYNES: My parents immigrated to the United States from the island country of Barbados around 1920. I was born around 1927 in the heart of Boston, on the edge of the Great Depression, which had its terrible impact upon our family. I went to the Boston Public Schools, and in the 9th grade in junior high school a very, very caring, insightive teacher kept quoting phrases that said something like this, "Be not like dumb, driven cattle; be a hero in the strife." That was the first seed in my life of one whom I came to know as the New England poet by the name of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

When I got to Boston English High School, our English teacher made us learn the poem and recite the poem, gave us a little of the background. I didn't realize that I was receiving a seed in my life that was going to help me psychologically, sociologically and even, eventually, theologically.

When I got to theological school all of the pieces of Longfellow began to make an awful lot of sense. His Psalm of Life became mine:

> Tell me not in mournful numbers, life
> is but an empty dream, for the soul is
> dead that slumbers and things are not
> what they seem. Life is real. Life is
> earnest. And the grave is not its
> goal. Dust thou art, to dust returnest
> was not spoken of the soul. Not
> enjoyment and not sorrow is our
> destined end away, but to act, that
> each tomorrow finds us farther than
> today.
>
> Art is long and time is fleeting and
> our hearts, though stout and brave,
> sill like muffled drums are beating
> funeral marches to the grave. In the
> world's broad field of battle, in the
> bivouac of life, be not like the dumb,
> driven cattle, be a hero in the strife.
> Trust no future, how ever pleasant.
> Let the dead past bury its dead. Act.

Act in living present. Heart within
and God or head.

Lives of great men all remind us we can
make our lives sublime and departing
leave behind us footprints on the sands
of time. Footprints that perhaps
another sailing on life's solemn main,
a forlorn and a shipwrecked brother
seeing shall take heart again.

Let us then be up and doing, with a
heart for any fate still achieving,
still pursuing, learn to labor and
learn to wait." (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: This next question from the Internet is from Everett C. Albers from Bismark, North Dakota: "Suppose that in the next millennium poetry becomes the medium of shared vision and American community; there's a reading beginning at midnight, 2099. What lines from American poetry of the 20th century might be recited 1,000 years or so hence? (Laughter.)

MR. HASS: Probably someone would get up and sing Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changing." (Laughter.)

MS. DOVE: And that would be very appropriate.

MR. PINSKY: We started to try to answer that question in what we did for half an hour. We were partly thinking of the occasion. But I would say that Williams, Stevens, Bishop, Frost, O'Hara, Hughes, Hayden, the poets that we read represent not only our sense of what would be good to read on this occasion, but also things that live in our hearts and we think are likely to be living 100 years from now -- things by those authors. So it's not a very original answer, but it is from the heart.

MS. DOVE: And we can see that, I mean, if you think of -- we read Dickinson, and we wanted to stay there -- she will also be read in the year 2999. (Laughter.)

MS. LOVELL: *When I spoke with Rich Wormeli, a middle* school teacher from Herndon, Virginia, and the 1996 Disney English Teacher of the Year, his deep feeling for words really came through. He's here with his students. Rick?

MR. WORMELI: Thank you. Thank you very much. We took your charge at heart. We have 11- and 12-year-olds, not just 13-year-olds, Ms. Dove -- some of Virginia's finest with us here tonight. But I have to tell you that in our classroom, we try to make poetry so compelling that the students can only escape by feeling the poet's passion, understanding the context. And with each

poem we somehow plant a seed, I hope, of developed thought, developed maturation, and understanding. But it is through poetry that we're finally able to express those things that are unspeakable, unbridled joy, and tragic sorrow.

It is the latter of the two that I share with you tonight in effort to make poetry alive and lasting for my students. I read you "The Ballad of Birmingham," by Dudley Randall, which expresses what was going on in this poet's mind at the bombing of the churches in 1993 Birmingham, Alabama.

> Mother dear, may I go downtown instead of out to play,and march the streets of Birmingham in a freedom march today?
>
> No, baby, no, you may not go. For the dogs are fierce and wild, and clubs and hoses, guns and jail are not good for a little child.
>
> But mother, I won't be alone. Other children will go with me, and march the streets of Birmingham to make our country free.
>
> No, baby, no, you may not go. For I fear those guns will fire. But you may go to church instead and sing in the children's choir.
>
> She has combed and brushed her night-dark hair and bathed rose-petal sweet, and drawn white gloves on her small brown hands and white shoes on her feet.
>
> The mother smiled to know her child was in this sacred place. That smile was the last smile to come upon her face. For when she heard the explosion, her eyes grew wet and wild. She raced through the streets of Birmingham calling for her child.
>
> She clawed through bits of glass and brick and lifted out a shoe. Oh, here's the shoe my baby wore, but, baby, where are you? (Applause.)

MRS. CLINTON: This is an appropriate question to follow your poem. It's from Alice George in Evanston, Illinois. "Please identify one activity to be enacted in our country's public schools which you believe best inspires children to welcome the power of poetry, reading, and writing into their lives.

MR. PINSKY: A very simple answer: To read aloud. The teacher should read aloud to the kids. The kids should read aloud. And people should follow their tastes. The most stringent assignment a teacher can give to students is find something that you think is worth memorizing. Find something you think is worth reading aloud to other people.

To return to the previous question, it's the young poets and the passionate young people who decide what lives. It's not curricula or critics or anthologies. It's what gets under people's skin and what gives them the pleasure of reading aloud.

Knowledge is good. Analysis is good. Discussion is good. Learning is good. But all these things in art must begin with a physical encounter. And the physical encounter with the poem is saying it aloud and feeling that emotion people feel when they say a poem aloud. And my advice for anyone who wants to learn more about poetry is the same as my advice to myself -- read it aloud and see what happens between the mind and the body as you read it aloud.

MS. LOVELL: I think we have time for one last Internet question, Mrs. Clinton.

MRS. CLINTON: This is from Louis Farrell of Las Altas Hills, California. "Technology is leading us into the new millennium with such things as new DNA research, faster computers, Internet, et cetera. What value will poetry add to our quality of living that compares to these new marvels?

MS. DOVE: The key word there of course is "quality." And I would say that all of those new computer things have to have something to talk about and to write about, and poetry allows us to imagine the future. I don't believe that poets have any kind of monopoly on imagination, but what poetry can do is awaken the imagination, and through that imagination you can have the DNA research, the computers and all of these marvels. So it's all connected, it's all wrapped up together.

MR. HASS: I'll say that I love my computer. (Laughter.) I have a great time with it. I love my CD player. I like my television set very much. (Laughter.) And all of those things, the human appetite for art in the human being is bottomless, there's no end to it. And the very speed and the technological magnificence and vividness and the highly duplicable quality of those media I think already, as I perceive it in the country, create in reaction -- I'm not rejecting those things, but in reaction -- love for and need for the kind of excitement and comfort that comes from an art where the medium is one person's body. Not necessarily the artist's body, not Rita reading Rita's poems or me reading mine, but the body of the audience.

When I say a poem by Robert Hayden or Dickinson or Whitman with my voice, that voice -- my breath, is the artist's

medium. And that's in a highly individual, personal scale that I think we crave, along with our craving for spectacular gadgets and massive film on a video disk of the Earth from space. It's wonderful, but it doesn't fill up my appetite for pizza. (Laughter.)

MS. LOVELL: Our next to last reading. Jessica Rawls is a 7th grader from Charles Hart Middle School in D.C., she was with us today. She's a star in her poetry slam team. Jessica has so many poems that I know it was hard for her to choose just one to read, but she did.

MS. RAWLS: "Life Is Fine," by Langston Hughes.

I went down to the river. I sat down on the bank. I tried to think, but couldn't, so I jumped in and sank. I came up once and hollered. I came up twice and cried. If that water hadn't been so cold I might have sunk and died. But it was cold, cold that water. It was cold.

I took the elevator 16 floors above the ground. I thought about my baby and thought I would jump. I stood there and hollered. I stood there and cried. If it hadn't been so high I might have jumped and died. But it was high, high up there. It was high.

So since I'm still here living, I guess will live on. I could die for love, but for living I was born.

Though you may hear me holler and you may hear me cry, I'll be dogged, sweet baby, if you're going to see me die. Life is fine, fine as wine. Life is fine.

Thank you. (Applause.)

MS. LOVELL: Mr. President, I know you have some words to give us.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say, first of all, I thought the people who were in the audience who read their poems were absolutely fabulous and I'd like to thank you all. You were great. Thank you. (Applause.)

Well, I'm supposed to end. I suppose the first thing I should say is that poets help me get over MacBeth. (Laughter.) When

I was about 21 and despairing I came across those wonderful lines from Carl Sandburg, "A tough will counts; so does desire. So does a rich, soft, wanting. Without rich wanting, nothing arrives."

We want these children to have ambition. We just want it to be well-connected.

A lot of Presidents have wanted to be poets. (Laughter.) George Washington actually tried his hand at poetry, writing that "true happiness depends upon a quiet soul" -- as I told our Poets Laureate on the way out. And John Quincy Adams actually wanted to be a poet, he wanted to do that, but he just couldn't quite get there. (Laughter.) So he settled for a lesser path. (Laughter.)

But still he composed verses all his life. Even when he was an old man in Congress, waiting to vote, he would write out little verses. He once wrote in the Congress, "We must seize the moments as they pass, and snatch the retrieveless sunbeam as it flies."

Lucky for you, I haven't written any poetry in over 20 years. (Laughter.) And the poems I wrote to Hillary so long ago I would still be a little embarrassed to read today. (Laughter.)

But I would like to close with a particularly American poem about love of country, sacrifice, the conflict between mortality and the timeless value of a deed well done. It is Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Concorde Hymn," written to honor the completion of the Battle Monument, commemorating the battles of Lexington and Concorde in the Revolutionary War.

By the rude bridge that arched the flood
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled
Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard 'round the world .

The foe long since in silence slept;
alike the conqueror in silence sleeps.
In time the ruined bridge has swept
down the dark stream which seaward
creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft
stream, we set today a votive stone,
that memory may their deed redeem when,
like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit that made those heroes dare to
die and leave their children free bid
time and nature gently spare. The
shaft we raise to them and thee.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

REMARKS FOR THE WHITE HOUSE MILLENNIUM EVENING

LECTURE BY STEPHEN HAWKING

EAST ROOM

MARCH 6, 1998

I am pleased to join the President in welcoming you to the East room of the White House. Tonight, we are honored to have Professor Stephen Hawking deliver our second Millennium Lecture. I'd like to thank everyone who has made this event possible, especially Ellen Lovell, director of the White House Millennium Council; the National Endowment for the Humanities and all the state humanities councils; and Microsystems, which is bringing this event to our fellow Americans and indeed to people around the world. First via satellite, to students at over 180 downlinks in 43 states. And also via the internet. Those wanting to watch this cybercast can click on the White House Web Site -- which is www.whitehouse.gov.

I believe that we now have in this room the largest gathering of American physicists ever assembled at the White House, and I'm particularly pleased to introduce Nobel Laureates here tonight: Dr. William Phillips and Douglas Osheroff. Would you please stand? I'm also pleased that a number of our friends from the United Kingdom have joined us -- including the President of Cambridge University, Sir Alex and Lady Broers [pronounced BREW-ERS] and Mrs. Elaine Hawking.

This lecture continues a series of Millennium evenings with scholars, scientists, and other creative individuals which we are holding to commemorate and celebrate this milestone in America's history. Over the next three years, we have a unique opportunity to take stock of who we are and who we want to be-- not only as individuals and families, but as communities and as a nation. The theme we have chosen for the Millennium is Honor the Past, Imagine the Future. ~~And that~~ is ~~what we are doing here~~ tonight.

A few weeks ago, Professor Bernard Bailyn from Harvard University inaugurated this Millennium conversation with a talk about the ideals of democracy that built our nation more than 200 years ago. Tonight, we leap beyond boundaries of historical time and place, and hear from a man who has helped revolutionize our understanding of the universe, and who tonight will help us "imagine" the future of scientific discovery in the next century.

The ongoing exploration of our planet -- and our cosmos -- reflects humanity's deepest longing for knowledge about ourselves and the world around us. As we enter this new millennium, it is our collective obligation to keep pushing back those frontiers of science and discovery -- ~~not so~~lely to advance our pursuit of knowledge, bu~~t to~~ apply what we've learned from the heavens to help improve lives here on earth.

We've invited students from area colleges and universities to join us tonight, not just because we believe this lecture will inspire them -- but also to remind all of ~~us~~ of the critical importance of providing our future leaders the best possible education in the fields of science and math -- the ~~tools they will need to~~ unlock the ~~extraordinary possibilities of the 21st century~~.

We have with us this evening a man who has spent a lifetime unlocking the mysteries of the universe. Almost 25 years ago, when Stephen Hawking was formally inducted into the Royal Academy in London -- he signed his name in a book that bore the signature of Sir Isaac Newton on one of its earliest pages. He has since come to be recognized, along with Newton and Einstein, as one of the most brilliant physicists of all time.

Even as a young student, Stephen Hawking was drawn to science. "I always wanted to know how everything worked," he once said. He attended University College, Oxford University -- where my husband had the privilege to attend as a Rhodes Scholar -- and then went to Cambridge University to study cosmology -- in particular, the evolution of the universe. Mr. Hawking has since applied his prodigious talents to seeking answers to such fundamental questions as "where did the universe come from?" and "can we predict the future?"

Professor Hawking -- who has received numerous honors including the Commander of the British Empire in 1982 -- is a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. He's currently the Lucasian [pronounced LU-KAY-SIAN] Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University -- a post held, once again, by fellow cosmic explorer Sir Isaac Newton.

Luckily for many of us, in addition to his many scholarly works, Professor Hawking has written a book to educate the general public about recent scientific breakthroughs such as the "big bang" theory and the notion of an expanding universe. *A Brief History of Time* has become the best selling science book ever written, and I admit I've been heartened by some of what I've read in that book. "Present evidence suggests," he writes, that "even if the universe is going to recollapse, it won't do so for at least another ten thousand million years." That certainly gives us some time to get things right.

As many of you know, Professor Hawking developed ALS -- what we commonly call "Lou Gehrig's Disease" -- in his early 20s. It's a progressive motor neuron condition that means he can only move a few fingers in his left hand. Thanks to the wonders of science and technology, Professor Hawking will communicate with us tonight through a customized computer system. It enables him, by pressing a switch with his hand, to select words f rom the bottom of his computer screen, which is located on the arm of his wheel chair. When he's finished a sentence, he sends it to a speech synthesizer -- which, he jokingly complains, has given him an American accent.

Stephen Hawking embodies the enduring spirit of imagination that sees no boundaries -- only possibilities. Tonight, we celebrate his life of study and accomplishment; his relentless curiosity; his wit; his optimism; and his humanity. With his refusal to allow the study of the universe to remain solely the domain of physicists like himself, Professor Hawking is inviting all of us to participate in the wonder and the awe of the cosmos.

It is a true honor and pleasure to introduce to you tonight Professor Stephen Hawking, who will speak to us about "Imagination and Change: Science in the Next Millennium."

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

MILLENNIUM COUNCIL EVENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

MAY 4, 1998

It is a great pleasure to welcome all of you to the White House this morning. Today, we come together near the end of the 20th century -- and the dawn of a new millennium. And we know that the millennium will arrive, whether we do anything about it or not. But all over the United States and around the world, people are expressing their excitement at being alive at this momentous time, and are seeking meaningful ways to celebrate it, and to leave a lasting legacy.

We're here today to talk about a national initiative -- an act of history -- to save America's past. I hope all of you will join me in this urgent project to preserve the artifacts, documents, monuments and historic sites that embody not only our nation's memories -- but our dreams of the future as well.

Last fall, the President and I created the White House Millennium Council to develop ways to engage all Americans in marking this milestone in human history; to work with elected officials on state and local celebrations; to involve the federal agencies in national millennium projects; and to cooperate with our country's non profit organizations and with corporate and foundation partners. The overall theme of the White House millennium program is to "Honor the Past; Imagine the Future" -- and the President and I are inviting all Americans to participate, and to think about what gifts they want to give to enhance future generations.

Here at the White House, we've already begun a series of Millennium evenings in which scholars, scientists, and creative individuals will help us honor the past, and imagine our future. We've listened to a renowned historian talk about the democratic ideals upon which we forged our nation -- and world famous physicist who helped us envision the scientific breakthroughs of the next millennium. And a few weeks ago, we had perhaps the greatest gathering of poets ever held at the White House -- reading their favorite poems, and celebrating America's enduring creative spirit.

One of the most powerful ways to help us imagine America's future is to preserve what we truly value of our past. Our monuments, our art, and documents and historic sites will tell the story of this nation to future generations. Yet these very symbols of our heritage -- from the Star Spangled Banner to the monuments at Gettysburg to the buildings on the south side of Ellis Island -- are literally deteriorating before our eyes, or will be at risk if we don't act now. That's why I am so pleased that all of you are here today, to help "Save America's Treasures."

As many of you know, the President, in his State of the Union address -- has proposed a public/private partnership to save our historic treasures. As he said then, "We challenge all Americans to make the year 2000 a national celebration of the American spirit in every community." He has called on Congress to appropriate $50 million in each of the next two years to stimulate a national effort for that purpose. But we know this is just the beginning.

Throughout our history, in a way that has become uniquely American, we have always provided both the public and private resources needed to pass on something of value to future generations. Today, we need your leadership and involvement to help preserve America's treasures, and to ensure this too will be a public/private commitment.

We want to be able to reach out and involve literally millions of Americans, from school children to community leaders to corporate executives, who can contribute to these preservation efforts in all kinds of different ways. And I'm so pleased that the National Trust for Historic Preservation has agreed to head up the private part of this partnership.

Today, the National Trust is announcing the beginning of new national advisory committee to Save America's Treasures, and I'm thrilled that so many distinguished individuals and corporate leaders have already agreed to participate on that committee. We are pleased that so many of you could be with us here at the White House today -- and that you will be joined by others who couldn't be here -- including Jeffrey Katzenberg (co-partners at Dreamworks); Dick Jenrette (former CEO of Equitable Bank); and Agnes Gund, president of the Museum of Modern Art, who has already pledged generous support. I want in particular to thank Veronica Hearst for the important gift that will support this committee's efforts.

I want to thank all of you for taking on what I believe will be an extraordinarily exciting and challenging mission to help raise public awareness and support for preserving our treasures for the next millennium. And I look forward to the opportunity to work with you over the next few years, as honorary chair of this committee, as together we explore ways to preserve our past -- so that it can inform and serve the future.

I am also pleased that the National Trust will work closely with two other non profit partners, the Heritage Preservation Inc., and the National Park Foundation. And I'm grateful that today we're being joined by our federal partners, including the National Park Service, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Archives, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, and the Smithsonian Institution. Together, all of you will help widen the circle of individuals, foundations, agencies and corporations who will care for our nation's heritage.

Our mission here today must not be left to either the public or private sector alone. It must be a truly inclusive partnership. We also must ensure that this national effort -- which reflects our deepest ideals as a people -- remains nonpartisan. No matter what our political differences, we will all stand together with pride as we view a repaired Star Spangled Banner; or walk through one of America's most treasured prehistoric sites in New Mexico; or help preserve the Louis Armstrong archives of rare musical recordings at Queens College in New York; or visit the newly restored tent which George Washington used as his headquarters in the Revolutionary War; or know that we've helped save our precious founding documents at the National Archives.

Before I introduce our first speaker, I want to say a few words about my own plans to highlight America's national treasures in the next few months. In July, I will begin to travel around the country to visit some of our most endangered historic and cultural sites that are so much a part of the American experience. It will be a special pleasure for me to get back on a bus -- this time to help spread the word about preserving America's legacy.

As I've said so many times, the enduring worth of our nation lies in our shared values and soaring spirit, and I look forward to joining with all of you in celebrating those values -- in so many different ways -- as we mark this milestone in human history.

And now, I would like to introduce Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, who will talk about the urgent task of saving America's historic and cultural treasures.

[Moe gives remarks.]

Thank you, Dick. And now, it's a pleasure to introduce Michael Kammen [Camm-en) -- a Pulitzer Prize winning historian from Cornell University, who will speak about the importance of preserving America's memories.

[Kammen gives remarks.]

Thank you, Professor Kammen. You just heard Dick Moe mention the volunteer efforts to save the Congressional Cemetery. Master Sergeant Thomas Williams is here to tell us what he's done on that project. I believe that this is an example of how Americans from all walks of life will care about and get involved in projects like this across the country.

[Williams gives remarks.]

Thank you, Sergeant. Two months ago, Rebecca Rimel, president of the Pew Charitable Trusts, came to the White House to announce two extraordinary grants to save America's treasures. Since that time, the Pew Charitable Trusts have done even more -- and Rebecca is here to tell us about their plans.

[Rimel gives remarks.]

Thank you, Rebecca. The invitation from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to serve on this committee has already stimulated some very creative ideas. David Altschul, vice chairman of Warner Brothers Records, is here to tell you about a commitment that his company is already prepared to make to help save our treasures.

[Altschul gives remarks.]

Thank you, David. And deep appreciation to all of you for coming today. We will have many other meetings and exciting announcements as we move forward on this Save Our Treasures initiative. The committee, as you know, is in formation. This is an extraordinary opportunity to become engaged in preserving what we -- as individuals, as communities, and as a nation -- want to bring with us into the next millennium. Thank you so much for being part of this historic mission.

I now invite you to join me for a receiving line in the Blue Room, and for lunch in the State Dining Room.

Thank you.

AS PREPARED

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE WHITE HOUSE MILLENNIUM PROGRAM
WASHINGTON, DC
AUGUST 15, 1997

[Acknowledgments: Governor John Carlin; The World Children's Choir and their artistic director, Sondra Harnes. (Their credo is: "To sing together, to create friendship, peace and health for themselves and the planet); distinguished guests and friends]

A few years ago, no one gave much thought to the approaching millennium. We didn't spend time pondering what it would be like to drop the "19" from our calendars and replace it with a "20." Rarely did we see references to the year 2000 in advertising, on web pages or in political speeches.

Recently, however, we've become more excited about the idea -- some might even say obsessed with it. We realize that we will soon be living in a rare historical moment, the conclusion of a century and the birth of a millennium.

No matter where we are in the country, celebrations of the millennium will inevitably reflect the creativity, diversity and raw energy of our people -- and no doubt will include everything from the most solemn events to the most exotic. Thousands of Americans have already booked reservations on cruise ships and at hotels for New Year's Eve in 1999. Companies are devising projects to be completed in the year 2000. Computerized clocks are busily counting down the remaining seconds of the 20th century. And from Boston to Cincinnati to Anchorage to Times Square in New York, communities are planning their own festivities to usher in the new era.

When the new millennium finally arrives -- at midnight on January 1, 2000 or January 1, 2001, depending on who you believe -- none of us will find ourselves suddenly transformed. We won't be trading our earthly jeans and T-shirts for space attire on Star Trek. The only bolts of light in the sky will be the fireworks we've already begun planning.

But still the coming of the year '00 presents us with a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the past, on where we have been, on who we are and what we hope to become.

When the President and I first began to talk about how, as a country, we could mark this turn of the calendar, we always came back to one idea: the American people's gifts to the future. Gifts that will help rekindle our spirit of democracy, renew our commitment to citizenship and unleash the full creative and intellectual potential of the American people as we chart our common future.

The question for us today is: How do we want to be remembered? And what message do we want to leave for the coming generations?

When we look back on the last 2,000 years to gain a deeper understanding of history and the lessons it has taught us, we rely on the paintings, sculpture, architecture, literature, philosophy and ideas created by the men and women of those times.

I believe that future generations, too, will look to our creative pursuits to tell them the story of our country and our era. And they will also probably consider the lives we led as individual citizens: Did we take care of our families, do our work well, and leave something of value behind for the children and grandchildren we brought into the world?

Celebrating a new century and a new millennium is our chance to create a legacy that reflects the democratic values and traditions that have made our country and our people unique in the history of the world. It's our chance to join in a national celebration of the American spirit that allows us together to honor the past and imagine the future.

I am especially pleased to be here -- in this great repository of American democracy, the National Archives -- to announce a special White House effort to recognize this important milestone. Beginning this year and lasting until 2001, the White House will lead a national Millennium Program for the American people to appreciate our common heritage and rejoice in our creativity.

As a living museum of our nation's history, the White House provides a unique venue for showcasing our nation's art, scholarship, scientific explorations and discoveries. Over the next three years, the White House will sponsor a range of cultural activities to promote a sense of optimism and restore faith in our capacity to build a better future. Among them are a White House Lecture Series, co-sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, that will feature prominent men and women who can provoke our thinking about the past and the future; and an American Cultural Showcase that will spotlight our finest artists and their talents.

And, as of today, you can even log onto a new Millennium Program website on the White House Home Page to learn more about activities that are being planned.

Other special commemorative events will coincide with the 200th anniversary of the White House, the 200th anniversary of the first meeting of Congress and the 200th anniversary of the creation of the Library of Congress, to name a few.

Around the nation's capital, some of our leading cultural institutions are working on their own millennium projects. The Library of Congress is putting part of its collection on-line for students, teachers and citizens everywhere. The Smithsonian Institution will expand its Festival of American Folklife on the Mall in the summer of 2000, and will feature 200 children from all over the world making and playing with toys unique to their countries and cultures. And some of you may already have enjoyed free performances on the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center that are part of a run-up to the Center's year-long artistic festival in 2000.

Each of these activities offers citizens a chance to learn about our nation's history, to remember it, and even to shape it. And each is a reminder that our nation's history is part of our own personal history too.

Yet building a future worthy of our children depends not just on what the federal government, or state governments, or corporations do. It depends as much on the gifts we give as individuals and communities.

As we reflect on our past and count all of the blessings we enjoy as citizens of a free and democratic country, I hope we will be inspired to give our own gifts to the future, whether by helping to build a new park, cleaning up a river, restoring an old theater, raising money for a library, saving family papers and photographs, encouraging children to interview their grandparents, or volunteering in our communities.

All of these are measures of ourselves as citizens in a democracy. And all are pursuits we cannot live without because they are a vital part of who we are and where we want to go as a people.

As the President said in his State of the Union address earlier this year: "Our economy is measured in numbers and statistics, and it's very important. But the enduring worth of our nation lies in our shared values and our soaring spirit."

If we preserve and strengthen the values, ideas, experiences and attitudes that are unique to us Americans, we can ensure that our country remains the world's strongest nation in the next millennium -- not only because of our wealth and might but because of our thriving culture and our boundless energy and creativity.

By giving our own gifts to the future we can make sure that, when the new millennium finally comes, we won't just be celebrating a new year. We will be celebrating the enduring strength of our democracy, the renewal of our sense of citizenship, and the full of flowering of the American mind and spirit.

I hope you will join us in planning a millennium celebration for all time.

Thank you very much.

[Introduce the President]

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Snowmass, Colorado)

For Immediate Release July 23, 1999

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT DNC DINNER

Cincinnati, Ohio

7:55 P.M. MDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, first, let me say that I think in the spirit of candor, I should tell you that the real reason that the air conditioning is not on tonight is that it's part of my continuing effort to convince the American people that Al Gore is right about global warming. (Laughter.) And I hope you will join us now in this crusade.

When Stan gave me this purple shirt, I thought instead of saying "no one more regal," I thought he was going to say I'm going to give him this purple shirt is because no one is more wounded than him. (Laughter.)

Joe Andrews, every time he says that line about we're going to win everything from president to dog catcher, as if that's a wide gulf, I said, plenty of times in the last few years, I thought that was a very short distance, those two positions. (Laughter.)

I'd like to begin, if I might, by saying a few thank-yous. I want to thank Stan and his whole family and I want to thank Dick and his wonderful family and -- Jim, I want to thank you and all the people that are associated with you and have been her for me and for my party for all these years. I'm grateful to the people of Ohio who have voted for me and for Al Gore twice, under what would normally seem to be adverse political conditions, when the

Republicans were doing pretty well here statewide, and conventional

wisdom would have it that we wouldn't do so well.

I want to thank Joe Andrew for agreeing to leave the security of his home in Indiana and take on the challenge of the Democratic Party and David Leland, who, in '96, had what I thought was the cleverest idea. He had a $96 fundraiser for the Democrats, and as I remember, he had 4,000 people there, which was a pretty impressive turnout and I knew we were going to carry Ohio again.

I want to thank Jody Richards, my longtime friend, who was the Speaker of the House in Kentucky. We were working on education together back when I was a young governor with no gray hair and no reasonable prospects of this happy occasion. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Tony Hall, who is not only one of the finest congressmen, but one of the finest human beings I have ever known in my life, and Ohio can be very, very proud of him and I thank you, sir, for all you've done and all you do, and the way you have been there for me as a friend as well as an ally.

And I want to thank my friend, Bill Daley, for serving in the Cabinet, being a brilliant Secretary of Commerce, a great political leader and I think that even though I have to retire in a year and a half, you haven't heard the last of him.

As you know, this has been a highly emotional week for me and for Hillary and for Chelsea. We were friends of Senator Kennedy and his family. We knew and had the greatest respect for John Kennedy. I had a wonderful, long evening with John and Carolyn. We thought the world of Jackie Kennedy. And we're Americans, so we went through this last week experiencing it in a personal way and experiencing it just in the same way every other citizen did. So I'm not going to give you a whoop-de-do tonight, I'm going to ask you to think about why you're here and what you will say tomorrow if someone asks you why you came.

When Senator Kennedy -- I was just told at the table tonight that the eulogy for his nephew is now available on the Internet. It may be printed in full in your paper tomorrow. Somehow, you ought to get the whole thing and read it.

The last sentence in the eulogy was this: "Like his father, he had every gift but length of life." I say that not to be morbid or even sad, because it was actually quite a wonderful service. But to remind us all that life is fleeting and fragile, things we don't deserve happen to us, both good things and bad things, and our only obligation can be to get up every day and try to be children of God and do the best we can with the life we

[illegible]

air and the water is cleaner, the food is safer.

We've set aside more land from the Florida Everglades to the California redwoods than any administration except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. And I am very, very grateful to have had the chance to serve.

I would like to say, because now that we're in a political season, many of those who spent the last six and a half years

telling the American people I had no business being President now

happened to her and her family. I think we're better off that little girl found a home, that she had a woman who had more problems than most of us have ever had in her life, but she still had enough room for her, and that her government helped her raise this child. And she got a $500 tax credit because of the Balanced Budget Act. That the child will be able to go to college, and that, thank goodness, because of medical research, she'll probably live to go to college.

Last thing. When I went to the Indian reservation, I was introduced by the Chief of the Oglala Sioux; they now call him the President. His name is Harold Salyer (phonetic). Before I went to Pine Ridge, Mr. Salyer and 18 other tribal leaders from Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota, the High Plains, came to see me at the White House. And we were sitting there and they all went through all their concerns -- you know, about education and the economy and everything. And then at the end, Salyer stands up. And he's not a very tall man, but he's very dignified and he stood there like this and he said, I have something I would like to say. He said, we are supporting your position in Kosovo. The poorest Americans. He said, you see, we know something about ethnic cleansing. (Laughter.) But he said -- let me finish -- but this is America. He said, my great grandfather was massacred at Wounded Knee. I had two uncles. One was on the beach at Normandy. The other was the first Native American fighter pilot in the history of the military in the United States. And here am I, their nephew, with the President

of the United States.

He said, I have only one son, and he means more to me than anything. But I would be honored to have him wear the uniform of my country to fight against ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Community. Humanity. Thirty-one years ago, Senator Kennedy gave another eulogy for his brother, Robert. Those of us who were grown then, many of us have a clear memory of it. And I want to close with this. I've thought about it a lot today. That man has borne a lot of burden.

But after Robert Kennedy's campaign for President in 1968, where he'd gone into the coal mining areas of Appalachia, where he went to the Indian reservation, where he went to places and people that had been forgotten, Ted Kennedy said that he and his family hoped that what their brother was to them and what he wished for others would someday come to pass for all the world. I hard it 31 years ago; I have never forgotten it. That's why I'm here tonight and why I hope you are.

Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

END 8:26 P.M. MDT

have.

I believe that the work that we have been engaged in, the political work of the country, is good work. I believe most people who do it in both parties are good people, and personally compassionate, by the way. I believe that. I despair that so much of the politics of the last few years has been about, you know, personal attacks, because it diverts the attention of the public from the life we share in common and the obligations we have to each other and to our children and to our country.

And today, I left that church, that beautiful old church, thinking that all of us, including me, ought to do more every day to remember the life is fleeting and fragile, but a great gift, with all of its troubles and tears it's a great gift.

And so when I think about what I'd like to say to you, it is this, that in 1992 when I ran for President, and early on in the race I saw John Kennedy, Jr. and his mother at events for me when I didn't know them, really, and I was running 5th in the New Hampshire Primary, I did it because I felt the country needed to change direction. And I offered some ideas to the American people based on the premise that we ought to be trying to create a country in the new century where every responsible citizen has the opportunity to live our his or her dreams, and where we're coming closer together as an American community even as we grow more diverse in our racial and ethnic and religious characteristics, and where we do more to be the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity.

Now, I am very grateful that those ideas, when put into action, turned out to have pretty good results. You know what happened in the economy. We also have a 30-year low in welfare and a 26-year low in the crime rate. A lot of our social problems, or evading teen pregnancy and drug use are down. Our test scores are beginning to rise after years and years and years in our schools; last year in the 4th, 8th and 12th grade they were all up in both reading and math for the first time in a long time. Ninety percent of our children immunized against childhood diseases for the first time in the history of our country. The air and the water is cleaner, the food is safer.

We've set aside more land from the Florida Everglades to the California redwoods than any administration except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. And I am very, very grateful to have had the chance to serve.

I would like to say, because now that we're in a political season, many of those who spent the last six and a half years

telling the American people I had no business being President now

say, oh, well, Clinton's like Michael Jordan, he just jumps higher than the other Democrats now; the natural order of things will reassert itself and we Republicans will rule America again.

I want you to understand that I'm glad I had the chance to serve, but I could give the best speech in the world, and if the ideas were wrong or if there were no implementation, we would not have been able to turn the country around. And I want you to understand that very little of what I did could have been done if I hadn't had the Vice President I did, who knew a lot more than I did when we started about a lot of the things we had to work on.

If I hadn't had people like Bill Daley and his great predecessor, Ron Brown and a lot of other people helping us, if I hadn't had allies like Tony Hall in the Congress -- and I say that to make this point: Tomorrow, when they ask you why you were here, I hope you will say, because I like the ideas they had and they worked for America. And I'm not just supporting Bill Clinton, I'm supporting what we all believe. And we have the proof now. We no longer have to debate these things, we now have evidence.

The second thing that I'd like you to think about is, we now are in a great hazardous period. We human beings are all inherently weak in some way or another, and sometimes the worst thing in the world for us is the illusion that everything is perfect and can't go bad. And so we have all this prosperity now, and I would argue that's a hazardous time, because prosperity and security can lead people to arrogance and short-sightedness if they're not careful.

I used to carry around with me when I was a governor 10 little written rules of politics, and one of them was, "You're always most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable." And so I say to you, we have this huge surplus. We had a $290-billion deficit when I took office. We've got almost a $100-billion surplus this year. We have projected surpluses for a long time to come.

The big question now is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? We've got the country working again; now what are we going to do. And there's this big debate going on in Washington. The Republicans basically say, okay, we'll agree with the President, we'll save the Social Security tax surplus for Social Security and we'll use that to pay the debt down. And I want to give them that, and I appreciate the fact that they've agreed with me today; they've agreed to pay it down some. But we want to give the whole rest of the surplus to a tax cut.

We say, even though we're in an election season already, that's a mistake, because if you look at the real, long-term challenges of America, you can't honestly say we can afford a tax

cut that big. What are those challenges? Let me just mention a few. One is the aging of America. The number of people over 65 in this country will double in 30 years; I hope to be one of them.

Anybody in America who lives to be 65 today has a life expectancy of 82. A child born in America today has a life expectancy of nearly 77 years. Within three years, we will finish the decoding of the human gene, and young mothers who take their babies home from the hospital will have a road map that will tell them -- you have a fine, healthy young boy, but his genetic makeup makes him highly likely to develop heart disease in his thirties or forties. Therefore, you should do these things. Your daughter is beautiful, but she has a gene which predisposes her to breast cancer at an early age. Therefore, you should do these things.

It is not inconceivable that within a decade, the average life expectancy of newborns will be over 80 -- and, keep in mind, that takes accounts of all the accidents and the diseases and everything that can happen to people. It is at our peril, therefore, that we pass up the chance to stabilize Social Security and Medicare and to reform Medicare so that it fits the needs of modern medicine with a prescription drug benefit and getting much more of our seniors to take preventive tests for everything from osteoporosis to cancer, because we can avoid a lot of the expensive medical bills if we prevent things from happening in the first place.

So I think we ought to not only set aside a substantial amount of the surplus for Social Security, but also for Medicare, and that we should take the interest reduction when we pay down the debt -- that means less interest, right -- I think we ought to take all the interest savings and put it into Social Security so we can run the life of the Social Security Trust Fund out for more than 50 years.

Right now, Medicare is projected to go broke in 2015, Social Security in 2034. Under my plan, we could take Medicare out for more than 25 years, we could take Social Security out for more than 50 years.

The second thing we have to think about is how to keep the economy going. You know, I'm sure you've all noticed, particularly those of you in business, the last two months

there's been this real debate about whether the Federal Reserve should raise interest rates to try to head off inflation that is not at all in evidence now, because nobody can imagine that we've had this economy growing this long in peacetime at this high rate.

Bill Daley and I kind of like it. It's our job. But people

say, well, you know, you haven't -- they say Clinton may have a good team, but they didn't repeal the laws of economics, so I mean, don't we have to raise interest rates, slow the economy down to stop inflation, because if we have inflation, we'll have a huge increase in interest rates and the thing will crater, and you've been seeing all this debate.

So I ask myself all the time: What can we do to keep the economy going, to minimize the effect of the next slowdown, to insure that the next pickup will be quicker. And I have two things that I think are quite important that are inconsistent with the Republican plan.

One is, I don't want to just pay down the debt, I want to pay it off. And under my plan, we'll be out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835. Now, why does that matter, and why would the more liberal of the two parties be for it? How does that help ordinary people? How does it help wealthy people? Why is it worth more to you than a tax cut? Why? Because in a global economy where money moves around in the flash of an eye all over the world, if we're out of debt, what does that mean?

It means interest rates will be lower for business, it means there will be more business investment, it means there will be more people hired for jobs, it means there will be more money available for wages increases and for ordinary middle-class people or people struggling to work their way into the middle class it means the interest rates they pay on homes, cars, credit cars and college loans will be lower.

It means the next time there are a lot of problems around the world like this financial crisis in Asia a couple of years ago, that our friends around the world will be able to get the money they need to get back on their feet at lower interest rates. It means, God forbid, if we have another terrible economic crisis in America sometime in the future and we have to go into debt, we'll be able to get lower interest rates and then we'll be able to get out of debt again in a hurry because we won't be borrowing money just to pay the bills every week, as we have been since 1835 -- and especially for the 12 years before I took office.

So this is a huge deal. The other big thing we can do to keep the economy growing without inflation is to bring economic opportunity to the people in the neighborhoods, the inner-city neighborhoods, the small towns, the rural areas and the Indian reservations that haven't felt a lick of prosperity in spite of all we've enjoyed. And that's why I took that trip across America to Appalachia, to the Mississippi Delta, to the Indian reservation and to the inner cities to highlight the fact that as well as we are doing, there are still places that haven't felt the sunlight of our prosperity.

And I have asked the Congress to pass a tax cut that is affordable, that includes giving people in this room who have money the same financial incentives through tax credits and government loan guarantees to invest in an Indian reservation or in Appalachia or the Mississippi Delta or the inner city that we give you today to invest in the Caribbean, in Africa, in Latin America or in Asia. I don't want to take away those incentives, I want to help those people, too. But I think we ought to have the same incentive to give poor people in America a chance to be part of the economic mainstream. And that's what I think we ought to do.

And let me just mention two other things. We have made great improvements in education. With tax cuts already provided, we've given tax credits to everybody, practically, for the first two years of college and, indeed, for the next two and for graduate school. But we still don't have the best school system in the world for everybody and until we have world-class education for everybody, this country is going to be held back. And as we've grown more diverse and more and more of our kids have a first language not even English, we're going to have to work harder to have a good school system.

If the Republican plan passes, we will literally have to cut back on our present level of support for excellence in education, at a time when we're trying to hook up all of the classrooms to the Internet, build modernized schools, raise standards, end social promotion but give the schools money for summer school and after-school programs. We will have to have a huge cut in national support for education -- this tax plan passes.

The last thing I'd just like to mention is the crime rate going down. I don't know if you remember this, but I had a huge fight with the members of the other party in '94 when Tony and others joined together, we passed this crime bill. They said if we put 100,000 police on the streets, it wouldn't have any impact on the crime rate. Well, they were wrong.

Now, I've got a plan that would put 50,000 more police on the street and target them in the areas that have still real high crime. We actually have a chance to make this the safest big country in the world in the next 10 years. But if this tax cut passes, we'll have to make big cuts in what we're doing now in law enforcement, and the support we have in state and local law enforcement, and the work federal law enforcement does.

So it seems to me -- and I could give you lots of other examples -- now, does that mean we can't have any tax cut? Does that mean we can't have any tax cut? No. I actually presented quite a sizeable tax cut to the Congress. I said, but let's do first things first. Let's save Social Security and Medicare. Let's pay the debt off. Let's make sure we can do what we have

to do in education, law enforcement, medical research, national defense, the environment. What we have to do -- not big increases, but what we have to do -- and then give the rest of it back to the taxpayers. That's the way I did it.

And there's a substantial tax -- worth hundreds of dollars a year to a lot of people for child care, for long-term care, to save for retirement. Now, one of my staff members said -- but you see what we're doing, don't you? We haven't saved Social Security, we haven't saved Medicare, we haven't secured these other things. What are we debating first? Their tax credit.

One of the guys that works for me says, this is kind of like a family sitting down saying, you know, let's take the vacation of our dreams to Hawaii, and when we get back, we'll figure out whether we can pay the home mortgage and send our kids to college. (Laughter.) I mean, that's what we're doing here. And so I say to you, I think we're right. But why are you here? I'm telling you, everybody in this room -- just about everybody in this room -- would be better off -- you ought to be at their deal, because for the first year, you'd be better off with their deal, because I think two-thirds of the benefits of their plan go to the top two percent or something of the economy. You'd be a lot better off in the short run with their deal. Why are you here?

Most of us believe -- I think all of us believe -- that those of us who are fortunate do better in the long run when everybody else does better, that we not only have a moral obligation to make sure everybody has a chance, but we actually do better. And guess what, we now have evidence.

I've got a friend in New York who runs one of the biggest companies in this country. He's going around to Wall Street, now that all these Republican and Democratic presidential candidates are raising money, and all these Wall Street guys are saying, you know, you've got to go for the Republicans this time. And he says, I'll tell you what you do: If you paid more in taxes after 1993 because of Bill Clinton's deficit reduction package than you've made in the stock market, be for the Republicans. (Laughter.) But if you haven't, you'd better think about it.

But this is not a selfish -- it is actually true that we all do better when we help each other. And so if you think about it -- I think the one thing that defines the difference between the two parties today is how we think of our national community. I think they honestly believe -- I don't mean this in a critical way, I think they honestly believe that they see the national community as people who say they believe the same things.

We say the national community is everybody who is a responsible citizen, working together trying to help each other reach our full potential. And we believe the government has a

role to play when there is no other way to do it. They call us the party of government; I've given you the smallest federal government since John Kennedy was President. I've privatized more programs and eliminated more than Presidents Reagan and Bush did.

The percentage of jobs created in the private sector in the Clinton administration is significantly higher than the percentage created in the two previous Republican administrations. We don't believe the government can solve all the problems, but we believe in things like family leave. We believe that. We believe that's a good thing for America. We believe in the patients' bill of rights.

We think if people are going to go into managed care they ought to know they can see a specialist if the doctor says so. And if they get hit in an accident coming out of the concert in Cincinnati tonight, they ought not to have to go past two hospitals to get to the emergency room just because the first two aren't covered. We believe that. That's what we really believe. And I'm willing to pay what the Republicans say it would cost $2 a month on my health insurance so somebody else can see a specialist and go to the nearest emergency room, and I think most of you are. And I think we're all better off when people are healthier, they're more secure, they feel better at work, they feel better about their country. That's the difference.

I believe we'd all better off if we could end 100 years of oppression of the Native Americans and they could actually make a living on those Indian reservations instead of haggling over a deal made over 100 years ago that was a disgrace to the United States. We believe that we are bound up together. And I hope that somebody asks you tomorrow why you came here, you'll be able to tell them that.

I'll close with just these thoughts. I'll tell you three stories real quick.

I was in Iowa a few days ago, and I remembered the first time I went to Iowa after I became President -- I believe it's the first time -- was when they had that 500-year flood in the Mississippi River. Do you remember that? And the Mississippi just flooded its banks in '93 -- 500-year flood.

So I go to Des Moines and I'm going out there, stacking those sandbags, feeling good -- you know, I'm being a good citizen, doing it and trying to set a good example, and I look up and there is this child standing there who was then 13 years old, who was about this tall, even though she's 13 years old. And the bones in her head were bulging through her skin, and her elbows and knees were knobby and her knuckles were bony, because she was born with brittle bone disease. She'd had dozens of bone breaks,

all kinds of operations. Every bone in her body could have been shattered. And she's there with the people and the sandbags.

And I asked this child, I said, what are you doing here? I said, do you live in Des Moines? She said, no, sir, I'm from Wisconsin. She said, but these people need help. And I don't know if you've known any children with brittle bone disease; some of them never get out of bed. This girl's really relatively strong, but still, she could -- was in great danger, always.

And I said, aren't you afraid to be here? She said, I've got to go on living. These people need help. I asked my parents if I could come down here, and we came. That young women went to the National Institutes of Health, twice a year, every year after that, so I kept in touch with her. Her name is Brianne Shwanta (phonetic).

Last year, I went out to American University in Washington to make a speech and I looked up, and there she was, an 18-year-old freshman, introducing me to all of her roommates. Now, I feel better that a child like that could get some of our tax money at the National Institutes of Health, and I think this country is better because of it.

I'll tell you another story. When I was in Iowa, and I looked out, and on the second row of this speech I gave at this school -- there were hundreds of people there -- there is this radiant young African American girl, about 8 years old now, tall, beautiful. Her name is Jamiah Postel (phonetic). The first time I met her, she was a little baby in her mother's arms in 1992 in

Cedar Rapids, Iowa. There was this huge rally there. And so I went to the crowd and I was shaking hands the way I always do, and there was this very tall white lady holding this African American baby.

So I said, whose baby is that? She said, this is my baby. And I said, well, where did you get that baby? She said, from Miami. I said, well, why, how? She said, well, you see, this baby was born with AIDS, so nobody wanted it, and I thought somebody ought to give this baby a home.

I later found out this woman, that her husband had left her, she had two children of her own, she was living in an apartment, barely able to make ends meet, but she had enough heart to take this little baby. And a couple of times a year, every year between now and then, they came to the NIH -- this child with AIDS. She is a beautiful child. And once every year or so, they'd come by to see me and I'd keep up with her, and when I'd go to Iowa she'd always be there. She was there in the audience, faithfully, like she always is.

The lady had a better turn in her life, good things have

Republicans were doing pretty well here statewide, and conventional

wisdom would have it that we wouldn't do so well.

I want to thank Joe Andrew for agreeing to leave the security of his home in Indiana and take on the challenge of the Democratic Party and David Leland, who, in '96, had what I thought was the cleverest idea. He had a $96 fundraiser for the Democrats, and as I remember, he had 4,000 people there, which was a pretty impressive turnout and I knew we were going to carry Ohio again.

I want to thank Jody Richards, my longtime friend, who was the Speaker of the House in Kentucky. We were working on education together back when I was a young governor with no gray hair and no reasonable prospects of this happy occasion. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Tony Hall, who is not only one of the finest congressmen, but one of the finest human beings I have ever known in my life, and Ohio can be very, very proud of him and I thank you, sir, for all you've done and all you do, and the way you have been there for me as a friend as well as an ally.

And I want to thank my friend, Bill Daley, for serving in the Cabinet, being a brilliant Secretary of Commerce, a great political leader and I think that even though I have to retire in a year and a half, you haven't heard the last of him.

As you know, this has been a highly emotional week for me and for Hillary and for Chelsea. We were friends of Senator Kennedy and his family. We knew and had the greatest respect for John Kennedy. I had a wonderful, long evening with John and Carolyn. We thought the world of Jackie Kennedy. And we're Americans, so we went through this last week experiencing it in a personal way and experiencing it just in the same way every other citizen did. So I'm not going to give you a whoop-de-do tonight, I'm going to ask you to think about why you're here and what you will say tomorrow if someone asks you why you came.

When Senator Kennedy -- I was just told at the table tonight that the eulogy for his nephew is now available on the Internet. It may be printed in full in your paper tomorrow. Somehow, you ought to get the whole thing and read it.

The last sentence in the eulogy was this: "Like his father, he had every gift but length of life." I say that not to be morbid or even sad, because it was actually quite a wonderful service. But to remind us all that life is fleeting and fragile, things we don't deserve happen to us, both good things and bad things, and our only obligation can be to get up every day and try to be children of God and do the best we can with the life we