

in other areas in order for us to protect education and the environment.

So I will continue to work with them. We can do that, but we have to know when we adopt this budget that we can achieve these numbers without hurting innocent people. They depend upon us to balance the budget with discipline and with compassion.

#### *Whitewater Investigation*

Q. Mr. President, if I could just change the subject for a second. Your spokesman earlier today said that if you could, you'd like to punch William Safire in the nose for calling Mrs. Clinton a congenital liar in his column yesterday. I wonder if you'd care to respond publicly to these accusations against your wife.

*The President.* Well, what I said was, you know, when you're President, there are a few more constraints on you than if you're an ordinary citizen. If I were an ordinary citizen, I might give that article the response it deserves.

I'm reminded of the great letter that Harry Truman wrote, which I—by the way, which I have now; it was a gift to me from a distinguished Republican, and I have it on my wall—you know, that Presidents have feelings too. I

think the American people—I would just remind the American people, we've been through this for 4 years now. And every time somebody has made a charge related to the Whitewater issue, it's turned up dry. And the only records, as far as I know, that haven't been disclosed so far, as far as I know, we still haven't seen the release of the RTC report, which says that, after all, we told the truth all along about the underlying matters here. So I just would like to ask the American people to take a deep breath, relax, and listen to the First Lady's answers, because we've been through this for over 4 years now, and every time a set of questions comes up, we answer the questions and we go on. The American people are satisfied, and they will be again.

She is—I've said before, I'll say again—if everybody in this country had the character that my wife has, we'd be a better place to live.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 112th news conference began at 5:16 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the former Resolution Trust Corporation, which ceased operations in 1995.

## Statement on the Death of Ambassador M. Larry Lawrence *January 9, 1996*

I was deeply saddened to learn of the death today of our Ambassador to Switzerland, M. Larry Lawrence. Larry was a good friend and a valued colleague who brought his abundant energy and fresh vision to every task he undertook. As Ambassador in Switzerland, he was a tireless and effective advocate of U.S. interests, especially the promotion of U.S. exports and commercial ties. Larry's service to his country did not begin with his diplomatic assignment. During World War II, at the age of 18, he volunteered for the merchant marines. He was wounded when his ship was sunk by enemy torpedoes in arctic waters. Many years later,

Larry was decorated with the Medal of Valor by the Government of the Russian Federation.

Larry's civilian life showed the same courage and resolve. As an entrepreneur, he restored the Hotel del Coronado, one of the west coast's outstanding architectural landmarks. Larry's quiet philanthropy also touched many lives. He believed passionately in education for women; the scholarships he endowed for minority women at the University of Arizona represent a lasting contribution. Hillary joins me in expressing our deepest sympathy to Larry's wife, Shelia, and to his children. We will miss him.