

content with that. The stunning collapse of communism in 1989 was no accident. During the 1980's, the Communist world learned that no wall, no barrier can fend off powerful ideas. It saw our prosperity and our vitality. It saw that our way is better. The prosperity of the 1980's, which began with tax cuts and progrowth policies in the United States, transformed the entire world. Our challenge now is to shape the revolution that we started to make the 21st century the next American century.

And so, I ask your help in that quest. Together, with business working cooperatively with government, we cannot fail.

Thank you all very much for coming to Washington. And may God bless our great

country.

*Note: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in the Great Hall at the Department of Commerce. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Commerce Robert A. Mosbacher; James R. Jones, chairman of the American Business Conference; L. William Seidman, Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; Richard Breedon, Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission; Arthur Levitt, nominee to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission and founder of the conference; and Vice President Dan Quayle, Chairman of the Council on Competitiveness.*

## Remarks at the Presentation Ceremony for the National Teacher of the Year Award in Slanesville, West Virginia

*April 10, 1991*

*The President.* Well, please be seated. Kids, it's great to be with you. And you ought to be very happy that I'm here because you don't have to be in school working hard, you see. *[Laughter]* To all those who handled the arrangements for a complex visit like this, let me at the very beginning express my sincere thanks to you, and we promise to leave right on time so things can get back to normal in this beautiful part of our country.

I want to thank Secretary Alexander for his remarks, for his kind words. Thank all of you for this West Virginia welcome. It's good to see the Governor of this State here, a friend of education, Governor Caperton, who you met earlier.

I'm told that a former Member of Congress, Harley Staggers, is here. I'm not focusing too well from up here, but if he—they're pointing out here. But anyway—way back over there. But Harley, nice to see you, sir—a man that served his State with great distinction. I want to single out Commissioner Benedict and Superintendent Marockie; John Quam, the director of the National Teacher of the Year program; and of course, your own principal—and now

that I feel a part of this school, our own principal—Gary Kidwell.

Let me say that I'm especially pleased, on this whole broad national education front, to be side-by-side with Lamar Alexander—a former Governor, a man that is committed, a former head of a great university system, now our Secretary of Education—a man who has made it his mission, his sacred mission, to join with the teachers of this school and others all across this country to make America's schools second to none. And very soon, back in Washington, we are going to unveil our national education strategy. It's a long-term strategy to make America all that it can be, to spark a nationwide movement that touches every school and every student in America.

But today I want to focus on the fact that, in the end, everything we try to do in education comes down to teaching and learning, to each teacher and each student in our classrooms. There's no better way to make that point than to come here to honor someone Slanesville knows so well, the 1991 National Teacher of the Year, Rae Ellen McKee.

You know, the last time I went to a

school, it was just a few miles away from the White House, and I had a third-grade kid, a boy, ask me to prove that I was the President. [Laughter] I finally showed him my American Express card. [Laughter] And this time I came prepared, though. I brought the Secretary of Education so there can be no doubt. And then I flew down here on Marine One. And third, when we're done here, just to prove it, I'm going to take Mrs. McKee back up to the White House with me.

I heard a story about one of Mrs. McKee's reading students—I don't know if it's true or not—about a boy who'd been watching me almost every day on television, back during the troubled days of the war in the Gulf, making speeches, making statements to the press. And the boy allegedly asked Mrs. McKee, "Are you really going to Washington to meet the President?" And she said yes, she was. And he said, "He doesn't need you. [Laughter] He can already read." [Laughter] Well, that really says it all. [Laughter]

But this is a proud day: for Rae Ellen's parents; for her husband, John McKee, and their children, Zachary and Molly, a second-grader with whom I just met; and for all the children in this elementary school; and for every hard-working teacher in America who sees the future and shapes that future every single day that our children walk into the classrooms.

Being here today reminds me a little of my own days in school, all the way back to 1941. That was high school level for me. I remember my high school history teacher, Dr. Arthur Darling. He was demanding, he was disciplined, and I learned from him. I don't know how much I remember the dates and times and places. I don't know how much I remember of the history that he taught me. But I know I won't ever forget his example. Years from now, in exactly that same vein, many of the kids here—all of them, in my view—will remember Mrs. McKee the same way.

Our National Teacher of the Year grew up in Levels, just 10 miles from here. Rae Ellen McKee is West Virginia born and bred. It's in her soul. She comes from a family of teachers—five generations, to be exact. And she's still a student herself, work-

ing now on a second master's degree in education at West Virginia University, proof that learning is a lifelong process.

Rae Ellen McKee knows that teaching is more than giving tests and assigning grades. Teaching, she says, is the "impact of mind upon mind, and heart upon heart."

There are plenty of schools bigger than Slanesville's, plenty of towns with more people. But in this small school, great things happen. Every day, these children, your children, take another wonderful step forward, toward their future. And that's a testament to this teacher and to this school. And above all, it's a testament to the strength of this community and its values. Our children learn from all of us, not just from the teachers. And what happens at home and in the neighborhood matters just as much as what takes place in the classroom.

I know that many of the kids here today learned to read with Mrs. McKee's help. And I've just spent a little time with some of you all in the classroom, asking questions and watching you learn. So, let me ask a question: How many of you have ever read a story or a book that's been made into a movie? Quite a few. And then you watch the movie and you say to yourself, the book was better. When you read, the power of your imagination paints the picture in your mind, and there isn't anything in the world stronger than the power of your imagination. And that's why reading is so important. It's more than picking out the words on a page. Reading is one way we learn how to think. And when you open a book, you open your mind to a world of experience. Right here in a classroom in West Virginia, the world comes to you.

And let me say to all the kids here today: I hope you won't mind that we're going to borrow Mrs. McKee. For the next year, as Teacher of the Year, she's going to travel across this great country of ours to share with all our schools the secrets of her success right here in Slanesville. We need to learn from her how we can teach all kids just as well as she's taught you.

And pretty soon, you'll be back in class. And I'm going to ask you to do something for me, today and every day: Work hard,

ask questions, have fun, and learn. That's what school is all about.

And once again, I want to thank you for this warm welcome, for a chance to spend some time with you in the classroom, and for the opportunity to share this proud moment for Slanesville.

And now I am honored to present this crystal apple—an apple for the teacher—to the 1991 Teacher of the Year, Rae Ellen McKee.

*Mrs. McKee.* Mr. President, I thank you on behalf of the teachers of America. Your being here today is an honor that most of us never dreamed we would have. And as important as this day will always be to me and to my colleagues in the teaching ranks, I think it is even more special because you have once again demonstrated your commitment to the young people of America.

And at this time, I thank you on their behalf.

*Note: The President spoke at 10:01 a.m. on the grounds of Slanesville Elementary School. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander, former Governor of Tennessee; Gov. Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; former Representative Harley D. Staggers, Jr.; Cleve Benedict, State agriculture commissioner; Henry R. Marockie, State superintendent of schools; John Quam, project director of the National Teacher of the Year program for the Council of Chief State School Officers; and Gary Kidwell and Rae Ellen McKee, principal and reading teacher at Slanesville Elementary School. Following his remarks, the President returned to Washington, DC.*

## Appointment of C. Gregg Petersmeyer as Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of National Service

*April 10, 1991*

The President today announced the appointment of C. Gregg Petersmeyer, of Colorado, to be Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of National Service at the White House.

Since January 1989 Mr. Petersmeyer has been Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of National Service. Prior to this Mr. Petersmeyer was a senior officer of the General Atlantic Energy Corp., a private oil and gas exploration company in Denver, CO. Before moving to Denver in 1982, Mr. Petersmeyer was with McKinsey & Co., Inc., in New York and has also been a member of the Hudson

Institute. From 1972 to 1974 Mr. Petersmeyer served as a staff assistant in the White House. Mr. Petersmeyer is chairman of the Fitzie Foundation, a nonprofit public foundation that annually recognizes and rewards outstanding girls and young women from four schools in the Boston area.

Mr. Petersmeyer received a bachelor of arts degree with honors from Harvard College, a master of literature degree from Oxford University, and a master of business administration degree from Harvard Business School. Mr. Petersmeyer resides in Bethesda, MD, with his three children.

## Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Patricia F. Saiki as Administrator of the Small Business Administration

*April 10, 1991*

*The President.* Good afternoon, Secretary Martin and distinguished friends from the

United States Congress. And of course, a special welcome to the members of Pat's