

Exchange With Reporters in West Des Moines, Iowa February 11, 1996

The President. Did you see that woman with the button out there that said, “President Clinton and national media, thanks for promoting Iowa tourism”? [Laughter]

1996 Election

Q. President Clinton, everyone keeps asking, why are you out here campaigning? You don’t really have any opposition in the primary; why bother—I mean, in the caucuses here—why bother?

The President. Well, because we will hold caucuses, the Democrats will, and people will come. And I want them to know that I would appreciate their support. I want them to know what I am trying to do, what I intend to do in the future, and because I want to validate this process. I think this is—I want this to work the way it’s supposed to. I want Americans to believe they make a difference if they go to town meetings, if they go to forums for candidates, if they ask questions, if they try to make some connections. And also because this is the beginning of a long process. I mean, all these—I’ve come to Iowa a lot in the last 5 years, and I expect I’ll be here again before November.

Q. Yesterday Bob Dole said he’s the candidate that can beat you; he ought to get the nomina-

tion. How would you feel about running against Bob Dole?

The President. I want the Republicans to select their nominee. That’s their job, not mine now. One of the things that I have found about this is that no one knows who can beat someone else before the actual event occurs. No one knows. It’s futile to speculate.

I think the Republicans will pick the person they believe is the best qualified to represent their party, and then we’ll have an election.

Q. And there’s nobody who you’d rather run against, sir? There’s no candidate out here who you’d say, “Yeah, I can beat this one”? [Laughter]

The President. Well, if they wrote me a letter and asked me to nominate someone, I’d—[laughter]—I’d be happy to accommodate them. But—

Q. Who would you suggest?

The President. —since they’re not going to do that, I don’t see that I should speculate.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:17 a.m. at A.K. O’Connor’s Restaurant. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on the Work-Study Program in Des Moines, Iowa February 11, 1996

[Sally Hinders, assistant provost for career services, Drake University, welcomed the President and introduced the participants, one of whom said that he was from Winterset, IA, site of the movie “The Bridges of Madison County.”]

The President. They should have given you the role. [Laughter]

[Ms. Hinders discussed some of the advantages of the work-study program at Drake University, indicating that student participants tended to become more involved in the Drake community and often used their experiences as stepping-

stones to other opportunities. She then asked the President to talk about the program.]

The President. Well, let me begin by thanking all of you for taking some time on a Sunday afternoon to do this. I’m delighted to be here, delighted to be at Drake.

Since I became President I’ve worked hard to try to increase access to colleges and universities for young people, because it’s obvious that more need to be able to go and more need to be able to stay. And I never will forget, when I was Governor I had an encounter one night with a number of students in Fayetteville,