

year to celebrate our nation's rich history and to pay tribute to the office of the Presidency.

America has been blessed with many great and good leaders over the past two centuries. The Presidents we honor with special pride on this day—George Washington and Abraham Lincoln—accepted the burdens of their office at moments of great national challenge and set a shining example for those who were to follow.

As the first President of the United States, Washington played a vital part in defining the role of the Presidency in America's government and national life. With courage and vision, he ensured the steady course of American democracy and, in relinquishing his office at the appointed time, established the peaceful transition of power that has become the envy of other nations around the world.

Abraham Lincoln preserved the Union that Washington helped to create. He guided Amer-

ica through four years of painful and bloody conflict, and at the end of his Presidency, we were still one nation under God, and government "of the people, by the people, and for the people" had not perished from our land.

But Presidents alone cannot ensure America's success or preserve our freedom for future generations. It falls to each and every citizen to take part in the great experiment of American democracy. As we face the unknown challenges and exciting possibilities of a new century, let us renew our resolve to participate actively in the process of government, to stay informed and committed, and to educate our children about the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. In this way we will keep faith with the great men whose service and sacrifice we honor on this day.

BILL CLINTON

Statement on the Railroad Accident in Silver Spring, Maryland *February 17, 1996*

Today all Americans extend our thoughts and prayers to the families of the people who died in the train crash last night. We are working hard to find out what caused this tragedy.

Several young men and women who died were Job Corps trainees, returning from a train-

ing center in West Virginia—taking a journey of personal responsibility. They were working hard to better themselves, and we salute their lives as we mourn their deaths.

Statement on the Death of Pat Brown *February 17, 1996*

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of Gov. Pat Brown's death.

I am very grateful for the warm friendship and wise counsel he generously extended to me and for what he meant to America.

More than any other individual, he built modern California, with its great universities, highways, and vital water system.

He loved people, and he loved politics. Always positive and optimistic, he believed in the promise of America, and he brought out the best

in people, because they knew he was committed to their future.

He was blessed with a wonderful wife and five children, who carried on his traditions of public service. Our thoughts and prayers are with Bernice, Jerry, Kathleen, Barbara, and Cynthia, and Pat Brown's grandchildren and great-grandchildren. May his great heart and good spirit be with them always.