

## Remarks Congratulating the National Collegiate Athletic Association Men's and Women's Basketball Champions

April 15, 1992

Well, we're just delighted to have you all here in the Rose Garden. And may I salute our basketball-playing, basketball-loving Vice President. We didn't ask him about the Indiana game, but—[laughter]. And may I welcome Coach Mike Krzyzewski, Coach K we call him, the Blue Devils players and staff. And of course, Coach Tara VanDerveer over here, the Cardinal and all the members; and single out our Cabinet mate, mine, Carla Hills, who's here. She was on Stanford's tennis team. Little short for basketball but—[laughter]—plenty tough in trade negotiations. So, we're glad she's here. And then of course, a new addition to our administration who is working in the antidrug program, this new and, I think, very exciting "Weed and Seed" program, Digger Phelps, who some of you may remember. Digger, welcome back.

And also we have here, and I saw some of you all signing autographs and meeting them, the champions from H.D. Woodson and from Forestville High Schools. Where are you guys? All right, there they go. These guys all look forward to the visits of the champions to the Rose Garden. But we have the Boys and Girls Clubs of Washington. Now, where are you all? Well, maybe we don't have them—there they are. There are some of the guys there. Good to see you.

Well, last year Duke was here, and then Stanford in 1990. We have to stop meeting like this. [Laughter] People are getting concerned that there's a monopoly going out here in our country. But thank you for joining us to celebrate, once more, that championship season.

A sports figure noted for malapropisms once said of a losing streak, "Those games were beyond my apprehension." [Laughter] Well, today we've got two teams whose winning streak tested the comprehension of basketball fans everywhere. Take, for example, Stanford University, again the NCAA women's champions. This year the Cardinal won 30 games and their fourth straight

PAC-10 title. Then they upset Virginia and then beat Western Kentucky to win the championship. No wonder Tara and I are becoming old friends. She may be the best court strategist since Perry Mason. [Laughter]

Now, consider first, as evidence, Stanford's all-everything center, Val Whiting. Now, where's Val? Way down on the—there she is. And some of you may not know this, she's studying to be a doctor. She scored 28 points in the Cardinal's thrilling semifinal victory, grabbed 13 rebounds in the final, made the All-Tournament Team.

Her teammate Molly Goodenbour, over here, number 4, right there, majoring in psychology, and why not? [Laughter] All season she made opponents shake their heads. Her "Molly rules" helped set an NCAA tourney record for the most 3-point field goals, with 18, and a single-game record for the most 3-point field goals with 6. There's always enthusiasm here in Washington for someone with a good three-point program—[laughter]—especially in an election year.

Now, this season Academic Third Team All-American Chris MacMurdo scored points on the court and in the classroom, setting a great example. I want to note Ann Adkins, the only senior on the team; Christy Hedgpeth, excelling outside; and Rachel Hemmer, the PAC-10 Freshman of the Year, prevailing under the boards. Then there's Kelly Dougherty, right here, always at her best in March; and walk-on Kate Paye, way down at the end; and Anita Kaplan, in the middle, perhaps Stanford's top reserve; and Angela Taylor, way, way down there someplace, Angela. I won't say what kind of reputation Angela has for her skills on defense, but they want to talk to her, Cheney does—[laughter]—over at the Pentagon.

This brings me to today's other guests. As my predecessor might have said, "There you go again." [Laughter] A year ago I said you showed that nice guys can finish first.

This season you struck again: Atlantic Coast Conference record, 14–2, the overall record, 34–2, champions of the ACC regular season and tournament; then, the first team since UCLA in 1973 and first ACC team to win back-to-back NCAA titles. Duke and I have something in common. Both of us like the word “repeat.” [Laughter]

Here’s what we’ll recall about their 1992 “stairway to heaven.” First, one Christian that the lions would be afraid to take on. [Laughter] Listen to this box score: a record 23d tournament game, the first player ever to start in four straight Final Fours. His perfect game against Kentucky, including that amazing last-second shot that everybody that watched TV will remember all the rest of their lives. We salute Christian Laettner, a true Player of the Year. Welcome back.

And then of course, we’ll remember Bobby Hurley’s wizardry on the court. You know, to Bobby, basketball is a family affair. His dad coached him in high school. He guarded his brother in this year’s regional semifinals. And this year Bobby made America Duke’s family. Think of how he became Duke’s career assist leader and NCAA Final Four MVP; or Bobby’s amazing record in NCAA tournament play, 17–1. It’s players like Bobby who helped Coach K, a graduate of West Point, do to opponents on the court which General Schwarzkopf did to his on the field of battle. Welcome back, Bobby.

Finally there are other players who helped the Blue Devils slam-dunk the opponents: Brian Davis, of nearby Capitol Heights, Maryland, he didn’t have far to go; Grant Hill, another near-in guy from Reston, Virginia, who threw the pass against Kentucky; Thomas Hill, Duke’s superb second-leading scorer; Ron Burt and Marty Clark, who grew up with six basketball-playing sisters. Marty, sounds like a typical weekend with my grandkids around this place. [Laughter] And all the Devils who helped Coach K, Duke’s Special K, make basketball history.

This year, Duke became only the fourth school to gain its third straight NCAA championship game. Stanford’s in the same league, three straight appearances in the Final Four. There’s a word for that: consist-

ency. And there’s another word for that: excellence. They are words which embody you as student athletes.

Both of these champions—and this is a very important point for the kids from the high schools here and the Boys and Girls Clubs here today—both of these champions have high academic standards. Each recruits aggressively, but honestly because neither bends the rules, because both play within the rules. A prediction: You players will make an even greater difference after graduation than before.

A Chinese scholar once wrote of “the great end of learning.” Well, learning is a great end with either a book or basketball. That’s why over the past decade more than 90 percent of Duke and Stanford players got their diplomas, rivaling the general graduation rates of their outstanding institutions.

Already, you’ve been missionaries for educational excellence. You’ve shown how a nation that is physically fit and educationally fit is fit to take on the world. So today, I ask you to carry that zeal to our educational systems at all levels, to your careers, and to the dream we call America. You stand here as examples of how will and heart can stir the human spirit.

So again, I am delighted to be out here. The Vice President’s delighted to be with me to congratulate as fans, to thank you for showing how education is our most enduring legacy, vital to all that we are and all we can become.

So good luck. And may God bless you all. And now here’s the drill. Last year we had a shoot-out by these, and another substitute team was here last year but—[laughter]. So after you all have a chance to visit a little bit and say hello, I’m going to invite the players down, and we will have a shoot-out, a White House shoot-out to see who wins our little trophy this year. The trophy is very modest, but we need these guys back. And we welcome the Cardinal to the White House court for a very, very brief appearance down there.

Now, thank you all very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 10:19 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.*