

vision. Dollars don't make visions; deeds do. When government spends your money, it shouldn't do so for appearances. It should spend your money on programs that work. This philosophy lies at the heart of our domestic agenda. We want to restore proportion to government by letting government do what it does best and freeing you to do what you do best. We want to restore faith in government by making real commitments, not impossible promises.

But while we Americans demand more effective government, we also must demand more of ourselves. Entrepreneurs should be free to pursue their visions boldly, knowing that our future depends upon their success. Neighbors should seize the chance to help one another, to settle disputes over a cup of coffee rather than in a courtroom, to commit the little acts of kindness that turn rows of houses into neighborhoods. Let's stop seeking excuses and find opportunities to serve, to help one another, to become

sources of wealth and Points of Light.

John Kennedy was right when he said: "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

While government can't do everything, it ought to do its job. So today, I urge Congress to join us in doing the Nation's business. Unshackle our initiatives on crime, transportation, banking, economic growth, education, energy, housing, and civil rights. There is no shame in acting, and there's plenty of time between now and Congress' August recess to get the job done.

We know we can do great things. Together, let's do them.

Thank you, and may God bless you and our great nation.

*Note: The address was recorded at 12:03 p.m. on June 21 in the Cabinet Room at the White House. It was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 22.*

## Remarks at the Dedication Ceremony for the Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher House in Bethesda, Maryland

*June 24, 1991*

Thank you, Secretary. What a beautiful day out here at Bethesda. Please be seated and thank you. Thank you, Secretary Garrett. And good morning, Admiral Lichtman. Thank you and all your associates for this warm welcome. I want to, of course, single out Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher for their generosity, not just for this but for others to follow.

I want to, with the risk of embarrassment, say that coming in I congratulated Admiral Trost, our former CNO, for his vision in getting this program underway. And everybody jumped all over me and said, it's not Carl, it's Pauline. So, we salute her as well, and both of them for their vision.

It's a special day for Barbara and me, coming back here to Bethesda to see an exceptional group of people. Glad we don't have to stay this time. *[Laughter]* But it does give me an opportunity, seeing so many familiar faces—with my tiny, minor

problem in mind—to just say thank you. For those who have not been inside this place as a patient, the care and the concern for everybody—all the patients that I visited with telling me this—is just unbelievable. And it's typical of hospitals, of course, all across this country, but we saw it firsthand. And I extend you all my heartfelt thanks. No fibrillation, just bringing it on out—*[laughter]*—and would give you this report. Over the weekend, I played three hard sets of tennis, ran 2 miles, hit some golf balls. So, lest there be any doubts about the efficiency of Navy medicine, why, Admiral, I'm back 100 percent.

And true story and perhaps of not much interest, but I got this letter from a farmers' group during my recovery: "This wouldn't have happened if you'd eaten your broccoli." *[Laughter]* I would rather risk refibrillation, but that's my position. *[Laughter]* But there's a lot goes on at this medical center

that's inspiring. I again commend the dedication of the doctors and the nurses, the corpsmen; all who make life so pleasant for people that are under stress and strain—some of whom are just back from the Gulf. I might add, some of the professionals; and others who are still caring for some of the cases right here at the main hospital for those who really suffered, really got hurt in Desert Storm.

And so, today we celebrate something else that makes this place remarkable—the opening of this Elizabeth and Zachary Fisher House, the gift of two longtime friends of ours. Barbara and I have known the Fishers for many, many years. I think it dates back, Zach, to 1971 when I was Ambassador at the U.N. But his building will provide lodging for military families who have come to visit their seriously ill or injured loved ones.

With pride I tell you that Barbara Bush has been very helpful in encouraging this kind of dwelling—the Ronald McDonald Houses that so many of you know about that are connected with the many other hospitals, civilian hospitals. And she shares my joy in celebrating this one here.

Because a concerned couple cared, this house will become a home to families facing the triple blow of critical illness, financial pressures, and separation. And we had the pleasure of meeting several such families inside. And I must say, to hear them talk about what this means to them says it all.

Listen to how the Fishers dedicate this house: "To our greatest national treasure, our military men and women and their loved ones." Millions were touched by the sacrifice of our troops, but the Fishers did something. They acted upon this. And I've spoken to a lot of people about our concept of Points of Light, those who have given themselves to help others. And Elizabeth and Zach are brilliant Points of Light. They saw a need, and then they moved in to fill it. They didn't wait for Congress. They didn't wait for a study or a committee hearing. They saw a problem, moved in and

solved it.

This kind of dedication and ingenuity has made ours the strongest and, I think, the most caring nation in the world. This comfort home is one of seven furnished family retreats that the Fishers are donating to military hospitals across the country. They were inspired by a simple wonderful truth: The most important part of life is being with someone you love, helping someone you love, sharing life with someone you love.

It was a little over a year ago that Barbara spoke up at Wellesley about our philosophy—I think, our country's philosophy. So, let me—possibly risking embarrassing her—but let me share it with you again today. She said: "You will never regret not having passed one more test, not winning one more verdict, or not closing one more deal. You will regret time not spent with a husband, a friend, a child, or a parent."

And on behalf of the families who will find peace in this home and the ill or injured loved ones who will find comfort in their presence, I want to join the rest of you in thanking the Fishers. You really represent this wonderful concept in America. De Tocqueville noticed when he first came here the propensity of one American to help another. You represent our best.

And may I just say to our military men and women with us here today—the Coast Guard, represented by Admiral Kime, the Navy and other services as well—thank you for your service to our nation. And may this house bring you comfort in your time of need.

Thank you all very, very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 9:25 a.m. outside the Fisher House. In his remarks, he referred to Lawrence Garrett III, Secretary of the Navy; David M. Lichtman, commander of the National Naval Medical Center; Carlisle A.H. Trost, former Chief of Naval Operations, and his wife, Pauline; and J. William Kime, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.*