

Remarks at the National Volunteer Action Award Ceremony April 22, 1993

Thank you very much. I want to thank, first of all, the people who have made possible this 12th annual National Volunteer Action Award event, begun in the early 1980's under President Reagan, people from the Points of Light Foundation and the folks from ACTION. I want to say, too, to all of you that this is a matter of great personal pride to me to be President and be a part of this today, because I have believed for a long time in grassroots community efforts and community service.

Last year, on the occasion of my birthday, which I share with the Vice President's wife, Tipper Gore, our two families went to Georgia and built a house with Habitat for Humanity, along with President and Mrs. Carter as a way of symbolizing our commitment to national service. And my daughter selected a school here in Washington in part because one of the requirements of being enrolled in the school was to do community service. Just a couple of days ago, she and her group went out and did one of their service projects, working to build some park facilities for young people who will come behind and use those facilities.

I can't help but say I'm especially proud today because one of the honorees today is the Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation from my home State. I should say, I had nothing to do with selecting any of these awards. [Laughter] But they will tell you that for well over a decade I have worked with them in many ways, watching them work against often enormous odds to empower poor people in rural areas to seize control of their own destinies. So I am especially proud of them as well as of all the other honorees.

I think all of you recognize the fundamental truth that as Americans and as human beings we can never be completely fulfilled unless we help each other. Just a few moments ago, I was over at the dedication of the Holocaust Museum. And we recognized, of course, the great losses of the Jewish people, of the Gypsies, and others who were systematically exterminated by the Nazis. But we also recognize the services of perhaps the most important volunteers in the 20th century, those who put their lives at risk to try to save large numbers of the Jews.

On that cold, wind-whipped occasion, I think it's fair to say that, by far, the most popular speaker at the event was a woman who put her life at risk to shield Jews from almost certain death and, in the process, found a person who became her husband. The Scriptures say that in giving we will receive. Perhaps not all of us will find a mate for life in our gifts, but all of us certainly will receive.

I think it has been recognized for a long time that service sustains and defines our democracy and helps us to understand that we are not brought together by race or religion or region but that we cannot be kept apart by those things if we have common values, common interests, and undertake common endeavors.

After all, volunteers won the American Revolution. And ever since, volunteers have been winning our wars and winning the battles of peacetime. Volunteers helped to get women the right to vote and helped to effect the civil rights revolution and help us even today to overcome the barriers that divide us.

All generations have been called upon to serve. And today, as people are living longer than ever before, every generation now living is called upon to serve, to deepen our lives and to strengthen the bonds of our communities. Today is so special to me because we are recognizing those of you who have risen to the challenge in particularly innovative and effective ways.

I hope that as we honor you today you will all join me in renewing our call for all Americans to embrace the spirit of service. We all have roles to play. Even those who are not in organizations represented here may be able to help to patrol this, police, and support the work of law enforcement officers in areas plagued by high crime, where children are unsafe, or may help to volunteer in a community health center where health care is available in theory but not in practice unless people can find their way to the clinic; or tutoring children after school; or being mentors to children who themselves would like to do better but don't have the role models they need.

We bring out the best in our country when we serve. I know that you know that I've tried

to make sure our Government will do its part. And as Mr. Segal said, next week I intend to introduce the national service legislation that I hope will change our country for the better and forever to provide a revolution in the best sense of the word, bringing us back to our best values, offering opportunity, requiring responsibility, and creating a stronger sense of the American community.

Those are the things which drove me into this race for President well over a year ago and the things which I hope so deeply will be embodied in the national service movement. We want to make opportunity available by making it easier to get a loan to go to college and easier to pay it off through service, demanding responsibility by making sure that everybody who gets something from their Government finally gives something back, we hope in service but at least in dollars, and rebuilding communities all over this country through our civilian GI bill, with thousands of people paying their way to college either before or after they go by doing what their communities need.

We'll bring ourselves a little closer to that sacred day when all of our children can live

up to their full potential by working together to make sure that we do that as well as the children we're trying to help. If these efforts are to succeed, the spirit of service must be renewed in the hearts of every American, not just in those who will be part of the national service movement. I hope that this movement will go well beyond party or any other political division in this country. I hope that everybody will embrace the cause and the spirit, because I believe we can change the country. If we can do it here in the Government, we can then challenge our corporations, our foundations, our schools, our nonprofits to follow the leads of those whom we honor here today. And if we're in it for the long haul because we know we all have a role to play, I really believe it means an America finally and fully living up to its potential, that is, being more like those of you whom we honor today.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:47 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Nomination for Energy Department and Ambassadorial Posts *April 22, 1993*

The President announced today that he will nominate Archer Durham, a retired Major General in the U.S. Air Force, to be Assistant Secretary of Energy for Human Resources and Administration. He also formally announced his intent to nominate Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn to be Ambassador to the Holy See.

"Through his long and exemplary career in the Air Force, Archer Durham had a reputation of being a hands-on manager who consistently led the Air Force in management efficiency indicators," said the President. "Secretary O'Leary has called for that kind of management at her

Department, and I am glad that General Durham will be providing it."

"I am also very pleased to be formally announcing my intention to nominate Mayor Flynn for the important post of Ambassador to the Holy See," the President added. "As I said on St. Patrick's Day here at the White House, he has been one of the best mayors to serve in my lifetime, and I think he'll do a great job in a wide range of areas."

NOTE: Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.