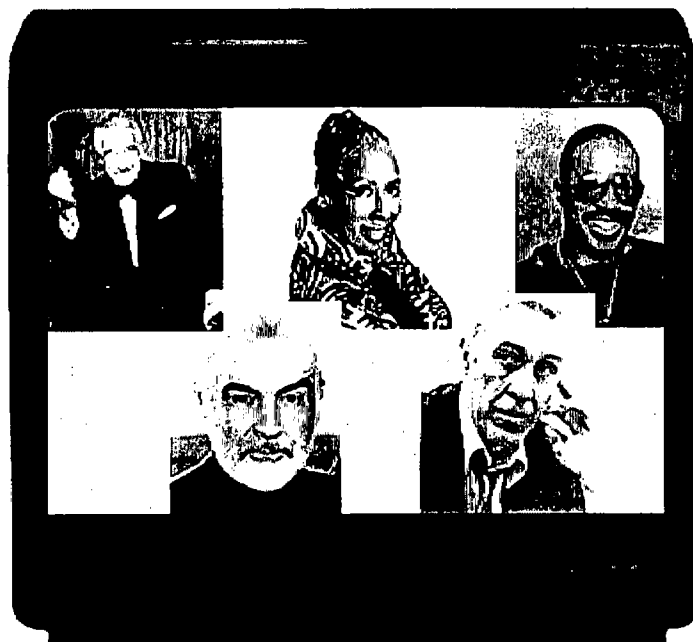


The Kennedy Center HONORS

1999



1999 The Kennedy Center Honorees

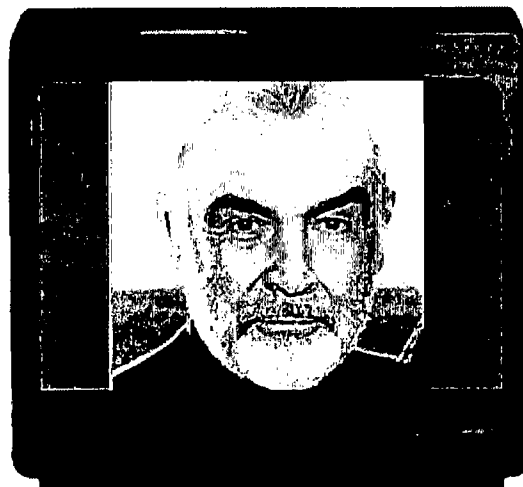
Victor Borge, Sean Connery, Judith Jamison, Jason Robards and Stevie Wonder.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts today revealed the recipients of the 22nd annual Kennedy Center Honors for career achievement in the performing arts. The honored artists elected by the Center's Board of Trustees are comedian and pianist Victor Borge, actor Sean Connery, dancer and teacher Judith Jamison, actor Jason Robards, and singer and songwriter Stevie Wonder.

The Kennedy Center Honors program was instituted by the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees "to provide deserved recognition to individuals who throughout their lifetime have made significant contributions to American culture through the performing arts."

HISTORY

The Kennedy Center **HONORS**



Sean Connery

(actor; born August 25, 1930, in Edinburgh, Scotland)

The man who came to define dash and elegance for an entire generation of moviegoers grew up in a poor tenement in Edinburgh, Scotland, the eldest of two sons of a truck driver and a charwoman. Young Thomas Sean Connery began helping to support his family with his first job at the age of seven, delivering milk. By 13 he had to quit school, working as a day laborer, a steel bender, a cement mixer. He joined the Royal Navy in 1947 for a 12-year stint, but he was discharged due to severe stomach ulcers in 1950. Then came his first job in show business: movie usher. He was also a bricklayer, a lifeguard, and a coffin polisher as well as a weightlifter and artist's model. It was his impressive physique that landed him the job of representing Scotland in the 1950 Mr. Universe pageant in London, where he was spotted by the producers of the hit Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *South Pacific* and given the role of a singing, dancing, shirtless sailor.

After this modest West End debut, which afforded the novice actor intensive dancing, singing and acting lessons, Sean Connery began landing roles and was particularly acclaimed in another American classic, *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, staged by the BBC. In 1958 he played his first leading role on screen, opposite Lana Turner in the romantic war drama *Another Time, Another Place*. He was noticed. And when it came time to bring to the screen the most intriguing and fascinating character in Cold War fiction, Connery beat out Cary Grant, Rex Harrison, Trevor Howard, Patrick McGeehan and Roger Moore for the role of Ian Fleming's Agent 007. *Dr. No* in 1962 turned out to be the beginning of the most successful film series in history.

Connery's screen spy - Bond, James Bond - was dapper, virile, sexually liberated and politically savvy, disarmingly witty and irresistible. He captured the imagination of

millions and triumphed at the box office for three decades beginning with *Dr. No* and continuing with undiminished excitement in *From Russia With Love* (1963), *Goldfinger* (1964), *Thunderball* (1965), *You Only Live Twice* (1967), *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971), and *Never Say Never Again* (1983).

He played a different sort of hero in Alfred Hitchcock's 1964 thriller *Marnie*. But it was after the wildly successful *Diamonds Are Forever* that Connery felt the need to breakout from his own 007 creation and prove himself in a variety of roles. He succeeded. He starred in the science-fiction epic *Zardoz* and in Sidney Lumet's opulent adaptation of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, both in 1974. He followed this in 1975 with what many consider his finest work, an enigmatic adventurer in John Huston's film version of Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King*. The next year, he teamed up with Audrey Hepburn in what may be the wisest and most romantic of all movie versions of the Robin Hood legend, *Robin and Marian*.

Brain DePalma's *The Untouchables* brought Connery the 1987 Academy Award. In *The Russia House*, Tom Stoppard's adaptation of the bittersweet John LeCarre bestseller, Connery played a very different Cold War warrior from Ian Fleming's glamorous secret agent. And Connery's appeal as an action hero has shown no signs of diminishment as the actor matured on screen in *The Hunt for Red October*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Rising Sun*, *The Great Train Robbery*, *First Knight*, *The Rock*, and *Entrapment*.

Sean Connery has received numerous international accolades including the Legion d'Honneur and Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres (the highest civilian honors given in France), and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Best Actor award for *The Name of the Rose* in 1987, the 1990 Lifetime Achievement Award for a British actor or actress who has made an outstanding contribution to world cinema, and in 1998, BAFTA's highest award, The British Academy Fellowship. In 1995 Connery received the Cecil B. DeMille Award for "outstanding contribution to the entertainment field," given by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association at its annual Golden Globe Awards.

Steven Spielberg has said that "there are seven genuine movie stars in the world today, and Sean is one of them." There is, in fact, no one quite like Sean Connery.



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Victor Borge

(comedian and pianist; born January 3, 1909, in Copenhagen)

He looks like a elder statesman and speaks with the charming accents of a middle European fairytale kingdom, but the whole world knows him as the Great Dane. Victor Borge's unique combination of concert pianist and sit-down comedian - an intoxicating mixture of melodies and mirth - has made him a living legend for most of the 20th century. His ability to puncture the pretensions of humanity in general, musicians in particular, whether he's lampooning stuffy conductors or grandiose concert pianists, remains undiminished, seventy years after his professional debut. As every good musician and comic knows, it's all in the timing and Borge is a master. He holds the Guinness Book of Records citation for longest-running one-man show in the history of the theater, with 849 performances on Broadway of his "Comedy in Music," which began in 1953. For the four decades that followed there was never a theater season, when the name Victor Borge didn't light up a Broadway marquee.

"Victor Borge is world-famous as the funniest pianist on Earth," declared *The Washington Post* a few years ago. And he gets as many laughs at the keyboard as under it. Borge has made an art of finding excuses not to play the piano--falling off the bench, swatting imaginary flies, stopping to reprimand a late-arriving audience member, suddenly remembering a joke or anecdote. "But when Borge finally does perform," reports *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, "it's the real thing: music-making of surpassing warmth and charm."

Ninety years ago, he was born Borge Rosenbaum in Copenhagen, Denmark. He started playing the piano when he was only three years old. He was hailed as a prodigy and given a scholarship to the Royal Danish Music Conservatory, making his orchestral debut as a soloist with the Copenhagen Philharmonic when he was 10. In public recitals,

he was a serious musician, but at school, in clubs, and at family gatherings he played more humor than humoresque. His incredible wit combined with his musical ability established him quickly as a one-of-a-kind artist. Word got out, and by his early twenties Borge was established as one of the leading film and stage personalities of Scandinavia.

With the rise of the Nazis to power, Borge was blacklisted because of his biting barbs about Hitler and the Nazi party. He escaped from Finland on the *SS American Legion* in 1940, the last American passenger ship to leave northern Europe before the start of World War II. When he arrived in the United States, Borge knew no English. Yet that same year he started a year-long run on the "Kraft Music Hall" radio hour with Bing Crosby. Borge discovered a gold mine of humor in his struggle with the English language, and the immigrant's nightmare was transformed into one of the most enduring and endearing parts of the act.

In 1963 he helped to establish the Thanks to Scandinavia scholarship fund in gratitude for the heroic deeds of the Scandinavians who, while risking their own lives, saved thousands during the Holocaust. The multimillion-dollar fund has already brought more than a thousand students and scientists to the United States from Scandinavian countries for study and research.

In recent years he has added opera and symphony conducting engagements to his heavy stage and television commitments. Among others, the National Symphony, New York Philharmonic, London, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Detroit, and the Royal Copenhagen orchestras have taken a beating under his baton.

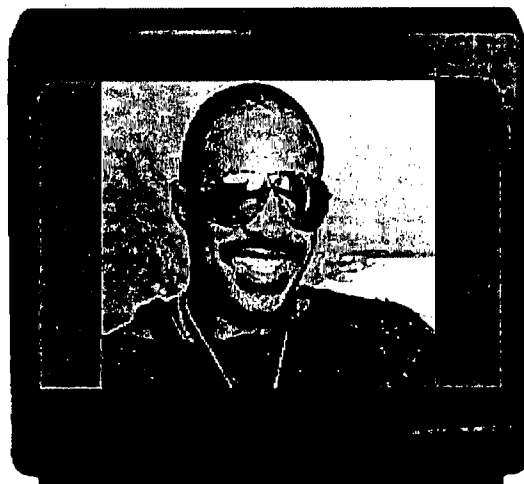
He has been knighted by the five Nordic countries and honored by both the U.S. Congress and the United Nations.

Reflecting on his success, Borge has said: "Basically there is no difference between Scandinavian humor and American humor because when you play a thing upside down you don't have to have a language to do that." His art, though, is a language all understand--the conservatory-trained and the first-time concertgoer, young people and grownups, in concert halls around the world.

"If I knew what the secret was, it wouldn't be a secret," mused Victor Borge.



The Kennedy Center **HONORS**



Stevie Wonder

(singer and songwriter; born May 13, 1950, in Saginaw, Michigan)

Stevie Wonder has been an integral part of the world of music for the past four decades, as a singer, songwriter, musician and producer. The boy wonder burst onto the music scene when he was just ten years old, and his mission ever since has been to bring joy into people's lives. "He has been pop music's unquenchable optimist for nearly a generation," said *The New York Times* in 1986. "His skills at writing sinuous melodies and gently uplifting harmonies, and his cheerful yet determined eclecticism - from funk to ballads, bossa nova to quasi-showtunes - have made Mr. Wonder a one-man Tin Pan Alley through two decades of rock."

Since his prodigious beginnings, Wonder has grown into an artist who combines musical innovation with political activism. The magic of his music is matched by his passionate commitment to political causes and charities. As much a teacher and leader as a supreme entertainer, he was an early and outspoken critic of apartheid in South Africa and has also been deeply involved in the global war against famine. "I love touching people with love songs," explains Wonder, "but I also want to reach people's consciences and trigger some emotion on matters other than the heart."

Blind since birth, Wonder sang like a seasoned veteran even as a toddler, and at age 7 he had mastered the harmonica and drums. At 11, he had a contract with Motown that led to the birth of "Little Stevie Wonder." Wonder and his label hit the jackpot in 1963 with "Fingertips-Pt. 2." In two years he became one of Motown's finest artists, recording a series of brilliant singles for a solid nine years. By the end of the '60s, he was not only hitting the charts with his own records - including "Uptight," "Castles in the Sand," and "My Cherie Amour" - but also by writing for many other Motown artists, including "It's a Shame" for the Spinners and co-writing "The Tears of a Clown" with Smokey

Robinson.

Wonder's creative spirit soon felt constricted by Motown's strict production and publishing contracts. When his record contract expired in 1971, Wonder recorded two full albums by himself and used them as a bargaining tool during contract negotiations with Motown. The record label gave him total artistic control of his albums, as well as the rights to his own songs.

In that first decade of his artistic emancipation which began in 1972, the singer, songwriter, producer, and multi-instrumentalist released seven classic albums: *Music of My Mind*, *Talking Book*, *Innervisions*, *Fulfillingness' First Finale*, *Songs in the Key of Life*, *The Secret Life of Plants*, and *Hotter Than July*. The hit singles that emerged from this period include "Superwoman," "Superstition," and "You Are the Sunshine of My Life." *Music of My Mind*, especially, helped usher in a new era in which soul and R&B albums became not just a collections of singles anymore, but a cohesive artistic statement, in which artists could extend their music beyond the confines of a three-minute hit single. Wonder's lyrics began to address social and racial issues as eloquently and incisively as any other artist or social activist.

And social activism became increasingly important to his career and his life. He lobbied the federal government to create the Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday; he performed in concerts to protest nuclear weapons and promote peace; and he recorded songs that urged racial harmony ("Ebony and Ivory," with Paul McCartney), opposed drunk driving ("Don't Drive Drunk"), advocated stiffer handgun control laws ("My Love Is With You"), and fought world hunger ("We Are the World").

During the past decade, Wonder put together the soundtrack for Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* and he released the critically acclaimed *Conversation Peace*.

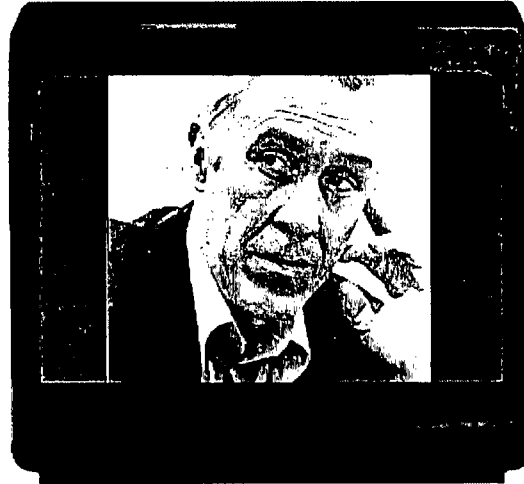
His work has earned him 17 Grammy Awards and an Oscar for "I Just Called To Say I Love You" from the 1984 film *The Woman in Red*. He has sold more than 70 million LPs and ranks alongside The Beatles and Elvis Presley in having the most Top Ten records.

Stevie Wonder is a true American phenomenon.



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Jason Robards

(actor; born July 26, 1922, in Chicago)

Recognized around the world as the definitive interpreter of the works of Eugene O'Neill throughout his long and esteemed career, Jason Robards has been hailed as one of this country's finest stage actors and acclaimed for his outstanding work in film and on television. Ellis Rabb, who directed Robards in a 1980s revival of the classic American comedy *You Can't Take It with You*, put into words what Robards demonstrates every time he steps onto a stage or in front of a camera: "Robards can do anything, from O'Neill to light comedy to Shakespeare, a range we seldom see in this country."

In addition to O'Neill, his stage performances span works by many of the major playwrights who define 20th-century theater: Arthur Miller, Clifford Odets, Lillian Hellman, Brian Friels, Kaufman and Hart, and Harold Pinter. One of his early stage appearances, in Jose Quintero's 1956 Circle in the Square revival of *The Iceman Cometh*, won Robards an Obie Award and restored O'Neill's crumbling reputation as perhaps this country's finest dramatist. A Tony Award followed in 1959 for *The Disenchanted*. Two decades later he won back-to-back Academy Awards for motion picture portrayals of *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee in 1976's *All the President's Men* and novelist Dashiell Hammett in 1977's *Julia*. The top acting prize awarded by the Cannes Film Festival is his, as is an Emmy Award for his role in "Inherit the Wind."

Born in 1922, in Chicago, Robards was the son of a well-known actor of the 1920s and early '30s, Jason Robards, Sr. After graduating from Hollywood High School, he enlisted in the Navy at the age of 17 and became a radioman stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He saw seven years of service. After the war, on his father's advice he enrolled in his father's alma mater, the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

For a decade Robards squeaked by with jobs on radio and live television. His Broadway debut came in 1951 in the concentration-camp drama *Stalag 17* and then five years later he was cast in the landmark *Iceman Cometh* in 1956. The following season he played Jamie in the American premiere of O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* and that now legendary relationship between actor and playwright blossomed with productions of *Hughie*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *A Touch of the Poet*, and revivals of *Long Day's Journey into Night*, this time playing the father, and *The Iceman Cometh*, in which Robards recreated his first major role, Hickey, 30 years later and astonished a whole new generation of theatergoers.

Among his most memorable films are *Tender Is the Night*, *A Thousand Clowns*, *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre*, *Isadora*, *Once Upon a Time in the West*, *The Night They Raided Minsky's*, *Parenthood*, *Philadelphia*, and *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*. His rendering of Howard Hughes in *Melvin and Howard* earned him an Oscar nomination.

On television he has been seen in several acclaimed specials, including "The Atlanta Child Murders," "Sakharov," "FDR: The Last Year," "Washington Behind Closed Doors," and "The Day After."

But it is as an American stage actor that Robards has few equals. He has been directed by everyone from José Quintero to John Gielgud. He has played in virtually every playhouse on Broadway: they are his beloved homes. In them he has made not only the works of O'Neill, but also such classic plays as *Toys in the Attic*, *After the Fall*, *We Bombed in New Haven*, *The Devils*, *A Thousand Clowns*, *Love Letters*, *A Month of Sundays*, *The Country Girl*, *No Man's Land*, and *Moonlight*, part of our nation's culture that we will always treasure.

Jose Quintero, his brilliant O'Neill collaborator, put it simply: "He is an artist in complete command."



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The Kennedy Center **HONORS**



Judith Jamison

(dancer, choreographer, and teacher; born May 10, 1943 in Philadelphia)

Judith Jamison's interpretation of *Cry*, the epic 1971 solo Alvin Ailey created especially for her, was and remains the stuff of legend: a superhuman feat of intensity and clarity, drenched in a powerful feminine presence with an immensely generous, universal appeal. And yet *Cry* was just one triumphant moment in a long career blessed with triumph. Ailey described Jamison as "one of the giants in my life," and her stature has only grown since her mentor's death in 1989, when she took the helm of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Jamison the dancer already has earned a place in history as one of our century's most individualistic and beloved artists. Jamison the choreographer and teacher, is leading a great American dance company into the next century. Jamison once spoke of Ailey, a 1988 Kennedy Center Honoree, as her "spiritual walker," and now it is Jamison who is guiding the steps of Ailey's spiritual children. As Ailey's successor, as a major force in dance in her own right, Jamison is nurturing the future of American dance.

She was born in Philadelphia and began her ballet studies there at the age of six with Marion Cuyjet and later with Antony Tudor. Her debut came at 15, as Myrtha in *Giselle*. She enrolled as a freshman at Fisk University in Nashville, intent on studying psychology. Dance beckoned, however: she left Fisk, joined the Philadelphia Dance Academy and never looked back. In 1964, Agnes de Mille spotted Jamison in a master class and invited her to perform in *Four Marys* with American Ballet Theatre.

It was in New York that Alvin Ailey first saw her, while Jamison auditioned for a television show choreographed by Donald McKayle. She did not get the job with McKayle, but within three days Ailey invited Jamison to join his troupe. Ailey and

Jamison were a perfect match, both statuesque and more than a little wild, their dance marked at once by emotional abandon and intellectual rigor. From 1965 to 1980, Jamison was Ailey's muse, his company's biggest star - even as Jamison herself often cautioned, "Don't call me a star, call me a dancer."

Her majestic presence brought to life dance after glorious new dance, including Ailey's *Revelations*, *Blues Suite*, *Aridness*, *Yemanjá*, *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, *Reflections in D*, *Masekela Language*, *Lark Ascending*, *The Mooch*, and two memorable duets: *Pas de Duke* with Mikhail Baryshnikov, and *Spell* with Alexander Godunov. She excelled, too, in Geoffrey Holder's *Prodigal Prince*, John Butler's *Blood Memories and Carmina Burana*, Louis Falco's *Caravan*, and Jose Limon's *Missa Brevis*. At the Hamburg Ballet, Jamison was partnered by Kevin Haigen in John Neumeier's *Josephslegend* in 1976. In 1979, Maurice Bejart choreographed *Le spectre de la rose* for her and Patrice Touron with Bejart's *Ballet du XXme Siecle* ("Ballet of the 20th Century"). In 1980, Jamison left the Ailey company to star on Broadway in *Sophisticated Ladies*. She founded the Jamison Project in 1988. When Ailey died in 1989, Jamison came home to the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, to build on Ailey's vision and make her own unique contribution. Under Jamison's aegis, the company's already broad repertory has been enriched with dances by Lar Lubovitch, Billy Wilson, Elisa Monte, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and Jamison herself.

Jamison's own growing choreographic oeuvre includes her 1984 *Divining*, her first work for Ailey, as well as a moving memory piece about him called *Hymn* with a libretto by Anna Deveare Smith, and such challenging ballets as *Just Call Me Dance*, *Time Out*, *Time In*, *Into the Life*, *Tease*, *Forgotten Time*, *Rift*, *Riverside*, *Echo: Far From Home*, and *Sweet Release*.

Ailey believed that "dance came from the people: we must take it back to the people." Jamison shares that belief, and she is taking to the people everywhere, a shining ambassador of our country, a living example of the very best and most exciting in American culture.



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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 29, 1996

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE
SAXOPHONE CLUB PRESIDENTIAL VICTORY CONCERT

Constitution Hall
Washington, D.C.

9:27 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Let me say to all of you, you have honored me and our party by being here tonight. I can't thank you enough. I want to say a special word of thanks to the Saxophone Club, to the D.C. Chapter and to Bennett Kelly, to all of you who had anything to do with putting this together. (Applause.)

I thank Bruce Hornsby and his wonderful band for keeping us pumped up and playing so brilliantly. (Applause.) I thank Stevie Wonder for so brilliantly taking us back across the years and bringing us back today again. (Applause.) He was magnificent, let's give him a hand. (Applause.)

And thank you, Kevin Spacey, for being here and for showing your versatility, your patience, your talent. You know, from the Usual Suspects to Seven to A Time To Kill to Johnny Carson, to killing time creatively -- (applause) -- this man has a brilliant past and a more brilliant future. I am so honored that he was here tonight. We ought to give him a Purple Heart for how much time he had to stand up. (Applause.)

You know, I felt so sorry for Kevin up here. It reminded me of some of the licks that I have taken in this campaign. And one day when I was kind of feeling sorry for myself, somebody reminded me of something Mark Twain said and I wish I could have whispered to Kevin. The fella said, you know, you ought to consider yourself like the dog Mark Twain talked about. He said, every dog needs a few fleas, it keeps him from worrying so much about being a dog. (Laughter.) And so no matter whatever happens to Kevin in his performing life, he'll always remember it will never be as bad as when he had to stand in Constitution Hall and make up jokes for 20 minutes during acts. You were great. Thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

You know, this election is in seven days. It has always been about the future. The work that Al Gore and I have done for four years has been about building an America for the 21st century. Whatever else people say or talk about in the end, it's about the future of the young people in this grand old Constitution Hall tonight and all your counterparts all across our great country.

And so I ask you to give seven more days of effort and your voice, your passion, your commitment to making sure that we roar into that next century together; that we build a bridge we can all walk across; that we say no to division, no to going back, no to the short-sighted, negative forces that would tend to divide us and cloud our clear vision of the tomorrow we can make together.

Our best days are still ahead. Thank you and God bless you

You know from what we've done in the last three-and-a-half years I'll do my dead-level best to do what I say I want to do in the next four years.

And now you know where they stand and what they will do. They passed a budget in 1995 which will become the law of the land if they control the Congress and the White House in 1997. They tried to do certain things to the environment and to the fabric of this country, which they will be able to do and which they will do. And you don't have to guess.

So we can look ahead. One side says -- their side -- that in this great new Information Age with so many opportunities, government is the problem; and what we really need for the American people is an unlimited number of choices and freedom from government. If we all just walk away, everything will work out fine. Our side says, that view forgets history. Remember what the great writer, Anatole France, said: "The rich and poor are equally free to sleep under the bridge at night."

We believe that the future requires not only the existence of opportunity, but making sure that every American has the chance to seize that opportunity, and that what we should be doing here at this moment is giving people the ability to make the most of their own lives -- as workers, as family members in communities, and as citizens. That is the central difference between the two approaches in the debate in Washington, D.C., and in the country today. And the American people must choose which road they will walk into the 21st century. (Applause.)

And let me reiterate what others have said. I don't care what the polls say today. This is a time of profound change. And just as there is volatility in the economy, just as there is volatility in our society, there will inevitably be volatility in our political life. If you want this to come out in a way that you

believe in, then you have to leave here tonight committed to doing everything you can to reach every friend, every neighbor, every person you come in contact with, to try to convince that person that this is the road we should walk together into the 21st century. This is the road we should walk together.

And you have lots of specific examples. They talked about the deficit; we brought it down. They say they want to help working people and value families, but we stood up for the Family and Medical Leave Law that Chris Dodd had to fight seven years for because they fought it every step of the way. (Applause.)

We, those of us who are here tonight, can afford to be here, but we're still for raising the minimum wage, because we want people who raise families and work full time to be able to live in dignity. (Applause.) That's important.

It's one thing to say you're for law and order, but we put a hundred thousand on the street, helping to reduce the crime level. We put money into community programs to prevent crimes so our children have something to say yes to, as well as something to say no to. We did pass the Assault Weapons Ban, and we also passed the Brady Bill. (Applause.) And you know what? None of those hunters shooting at those moose that Robin portrayed so well tonight have lost their guns. But 60,000 people -- 60,000 people did lose out. Sixty thousand people with criminal records have not been able to buy handguns because of the passage of the Brady Bill. We were right. That was the right decision for America. (Applause.)

We think everybody ought to be able to go to college, because what you can earn depends on what you can learn. And so we fought for a new student loan program -- lower cost, less hassle, better repayment terms. We were for it and, by and large, they weren't.

So we have very different views. None of those cases -- not a single, solitary one -- involves the government guaranteeing an outcome to any citizen. What did we try to do? We tried to guarantee safe streets, the opportunity to get an education, the opportunity to get a job, a healthy economy. And the same thing is true with the environment. I plead guilty to believing we cannot grow the American economy over the long run unless we preserve the quality of our land, of our water, our natural resources, and the animals who inhabit this earth with us. I am guilty. I plead guilty. And I believe most of the American people would say the same thing. (Applause.)

That doesn't guarantee us anything except the chance to have a decent, coherent life. And so I say to you again, if you believe that every person ought to have a chance to make the most of his or her life, if you are sick and tired of seeing this country divided by race, by religion, over these issues that serve to drive a wedge between the American people and you know that unless we come together we'll never be the country we ought to be; if you want your country to stand up for peace and freedom, even when you may not agree with the President on every issue -- I've done a lot of things that weren't popular with some groups, whether it was Haiti or Mexico or getting involved in the Northern Ireland situation for the first time -- and I know that a lot of people say from time to time, well, maybe he does this, that or the other thing too much.

But let me say this, 20 years from now I want your country to be the strongest country in the world. But other countries will be stronger than they are today. And we have to make sure that other countries join us in fighting terrorism, in standing up against dangerous weapons, in standing up to drug smuggling, in standing up for a decent life for all the children of this world. If we don't cooperate with these countries and try to lead and shape the future, then it will diminish the future for all of us. And if you believe all that, then I ask you to leave here committed not to saying, okay, I did my part, I went to that fundraiser, we raised \$12 million. Big deal. No, I ask you to walk away and say, I'm going to work every day between now and election day in November so we walk the right road into the future. That is my commitment and that's what I want you to do. (Applause.)

Lastly, let me make this point. If we seek to prevail, we must have a strong sense of history and a big heart. This country has had a few major decision points in its history. When we started -- Robin did a little debate about the Founding Fathers -- all the things we take for granted today, they were big decisions -- would we have a Bill of Rights or not; how were we going to limit government to protect people; would we be one country or just a little collection of states.

The next big crisis we had was the Civil War, when Abraham Lincoln gave his life, first to keep us one country and, second, to make us live up to the letter of the Constitution and get rid of slavery. Then, a hundred years ago we had an age very like today, when the economy changed, the way we lived and worked changed. And Theodore Roosevelt, a great Republican president, and Woodrow Wilson, a great Democratic president, led us into what we now call the Progressive Era, when we said, hey, this Industrial Age is a great thing. People being able to move out of the country and live

in the city, it's a great thing. But it's not a great thing that children are working 60 hours a week. It's not a great thing that women are being abused in the workplace. It's not a great thing that we are destroying our natural resources. It's not a great thing that small businesses are being crushed by unfair monopolies and not having a chance. We think we'll use the power of government to help ??people make more of their own lives and preserve what is essential to this country. And that's what we've got to do again today. (Applause.)

When President Roosevelt got us through the Depression and stood up for freedom against fascism in World War II, when we stood up against communism in the Cold War, all these things kept America what it is today. And believe me, the decisions we have to make today as we move from the Cold War to the Global Society, as we move from the Industrial Age to the Information and Technology Age, they're every bit as profound.

No one has all the answers. The most important thing is, what road are we going to walk down. If you want America to be something, we have to have a strong sense of history. We have to understand that we are here today because our forbearers were committed to living up to the promise of the Constitution, to meeting our challenges and protecting our values and giving everybody a chance.

And the other thing we have got to have is a little bit of heart. You know, they make fun of me sometimes. They say Bill Clinton is too emotional, feels your pain, and all that sort of stuff. Let me tell you something: You just think about it. When they lay you down for the last time, what are you going to remember? You wish you had spent a few more hours at the office? No, you're going to think about your children, your family, the people you like, the people you love, how it felt to learn and experience things for the first time, the music that made you feel alive and big. That's what makes life worth living.

Yesterday I was in a little town in New Jersey that was dominated by, basically, white ethnic schoolkids. We were at an anti-teen smoking event. But in this blue collar, ethnic town, there were Jewish kids, there were Hindus of Indian heritage, there were two young women in their Muslim formal dress in the school -- all living together as Americans. All proving, once again, that we believe that anybody who just shares our values and will respect the honest differences of others should have the chance to live in this way, to live out their dreams that go way beyond economics. And I just want you to know why I feel that way.

Just before I left to come over here tonight, I met with a group of people. I frequently have coffee with people from around the country who are active in public affairs, and most of them couldn't afford to come here tonight. The people I met with tonight were four local government leaders from the Northeast, three state legislative leaders from the South and the West, and some Hispanic and African American women who are active in political organizations all over the country. And I just go around the table and let them talk.

About the tenth person to talk was this very tall, stately, impressive African American woman from San Francisco. She looked at me -- this is self-serving, but I am going to tell you anyway -- this woman looked at me and said, before we get down to what I came to talk about, let's get first things first. She said, my daddy is 75 years old and he lives in St. Louis, but he was born and grew up in Hope, Arkansas -- the same little town in Arkansas I was

born in. And he went to Yeager High school, which was the all-black high school at the time when the schools were segregated. And he told me that your grandfather, at his little store, was one of only four white people in town that would really do business with black folks. She said, is that true?

I said, yes, ma'am, it's true. And I can still remember when I was five years old, sitting on that wooden store counter next to a big jar of Jackson's cookies that were this big and sold for a penny apiece, listening to my granddaddy tell me that those people who came into his store were good people and they worked hard and they deserved a better deal in life. (Applause.)

Now, let me tell you folks, that's what makes this country great. Our political system is not great because it's a political system. It is not even great because it works economically. It's great because it gives us all a chance to live out our dreams, and because in every generation we keep trying to meet the challenges and protect our values and live up to what we say we believe in. That is really what this is all about.

And we cannot go into the global economy of the 21st century by walking away from our common responsibilities and saying that we don't have a common responsibility to help everybody's kids live up to the fullest of their dreams. (Applause.) You think about it, talk about it, stand up for it, work for it. Don't be overconfident and we will prevail.

Thank you and God bless you. And good night.
(Applause.)

END

10:54 P.M. EDT

all. Thank you. (Applause.)

END

9:31 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 8, 1996

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE GALA

The Washington Convention Center
Washington, D.C.

10:32 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. You may have held your humor in check tonight, but you don't ever hold anything back from America every day in your job. The American people will never really know -- at least, until I write my memoirs -- all the magnificent things Al Gore has done as Vice President. But I'm telling you, we should all be very grateful to him, and I appreciate it. Thank you. (Applause.)

I want to thank Tipper for so many things. For making me more sensitive to the whole issue of mental health; for making me see the world in a deeper and different way, through the lens of her camera; and for sharing my birthday and all those crazy characteristics we Leos have. (Laughter.) You know, there comes a time when the four of us are out at 12:30 in the morning on Saturday evening, I don't want to talk about public policy anymore -- (laughter) -- so we just let Al and Hillary go on their way and we talk about music or something.

I want to thank Don Fowler and Chris Dodd for the incredible labor of love and effort they have exerted, and all of those who work with them -- Marvin Rosen and the others who have raised so much of the funds, and Terry McAuliff and those who have helped our campaign. I thank them all so much.

I want to thank Dan and Beth and the other co-chairs, and all the committee who worked so hard tonight. And I'm very grateful to Stevie Wonder and to Robin Williams for not only adding a little glamour, but adding a little depth to our lives in their songs and in their humor. They made us think about what's really important in life and what's really important in public life. I thank them especially for honoring our friend, Ron Brown. As I said when I spoke at his memorial service, I probably wouldn't be here if it weren't for Ron Brown, and I'm glad we could be here for him tonight. And thank you, Alma, for being here with us. (Applause.)

I want to thank the host and chairman of this dinner, Peter Knight, who has -- if you want to clap for him after what he has done to you for months, I think that is a wonderful thing. (Applause). Any man who can pick your pocket and still win your applause -- (laughter) -- deserves to be the campaign manager of the Clinton-Gore campaign. So tomorrow he goes to work in a new job. (Applause.) Ever since he played a major role in our campaign in 1992, I have been profoundly impressed with his mind, his heart, his skill, his discipline. And I look forward to his leadership as we go down the road ahead. I thank him very, very much.

I want to thank the First Lady for so many things over what now are nearly 21 years of our marriage, for these remarkable three-and-a-half years we have had in the White House, for putting up

with a phenomenal amount of abuse solely because she happened to be married to me, and doing it with good humor and good grace and a strong heart. (Applause.) And not quite solely because she happened to be married to me, she also happens to stand for some things that some of those in the other party don't like.

But I think it's a good thing that woman as well as men, and girls as well as boys, should have a chance to live this life to the fullest of their ability. And I do believe it takes a village to raise a child. (Applause.) And I think it takes a village to solve our problems and a village to make this country what it ought to be. Stevie Wonder sang it: All for one and one for all.

And finally let me thank all of you, and let me say -- I don't want to speak long tonight because, as Robin Williams said, I know I'm preaching to the saved. But I want to tell you one more time as clearly as I can what is at stake in this year, and why it goes beyond the bounds of a normal election, and why you cannot leave your commitment at this door -- no matter how much you gave or how difficult it was. For your citizenship cannot end here.

When Al Gore and I ran in 1992, I had a clear vision of what I hoped our country would like in the 21st century and I haven't lost that vision. I want America to be a place where every child can grow up to live out his or her dreams without regard to their race or their religion or their ethnic group or the station in life from which they start. If they're willing to work, I want them to have a chance to live out their dreams. (Applause.)

I want America to be a place where our incredibly rich diversity of heritage brings us together, and where we live together in peace and respect, with safe streets and good schools and a clean environment. I want America to be a place where everyone knows that we're doing our best to preserve our values together, to move forward together. I want America to be the strongest force for peace and freedom in the world in the 21st century. I want us to continue reaching out to other people and standing up for the things we've stood up for.

And I believe in order to do that we have got to be willing to work together, to face our challenges and not deny them, to protect our values, not just to talk about them and regularly violate them. These last three-and-a-half years have been a great opportunity for us. We've still got a long way to go as a country, but no one can doubt that in every important way we're better off today than we were in 1992, when the deficit was twice as high -- (applause) -- when we had 8-and-a-half million fewer jobs, when we had a higher crime rate, higher welfare rates, higher poverty rates, when we seemed to be drifting.

But what I want to say to you tonight is, more important than any single issue is the differences now before the American people in this election about how we will walk into the 21st century. In 1992 there was so much talk about change. Robin did that great imitation of Ross Perot. Ross Perot and I said we represent change. Sixty-two percent of the people said, okay, we're for change against the status quo and kind of a hands-off policy to our problems. And thank goodness in that 62 percent more people voted for me than Mr. Perot, so I got to show up here tonight. And that's what happened. (Applause.)

But it was change against the status quo. That is not true now. There is no status quo option. In this election there are two very different visions of change. And, unlike most elections, you don't have to guess. You know where I stand, what I stand for.