

5/11/99 6 pm Widmer

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS IN TRIBUTE TO BILL RUSSELL
TO BE VIDEOTAPED MAY 12, 1999
[TO BE SHOWN MAY 26, 1999]**

- indent* → In the summer of 1955, a young basketball star at the University of San Francisco was invited to the White House, but he didn't get the letter for a long time – it was expensive to drive from his home in Oakland across the bay, just to pick up a letter. Bill, we're taking no chances this time. I'm sending this message the most direct way I can. We ~~may~~ honor you tonight – but you have been honoring America for over forty years. Not only through your fierce drive to win – but through your self-respect, your leadership, and your belief that every person is part of a team.
- Not many people have more championship rings than they have fingers to put them on. Between 1956 and 1969, the Celtics won 11 out of 13 championships. The last one came thirty years ago this month, against long odds, when the Celts came from behind in the series to win Game 7 in L.A., 108 to 106. I bet a lot of people got to hear Bill's special laugh that night.
- Bill, you not only won a lot, your defensive genius reinvented the game. When we remember number six, most of us think of a rebound, or a blocked shot, followed by a quick pass, and another Celtic basket. You also defended against challenges off the court, including some that were even tougher ~~to go up against~~ than Wilt Chamberlain. You always stood tall against racial injustice. You refused to be silent when you saw a society that was too separate and too unequal. We are a better nation for your honesty.
- Your leadership has inspired not only the players you coached, but the people involved with the mentoring partnerships we celebrate tonight. Nobody knows better than you that good teamwork is the key to winning. For years, Celtic fans have seen the number six hanging above the parquet (par-kay) floor. Tonight they get to thank the man behind the number. Congratulations, Russ, from one left-hander to another.

###

Final 5/12/99 4pm
Ted Widmer



**PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS IN TRIBUTE TO BILL RUSSELL
TO BE VIDEOTAPED MAY 12, 1999
[TO BE SHOWN MAY 26, 1999]**

In the summer of 1955, a young basketball star at the University of San Francisco was invited to the White House, but he didn't get the letter for a long time – it was expensive to drive from his home in Oakland across the bay, just to pick up a letter. Bill, we're taking no chances this time. I'm sending this message the most direct way I can. We honor you tonight – but you have been honoring America for over forty years. Not only through your fierce drive to win – but through your self-respect, your leadership, and your belief that every person is part of a team.

Not many people have more championship rings than they have fingers to put them on. Between 1956 and 1969, the Celtics won 11 out of 13 championships. The last one came thirty years ago this month, against long odds, when the Celts came from behind in the series to win Game 7 in L.A, 108 to 106. I bet a lot of people got to hear Bill's special laugh that night.

Bill, you not only won a lot, your defensive genius reinvented the game. When we remember number six, most of us think of a rebound, or a blocked shot, followed by a quick pass, and another Celtic basket. You also defended against challenges off the court, including some that were even tougher than Wilt Chamberlain. You always stood tall against racial injustice. You refused to be silent when you saw a society that was too separate and too unequal. We are a better nation for your honesty.

Your leadership has inspired not only the players you coached, but the people involved with the mentoring partnerships we celebrate tonight. Nobody knows better than you that good teamwork is the key to winning. For years, Celtic fans have seen the number six hanging above the parquet (par-kay) floor. Tonight they get to thank the man behind the number. Congratulations, Russ, from one left-hander to another.

###

— He works us that nice letter —