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Remarks Honoring the 2013 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Minnesota Lynx

June 12, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody. Please, please, have a seat. Welcome to the White House. And give it up for our special guests, the 2013 WNBA Champions, "Los Lynx," the Minnesota Lynx. [*Applause*] Hey! We happen also to have some fierce Lynx fans, including Congressman Tim Walz, who is here, and I understand that Mayor Chris Coleman just arrived. So give them both a big round of applause. Chris is around here somewhere. There he is back there. Stand up, Chris, so everybody can see you. Take credit.

Now, in 2012, when the Lynx came here after their first title, I said I had a feeling I might see them again before I left office. [*Laughter*] I just want to mention that I was right. [*Laughter*] And so you can fact-check that, PolitiFact. I got that one right. [*Laughter*]

One of your assistant coaches, Shelley Patterson, put it pretty simply: "Winning is what we like to do." And it shows. Over the last 3 years, Coach Cheryl Reeve has led the Lynx to the WNBA's best record, winning more than three-quarters of your games, making it three straight championship series. That's pretty good. Last year, Seimone Augustus issued one of the strangest apologies in sports. I've never heard this before. She said, "I'm sorry if we make it look too easy." [*Laughter*] That's a good problem to have.

But you began last season with something to prove. In 2012, a tough loss to the Indiana Fever in the finals kept you from a second straight championship. So in 2013, you set out for a little redemption, and to put it mildly, you succeeded.

You did not only go 26–8 in the regular season, but you also swept the playoffs, a perfect 7–0. You won it with all-star talent, from Seimone to Rebekkah Brunson, hometown hero Lindsay Whalen. You did it with fellow all-star and Finals MVP Maya Moore, who has now been here so many times, I've lost track. [*Laughter*] I mean, basically, there's like a Maya Moore wing in the White House. [*Laughter*] And when she comes, we kind of—we've got all her stuff here; she's got a toothbrush and—[*laughter*].

And you did it with all-star teamwork. On the road, in the clinching game of the finals, all five starters scored in double digits. Last season, Lindsay set a new franchise record for assists after just 88 games, a mark that took 205 games to set in the first place. Just gives you a sense of how good she is. Lindsay can play.

But bringing home titles isn't the only thing that's earned "Los Lynx" fans throughout Minnesota. These young women are outstanding members of the community. They make time to help local students with their reading. I hear they clean up pretty well for their annual "Catwalk for a Cure" fashion show—[*laughter*]—that raises money for breast cancer research, so I'm going to have to look that up.

I also want to thank this team, as I always tell them, for being great examples for my daughters and for girls across the country. We know that when young women are involved in sports, they do better across the board. [*Applause*] They do better across the board. And when the WNBA first said "We got next," some folks didn't think a professional basketball league could make it. That was 18 seasons ago. And so we're excited to see not only where the Lynx are going to go in the future, but every NBA—WNBA team for years to come. And one of the

things I'd like to see is a Chicago Sky title. It's been a while. [*Laughter*] A really, really—a long while. But it's—it might happen in the future.

So today, of course, our job is to congratulate this outstanding team standing behind me, the 2013 Champions, Minnesota Lynx. Good luck with the rest of your season. And I understand—I don't know, Coach, if you want to say something. I know—I think Maya, who basically feels like she owns the place, wants to say a few words. [*Laughter*]

Head Coach Cheryl Reeve. I'll defer to Maya.

The President. All right, come on.

Forward Maya Moore. Man, what a birthday treat. Thank you to my teammates.

The President. Happy birthday. I didn't know that.

Ms. Moore. Yes, yesterday. It's all week, don't worry. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay. [*Laughter*] Malia and Sasha do the same thing. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Moore. It's reduced down from a month; now it's a week.

I just can't speak enough about this team behind me. It's really just been an awesome 3 years, going into my fourth year, and even before that, the foundation that was being built with Seimone, Coach Reeve, and all the other captains. But every year, it starts at Mr. Taylor's house, our awesome owner, who has provided—[*applause*]—yes.

Like Mr. President said, if we don't have opportunities to compete in sports and to play in sports, you don't get to see us up here today. So to have somebody that believes in us, Mr. Taylor, Becky, we appreciate you. We have our annual dinner at their house where we all come together. And as the rookies got to see, we're really a family. And what you see behind me right now is very genuine, how we treat each other, the passion that we play with. Our leaders, with Coach Reeve, Jim, and Shelley, the tireless work that they put in, and they don't want any credit. They do their jobs to perfection.

And last year, we didn't start out with that hot streak that we did our first 2 years; we had a little trouble in the beginning. And then, we also hit a rough patch towards the end of the season, losing four out of five games. I know. Gasp. [*Laughter*] And it was a struggle. We were in Chicago—this will make you feel good—[*laughter*]—playing against an awesome rookie in Elena Delle Donne, and she ended up hitting a game-winning three. A heartbreaking loss for us on the road. And our captain—one of our captains, Lindsay Whalen, you wouldn't have known this, but she took that loss on herself. She cares so much about this team and really just took it personal and hard. And that's really the heart of our team and the heart of this club. We care. And it shows when we're on the court, when we're together, when we're in the community. And I think that's what our Nation is about. We care, we're leaders in that. And that's why this team is so special not just talent-wise, but just the people that I've been blessed to play with.

So, hopefully, we can continue to make this an annual trip, and I want to see that room you're talking about. [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you.

Ms. Moore. You're welcome. Thank you.

The President. Thank you.

Ms. Moore. We have something for you.

The President. What do you got?

Ms. Moore. We have a little treat for you for 2013.

[*At this point, the President was presented with a team jersey.*]

The President. All right. Very nice. Very nice. It's got the number.

So let's strike the podium so we can get a good picture here. Come on. I'm going to slide right in here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Christopher B. Coleman of Saint Paul, MN; Seimone Augustus and Lindsay Whalen, guards, Rebekkah Brunson, forward, and Janel McCarville, center, Minnesota Lynx. Ms. Moore referred to Glen Taylor, owner, and Jim Petersen, assistant coach, Minnesota Lynx; Becky Taylor, wife of Mr. Taylor; and Elena Delle Donne, guard/forward, Chicago Sky.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : 2013 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Minnesota Lynx.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Augustus, Seimone; Brunson, Rebekkah; Coleman, Christopher B.; McCarville, Jane; Moore, Maya; Obama, Malia; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Patterson, Shelley; Reeve, Cheryl; Walz, Tim; Whalen, Lindsay.

Subjects: Sports : Basketball; Voluntarism.

DCPD Number: DCPD201400451.