

marks, the President referred to Ross Perot, businessman and prospective Presidential candidate.

Remarks Congratulating United States Olympic Athletes April 8, 1992

Well, please be seated. Mr. Vice President and Marilyn—I've been jealous of them ever since they got to go to see a little bit of Albertville, not as much as they would have liked, but we were just delighted they could represent our country, albeit briefly, at this marvelous event.

And may I salute an old friend, Bill Hybl, from Colorado, who is the president of the U.S. Olympic Committee and who stepped into a difficult job and has done a superb job for our athletes and for our country. I see next to him Oss Day, who was also on our delegation that represented us over there. Welcome, sir. And may I just salute all that are here today, fellow Americans, and most of all, the very special athletes who did our country so proud. And a special hello to another athlete in his own right, a former coach of Notre Dame's Fighting Irish, who has just come, as Dizzy Dean would say, from "commemertating" on the NCAA basketball tournament, Digger Phelps.

Now, a parenthetical note and one of great importance and, I think, benefit to our country. Today we're announcing that Digger Phelps will be a Special Assistant to the Director at the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Next to Digger is Governor Bob Martinez, who is doing a superb job heading up that Office. And now, Digger will be at his side, the side of the Attorney General Bill Barr. And he's joining our efforts to take back the streets from crime and drugs, working on our new "Weed and Seed" program, which is terribly important to every community in our country. Digger, welcome, officially, and please stand up.

Well, I'm so glad to see all of you here helping salute the Olympians. And let me say that it's an honor to have this team here, though I almost didn't recognize you all without the interruptions for commercials.

[Laughter]

The Olympics—sorry about that one—[laughter]—the Olympics have been described as "going for the gold." Well, whether you took home a gold, silver, bronze, or simply just gave it your best, in my book and the book of your countrymen, you're all winners, indeed, heroes. And I think that's true for all Americans, look at it that way.

A book once proclaimed, "Let us now praise famous men." The 1992 Winter Olympics praised famous women. And did they do it well? I speak of champions like Kristi Yamaguchi over here, of Fremont, California. And I know Kristi's got her own cereal now, but we know she's the real Special K. [Laughter]

With us today, of course, is a champion whose specialty is speed skating. Bonnie Blair was supported in her early days by her hometown Champaign, Illinois, fire department. Now, after becoming the first American woman to take a gold medal in two straight Olympics, she's set the speed skating world on fire. Congratulations.

So did Cathy, Cathy Turner of Rochester, whose story even Ripley would disbelieve. A briefly retired speed skater, Cathy gave up her job as a nightclub singer to return to her sport and win the gold in short track, a silver in the relay event. And I congratulate her. Well done, well done. That brings me to other members of what's been called the Golden Girls, people like Donna Weinbrecht of New Milford, New Jersey, winning the first-ever gold medal in moguls skiing, or Juneau's Hilary Lindh, winning the silver in the women's downhill, the first Alaskan athlete to win an Olympic medal. Hilary, you've made Alaska almost forget about the Iditarod. Where are you?

I think, too, of Diann Roffe, Nancy Kerrigan, Amy Peterson, Darcie Dohnal, and

Nikki Zieglmeyer, each of them winning bronze or silver. And also three-time Olympian Bonny Warner, who has now traded the luge for her new career as an airplane pilot. Bonny, you made the entire Olympics friendly skies for America. Now, where is Bonny? Way up high. There she is.

And then, members of the men's hockey team, of course, have now all spread out, returned to a variety of careers. And I know they'll be as successful as they were at Albertville, fourth in the Winter Games, best since the Miracle Team of '80, 1980. Team U.S.A. was led by Ray LeBlanc from Fitchburg, Mass., who did a superb job in goal. As an expert at taking a lot of shots, I know exactly how he felt. [*Laughter*] We can all learn from him. No wonder they call Ray "America's choice," just as Nelson Carmichael, winning a bronze in moguls freestyle skiing, is the choice of his hometown, Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Then, Paul Wylie, a figure skater from Somerville, Mass., who won a silver medal when some said he was over the hill at age 27. Don't worry, Paul. Barbara and I know you'll get used to it. [*Laughter*] Had to rope her in on it. At the end of this year's games, Paul Wylie received the Olympic Spirit Award.

Let me add, that spirit owes much to this year's demonstration sport competitors, the men's curling team of Bud and Tim Somerville and Bill and Mike Strum, Jeff Hamilton in speed skiing, and Lane Spina and Sharon Petzold in freestyle ballet skiing, all here someplace. Hold up your hands now so we can get a little idea. There they are. Welcome, welcome.

But in the broad and in the truest sense, all of you here today mirror America's Olympic spirit: the work ethic, the desire to give of yourself and of your heart, the

love of victory and, above all, competition. Each quality makes the Olympics great. Each, in turn, makes our country great.

In 1954, Dwight Eisenhower called the Olympics the means and methods by which some understanding of fairplay and justice can be developed among nations. Here is what we call it: human beings vying peacefully, athletes asking more of themselves, excellence, achievement, the boundless energy of the human spirit.

Each of you showed how the Olympics race can ennoble the human race, that cooperation and competition can produce a better world. And you led the way to America's best showing in the Winter Games since 1980, 11 medals, the most we've won on foreign soil.

And you pointed the way to Lillehammer in 1994. And you gave the world a taste of what we'll do when America holds the Summer Olympics in Atlanta in July of 1996. White House to the world: I can't wait. And I know all Americans agree with me.

More than two millennia ago, a Greek statesman asked, "Which would you rather be, a victor in the Olympic Games or the announcer of the victor?" Today I am privileged to be the announcer of you victors, Americans who showed what we mean by competition, decency, self-reliance, self-discipline, proving that the Olympics, like America, are truly number one.

For that I thank you, for coming to the White House. We just welcome you once again. And may God bless you all, and the Nation that you made so proud, the United States of America. Thank you, and welcome.

Note: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.