

mobilize all necessary resources to help these States recover from the damage. And be assured that the prayers of our entire Nation are with you.

## Remarks Announcing the Bosnia-Herzegovina Cease-Fire Agreement and an Exchange With Reporters

October 5, 1995

*The President.* Good morning. Today we take another solid step on the hard but hopeful road to peace in Bosnia. I'm pleased to announce that the parties in Bosnia have agreed to a cease-fire to terminate all hostile military activities throughout the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina to become effective on October 10th, if certain conditions are met.

At the same time, the Governments of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia have agreed to proximity peace talks in the United States, beginning about October 25th, aimed at bringing them closer to a peace agreement. Those negotiations will take place with the assistance of our able negotiating team, led by Assistant Secretary Holbrooke, together with our Contact Group partners.

The talks will continue, then, at an international peace conference in Paris that can help to achieve an enduring end to the struggle. This is an important moment in the painful history in Bosnia, for today the parties have agreed to put down their arms and roll up their sleeves and work for peace.

We need to be clear-eyed about this. What matters is what the parties do, not simply what they say. There remain deep divisions to overcome. We are now on the right road, but we

have by no means reached our destination, which is a serious and lasting peace in Bosnia. This cease-fire, however, greatly increases our chances to end the war and to achieve a peace. The United States, together with our European and our Russian partners, intends to use all of our influence and every ounce of our energy to seize this historic opportunity for peace.

*Q.* Do you think it's fair to make this statement, and do you wish you had done it sooner? If you had moved more aggressively——

*The President.* All I know is that we're on the verge of a cease-fire. We're going to do our best to get the cease-fire. We have 5 days of hard work to do on that.

*Q.* Will NATO police this cease-fire? How will this be enforced?

*The President.* We're going to brief you on all the details of the cease-fire. We intend to go forward with the cease-fire, then go forward with the talks here in Washington. We hope we can start the talks in Washington by October 25th, and we feel very strongly that that will increase the chances of peace.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

## Remarks on Presenting the Arts and Humanities Awards

October 5, 1995

*The President.* Thank you very much. It's an eerie feeling being introduced by your wife. [Laughter] You never know what's going to be said. [Laughter] You're steeling yourself for the discipline not to show any adverse reaction. [Laughter] We're having a good time today, Hillary and I are. We love this day; we look forward to it. And we thank all of you for coming. We

thank especially Senator Pell and Senator Simpson. Thank you for coming. We're glad to see you.

We thank the members of the administration who are here. I see Secretary Riley and Deputy Secretary Kunin of Education; and Roger Johnson, the Director of the General Services Administration. There may be others here. I thank

all of you for being here. I want to say a special word of thanks for the service of Jane Alexander and Sheldon Hackney for the great job that they have done. I thank my good friend John Brademas, the Chairman of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, and Diane Frankel, the Director of the Institute for Museum Services. And I thank all the members of the Arts and the Humanities Councils who are here for their willingness to serve.

It's a great honor for me to be able to present today the National Medal of Arts and the Charles Frankel Prize in the Humanities to a distinguished group of Americans who have lived their lives as builders, bringing people enlightenment, bringing people enjoyment, advancing the cause of human knowledge and human understanding and the joy in life. Before I do that, I think I ought to say, we've had a couple of pieces of good news this morning at the White House, which at least are not inconsistent with what so many of these people have given their lives to.

The President of Mexico called me this morning and told me that, after all the difficulties his country had faced in recent months, that he was making an early repayment of \$700 million of the money they borrowed from the United States to keep their economy going. And I think that's a good thing.

You know, when you loan money, you never know whether it's a good thing or not until it's too late to do anything about it. [Laughter] Some of you have been in that position. But they're our friends; they're our allies; they're our partners for the future. They're fighting for their democracy, and they're fighting for the quality of their country's economy. They hit a rough spot in the road, and they borrowed less money than we authorized them to, and they're paying it back more quickly. And we're going to have a brighter future as a result of it and a safer, more secure future and a better partnership. And that's a good thing.

And perhaps even more importantly, I learned early this morning that in 5 days from now, if we can just get a couple of things done, the parties in Bosnia have agreed to a complete cease-fire of all military hostilities. They have furthermore agreed to come for what are called "proximity peace talks"—I'll tell you about that in a minute; that's a Government language word—to the United States to actually talk about hammering out a final peace agreement

in late October. So this is a good day for the cause of peace and prosperity in the world and in the United States.

Proximity peace talks means that they'll all come to the same country, to the same town, to the same place, but they'll let us talk to them, and they won't talk to each other until—[laughter]—but that's better than it's been. [Laughter] And sooner or later, we'll all find out we have more in common than we do dividing us. And that's the lesson that we hope the American people keep in mind as we go through the next months and years as well.

I think it's fair to say that no President has ever enjoyed these award ceremonies more than I have because every year I get a chance to recognize the lifetime achievements of people who have been heroes to me in various ways, men and women who, unbeknownst to them, have been my teachers, my role models, my inspiration, because, as President, I am no different than any other American who enjoys literature or music or art and architecture. And I have benefited, as so many of you have, from the work of the people we recognize today.

These awards call attention to the lives of 17 individuals and one organization who have worked to enrich the lives of millions and millions of Americans, millions of people around the world, and have made this country a stronger, better, richer place. They are genuine examples of the American ideal, and their work as a whole is a national treasure.

The arts and humanities have energized the American dream in so many ways. The soul of our country has literally been shaped by the vision of our artists and the creativity of those whom we honor here today. And many others in the past have helped America to become and to remain the freest, most democratic nation in the world. Through the arts and humanities, we assert both our oneness and our diversity. And in celebrating this ideal, we move forward together.

Human creativity is clearly the most powerful force on Earth. And these awardees have exercised that power to the fullest. They have woven for us a wonderful mosaic of music and dance, art and literature to comfort and inspire a troubled world.

The importance of this work is more important now, perhaps, than ever before as our country and our world go through a period of unprecedented change, changes that are both

bringing us together and ripping up the bonds that have united us in the past. In a nation as diverse as ours, our arts and our humanities are bridges to help us reach out to one another and understand one another better. Projects like the NEH's national conversation are truly helping us to accomplish this.

In the face of those who would divide us, we must remain steadfast in supporting the arts and humanities as a way of coming together while we celebrate our diversity. Our support for them is not the preservation of some extravagant cultural elite, it is the preservation of our cultural tradition for all Americans and especially for those who, unlike me and so many of us, are not part of anybody's elite, and they need their country to make sure they have access to the great heritage of America as well.

For the last 30 years, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities have made the arts and humanities accessible to millions of our fellow citizens from schoolchildren to people in our inner cities to citizens in our most isolated rural communities, many of whom would never have experienced these gifts had they not been offered so freely by our Nation's artists and scholars and by their Nation's Government.

For a very small contribution, both the NEA and the NEH have made vital contributions to the life of this Nation. Each of the awardees we recognize here today has been a pioneer. Sometimes they've made us laugh. Sometimes they've helped us cry. Sometimes they've challenged us to see the error of our ways. Sometimes they've helped us to celebrate the strength of our goodness. But always they have lifted us to higher ground.

I am honored to confer upon this wonderful group of Americans the National Medal of the Arts and the Charles Frankel Prize. First, the Medal of the Arts winners.

Licia Albanese: the beginning of her career came as something of a surprise. When the lead soprano in a Milan production of "Madame Butterfly" fell ill during the performance, this young singer was called upon to finish the opera. Her performance that evening brought the house down. And a career that spanned more than 30 years was launched.

She went on to leading roles in operas all around the world, always creating characters memorable not only for the arias they sang but for their intense vitality. She had the rare ability

to combine her great talent as a singer with equal talent as an actress. It was once said that Licia Albanese had the two qualities which all great artists have, simplicity and sincerity. Most recently, she and her late husband founded the Puccini Foundation, and she has worked tirelessly for the benefit of opera and its survival as an art form.

Please welcome our first honoree, Licia Albanese.

*[At this point, the President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Ms. Albanese.]*

Gwendolyn Brooks began writing poetry when she was only 11. And at the age of 13, her first poem was published. More than 75 others followed, while she was still a teenager. For four decades, Gwendolyn Brooks has drawn on the black experience to create poetry that speaks to all of us in a frank and familiar way. She served as the poetry consultant to the Library of Congress, and today is the poet laureate of Illinois. In 1949, she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. She has kept alive the culture of her roots through the cultivation of her words.

Gwendolyn Brooks.

*[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Ms. Brooks.]*

Each painter, performer, or thinker here today has in one way or another served to create a legacy in the halls of American art. Their contributions shall be forever remembered in their fields and beyond. But their work might never have seen the light of day were it not for generous, committed, and visionary citizens like two of those whom we honor, Iris and Bernie Cantor.

They have helped literally countless young artists to succeed. They've introduced countless young people to the joys of art. The grants and gifts bestowed by the Cantor family have built and filled the galleries and museums across our Nation. From the Rodin sculptures given to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art to the grants for exhibitions at institutions such as our own Arkansas Art Center at home to the sculpture exhibit here at the White House, the Cantors' love for art has known no bounds. They've done much to keep the arts alive in America, and we owe them our thanks. Bernie could not be with us here today. But Hillary and I are

delighted that our good friend Iris Cantor is here to accept the award on behalf of both of them.

Iris and Bernie Cantor.

*[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Mrs. Cantor.]*

It's a special honor for me today to honor another husband and wife team that has shown that a commitment to the issues facing the world around us can be just as important a part of their lives and our lives as a commitment to the art one creates. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee met in 1946, performing in a Broadway version of "Jeb Turner". I want to say that again. They met in 1946, while performing in a Broadway version of "Jeb Turner"—[laughter]—a play in which she was violating the child labor laws at the time. [Laughter] They were married a year later. And they have performed individually and together now for almost 50 years.

While the stage and screen have kept them busy with such projects as "A Raisin in the Sun," "The Jackie Robinson Story," and "Do The Right Thing," they have continued to fight for others' struggle for equality. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee have helped groups such as the NAACP, the Urban League, the AIDS projects, like Housing Works. In 1986 they produced a PBS tribute entitled "Martin Luther King: The Dream and the Drum." Their vision and their talent shine as brightly today as they did on that first day when they met on Broadway so long ago, and our country is very much a better place because of their life and their work.

*[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Mr. Davis and Ms. Dee.]*

Having written no fewer than 100 pieces of music by the time he graduated from high school, David Diamond was well on his way to becoming one of America's most accomplished and disciplined composers very early in his youth. His dedication and commitment throughout his distinguished career has made him a master at the craft of creating music.

He's a proud adherent to the classical tradition and has made outstanding contributions to the field for more than 60 years now. An inspiration both to those within his field as well as those who simply enjoy the music he creates, David Diamond truly exemplifies the spirit of American creativity.

Mr. Diamond.

*[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Mr. Diamond.]*

Born in Germany, James Ingo Freed came to the United States as a 9-year-old refugee in 1939. After earning his architectural degree in 1953, he joined the offices of I.M. Pei and Partners. Widely published and respected within the world of architecture, he has been the recipient of many major awards, and most recently, he has been justifiably celebrated for his creation of the magnificent, for most of us, overwhelming United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, an extraordinary structure that houses many painful memories but ultimately inspires its visitors to strive for a better future. We're honoring him today for that monumental achievement but also for his lifelong dedication to his craft which continues in this city at this moment as the Federal Triangle building comes up and moves toward completion. Let's give him a warm welcome.

James Ingo Freed.

*[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Mr. Freed.]*

Our next awardee obviously needs no introduction. He was cited by the Guinness Book of Records as the most honored entertainer in the world. [Laughter] Maybe we ought not to do this. [Laughter] Bob Hope has more than 1,000 awards and citations for his humanitarian and professional success. He's been honored more than—I think, five times by the Motion Picture Academy, including receiving an honorary Oscar and the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. But I know something that some of you probably don't know. He would far rather go down in history as a great golfer. [Laughter] This morning when I saw him, Bob said, "Well, how's your golf game?" I said, "It's pretty good, but it's too rainy today. We can't play." He said, "That's too bad, I'll miss taking your money." [Laughter] Unfortunately, that's not as funny as you think it is. [Laughter] Known the world over for his wonderful wit and sense of humor, Bob Hope has brought laughter and pleasure and a happier outlook on life to generations of American citizens and especially to our troops in uniform all around the world.

He began entertaining American service men and women even before World War II, and he's done it in every conflict since. In 1971,

Bob Hope took his commitment to the people of America one step further by applying for a visa to Laos to help negotiate the release of our prisoners there. When he wasn't performing across oceans, Bob Hope was making films and making people laugh here in America. I can honestly say that those films are still making all the members of my family laugh every time they're shown on the television here.

But even with his busy career, Bob Hope never lost sight of the truly important things in life, helping people in need. He's helped raise more than \$1 billion for hospitals, for the disabled, the Boy Scouts, and numerous other health and human service causes. His annual golf tournament every year, which he still plays in, directs, and manages, is an example of a man whose commitment to doing this kind of work truly is a lifetime endeavor.

He is perhaps the finest example of a successful American entertainer whose greatest performance is in what he does off stage every day. I am so delighted that Bob Hope and his wonderful wife, Dolores, are both here today. And I'd like to ask Bob now to come up and receive his award.

Mr. Bob Hope.

*[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Mr. Hope.]*

Mr. Hope. I just want to say a couple of words. I appreciate this, Mr. President. *[Laughter]* But last year during our golf tournament, I called the President, and I said, "Do you think you could get out here and play with us during our tournament?" And he said, "I don't know." And I got a hold of Mr. Bush, George Bush, and I got a hold of President Ford. And the four of us played, and we raised \$1,400,000 for the hospital out there. And I just wanted to thank him right now in person. That's it; that's it. *[Laughter]*

The President. American art is not limited to portraits or landscapes or still lifes. The broad range of subjects reflects the diversity of American experience. Roy Lichtenstein is one of the pioneers who challenged convention and opened our eyes to new styles of expression. In the early sixties, he was one of just a small group to experiment with popular icons as subject material. I hope that doesn't make a comeback. *[Laughter]*

His works are well known and have appeared in numerous exhibitions all around this country.

In addition, Roy was one of several artists commissioned to work on the New York State Pavilion for the 1964 World Fair. I hope that the pioneering spirit exemplified by Roy Lichtenstein will always, always live in the artists of America. It's been a real honor for Hillary and for me to get to know Roy and his wife and his work. And we're very grateful for it and glad to honor him here today.

Roy Lichtenstein.

*[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Mr. Lichtenstein.]*

For nearly four decades, Arthur Mitchell has been a pivotal figure in American dance. The protege of the great George Balanchine, he was the first African-American dancer to become a principal artist in the New York City Ballet. After leaving the company in 1966, he went on to a career on Broadway and as an artistic director. But always, always, there was the call of his home, Harlem.

Following the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, the next year Arthur Mitchell realized a dream by returning to Harlem as the founder of the Dance Theater of Harlem. It is now recognized as one of the world's premier dance troupes. His dedication to young people and to dance are truly legendary. We are honored by his presence here today and by the lifetime of creativity, achievement he has demonstrated and, most of all, that he found a way to go back to his roots and lift people up with their God-given talents.

Mr. Arthur Mitchell.

*[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Mr. Mitchell.]*

Speaking of roots, this next awardee is one from mine. Bill Monroe is heralded as the father of bluegrass music, a title that is a fitting tribute to his truly innovative and inventive style. Bluegrass is known for its free improvisation, and in its way, it embodies the essence of the American spirit. Bill's own roots stem from rural Kentucky. When he was just 10 years old, he began to play the guitar and the mandolin. Along with his two older brothers, Charlie and Birch, he made music on the front porch of their family home. Later, Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys established themselves as more than just a string band by blending different vocal harmonies with instrumental solos. And over the

years, the band continued to gain recognition for its novel combination of instruments.

Bill Monroe was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1970 and joined the International Bluegrass Music Association's Hall of Honor in 1991. For people who follow and love that music, Bill Monroe is truly an American legend. He's added so much through his lifetime career to the rich heritage of this great Nation's music.

Mr. Bill Monroe.

[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Mr. Monroe.]

He said, "I'm younger than Bob Hope, but I'd still like to say a thing or two." [Laughter]

Mr. Monroe. Bob Hope is a great man. I'm glad that he's here. But what I wanted to tell you folks, I have played for the last four Presidents of the United States, President Carter, President Reagan, President Bush, President Clinton here. And they all tell me that the music I originated belongs to America. And I'm really proud of that. It's a great honor. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. God bless you.

Now, it is a great honor for me to present the award we give every year to an arts organization. As the largest and most comprehensive arts and education program in the entire Nation, Urban Gateways has been cited as a model by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1994 alone, Urban Gateways reached over 1 million people in over 11,000 programs established in Chicago area schools. Armed with the belief that exposure to the arts is crucial to personal development, the program helps bridge the gap between Chicago's vast cultural wealth and the huge number of children from disadvantaged communities. At a time when so many of our children are being lost to the horrors of drugs and violence, Urban Gateways has assumed responsibility for our young people's youth. The organization gives them guidance and an important outlet for their creative energies.

Here today to accept the award is Urban Gateways' executive director, Sandra Furey. She has led Urban Gateways to the frontlines in the campaign to keep the arts alive in the minds of our children and, in so doing, to keep our children alive and well and strong for the future of this great Nation. Let's give her a big hand. [Applause]

[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the medal and congratulated Ms. Furey.]

And now it is my honor to introduce the winners of the 1995 Charles Frankel Prize. The first winner, Bill Ferris, leads the sort of life I'd like to lead if I had another one to live. I mean, he lives in the Deep South. He writes funny, wonderful books. And he's still trying to find out if Elvis is alive. He's probably done more than anyone else to bring national recognition and understanding to the field of Southern studies. As many of you know, he seriously was one of the organizers of the recent, highly successful Elvis conference at the University of Mississippi at Oxford. Since 1979, he has directed the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at Ole Miss, where he's built Southern studies curriculum into the most extensive in the Nation. He was a consultant to the movie "The Color Purple," and for nearly a decade until 1994, as the blues doctor, he hosted "Highway 61," a weekly blues music program that airs on Mississippi public radio. His scholarship covers the fields of folklore, American literature, music, and photography.

I want to thank him for bringing the culture and music of my homeland to all Americans. A remarkable person.

Mr. Bill Ferris.

[The President and Hillary Clinton presented the prize and congratulated Mr. Ferris.]

Too often, television overlooks the lives and poignant stories of ordinary Americans who may not show up on the evening news, but whose extraordinary lives keep our country going. Charles Kuralt recognized this problem nearly 30 years ago. In 1967, he asked his boss to let him wander around the country for 3 months, and the critically acclaimed show "On the Road" was born. Through his travels, Charles Kuralt brought hundreds of courageous Americans into the living rooms of our country. And in so doing, he helped raise issues of social concern, such as funding for education, the problems of poverty, the plight of small businesses. But understanding the needs of others comes naturally to Charles Kuralt. His father, Wallace, was a North Carolina social worker who worked all his life on programs that provided day care, substance abuse counseling, and planned parenthood services. That spirit is alive and well in his son today.

The numerous awards and 13 Emmys Charles Kuralt holds are but a small reward for what he has given to all the rest of us. It's unfortunate that he was unable to attend today. We send him our wishes for a very speedy recovery from surgery that he had earlier this week, and we're glad that here to receive his award is his daughter, Lisa Kuralt White.

[*The President and Hillary Clinton presented the prize and congratulated Ms. White.*]

David Macaulay has written several books detailing the insides of complicated machines. He can even explain "the way things work." [*Laughter*] We could use him around here in the next couple of weeks. [*Laughter*] He has devoted his professional life to the investigation of architecture and mechanics. His books have helped children and adults alike to understand the world's rich history of construction and architecture. Using detailed illustrations, his books help to unfold the mysteries of both man and machine. David Macaulay's works serve as a bridge between humankind's earliest attempts at building and the most modern techniques of today. His painstaking efforts have made knowledge and investigation more accessible to the rest of us who could never have understood them on our own but whose lives were richer and more enlightened and whose citizenship more informed as a result of his work.

Mr. David Macaulay.

[*The President and Hillary Clinton presented the prize and congratulated Mr. Macaulay.*]

All of us know that history well-written and well-learned can be a great teacher. It can demonstrate what we are capable of at our best and what we may do wrong at our worst. In his remarkable body of work, David McCullough has shown us the true character of many of our country's most heroic figures and many of its most important events and eras.

From his wonderfully successful and enlightening biography on President Truman to his look at the building of the Brooklyn Bridge to his work as the voice of the highly regarded PBS series "The American Experience," David McCullough has given us a window into the lives of outstanding Americans and important events. His work emphasizes the value of history and our place in it. Along with his research, he spends many hours working for the preservation of historic sites, of public libraries, and of

other institutions across America which enable us to preserve and learn about our roots. We should never forget what David McCullough has asked us to remember. And we should never forget his incredible contribution in helping us to preserve that memory.

Mr. David McCullough.

[*The President and Hillary Clinton presented the prize and congratulated Mr. McCullough.*]

Bernice Johnson Reagon is perhaps best known as the guiding spirit and resonant alto voice of Sweet Honey in the Rock, the famous *a cappella* quintet she founded in 1973. Singing an eclectic blend of gospel, jazz, folk, and rhythm and blues, the group has carried its message of world peace, women's rights, and racial harmony on tour throughout our Nation and throughout the world. If that were all she had done, Professor Reagon would be worthy of this award. But her creative energy is truly unlimited.

For nearly 35 years, she's helped to preserve, celebrate, and illuminate the rich heritage of African-American music as a civil rights activist, as a singer-composer, an author, an historian, a museum curator. Since 1993, she's been distinguished professor of history at American University here in Washington. Her latest contribution to public understanding of African-American music is the 26-part radio documentary "Wade in the Water: African-American Sacred Music Traditions," which aired beginning in 1994 on National Public Radio stations nationwide. She is a messenger of peace, and I am deeply honored that she is with us today.

"Sweet Honey in the Rock," for those of you who haven't heard it, is a truly inspiring experience, but the work of her life is even more inspiring.

[*The President and Hillary Clinton presented the prize and congratulated Ms. Reagon.*]

Let me thank again all the honorees and congratulate them. Thank all of you for coming. Let me thank all the distinguished saxophonists who came here to be with us today for their work. [*Applause*] Thank you all for your contributions and your devotion to the American way of life.

God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks,

the President referred to President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico.

## Statement on the Financial Recovery in Mexico *October 5, 1995*

This morning I received a call from Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo. I am pleased to announce that he informed me that Mexico is ready to repay \$700 million of the U.S. financial assistance we provided earlier this year to address Mexico's financial crisis. This news is another important step on the road to financial recovery for Mexico, and I am very pleased that this repayment comes sooner than expected. I congratulated President Zedillo on his resolve to implement the tough measures needed to restore economic stability and growth.

Last winter, an imminent financial collapse of Mexico threatened the economic and national security of the United States. At my direction, the United States took action to form an inter-

national coalition to provide Mexico sufficient funds to refinance its debts. It is critically important that Mexico remain a stable neighbor, continuing to grow as a market for our exports and to cooperate with us on a broad range of issues of mutual concern.

Today's decision sends a positive signal to the financial markets that the tough financial measures Mexico has undertaken are succeeding and the American taxpayer is being repaid ahead of schedule.

I look forward to meeting with President Zedillo next week when he visits Washington on his first state visit and discussing the broad range of issues affecting our two countries.

## Remarks at the Arts and Humanities Awards Dinner *October 5, 1995*

*The President.* Ladies and gentlemen, I want to welcome all of you here and say again to our honorees today how very much Hillary and I enjoyed having all of you here and having the great honor of presenting your awards to you.

Helen Hayes once said that, "We rely upon the poets, the philosophers, and the playwrights to articulate what most of us can only feel in joy and in sorrow. They illuminate the thoughts for which we only grope. They give us the strength and bond we cannot find in ourselves, the wisdom of acceptance, the will and resilience to move on."

Those words have special meaning today as America and, indeed, our entire world work to find their way into a new era, an era in which people are dramatically changing the way they work and live and relate to one another.

We must dare, as artists and poets do, to break free of the past to create a better future

rooted in the values that never change. That is a great lesson our artists, our thinkers, our scholars, our supporters and advocates of the arts and humanities teach us. We thank you for your lives, your dedication. We honor all of you.

In every period of change and upheaval, there is always great new opportunity and there is always a struggle between those who are best positioned to receive that opportunity and those who work but aren't so well-positioned. I want to thank tonight, especially, the National Endowment of the Arts and the National Endowment of the Humanities because, in a world where some fear we're moving to a winner-take-all society, you work so that all people can win in their access to the arts and humanities. And that is a goal worth pursuing and worth achieving.

I thank you all for your work, and again, I say on behalf of the First Lady and the Vice