

After I became President, I asked her to chair the United States Commission on Immigration Reform. And she made us listen again when she reminded all sides on that delicate and difficult issue that we must remain both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws.

Barbara Jordan's life was a monument to the three great threads that run constantly throughout the fabric of American history: our love of liberty, our belief in progress, our search for common ground. Wherever she could and whenever she stood to speak, she jolted the Nation's attention with her artful and articulate defense of the Constitution, the American dream, and the common heritage and destiny we share, whether we like it or not.

Barbara Jordan loved her family, her loved ones, her friends, her allies, her teachers. She loved Texas. And how she loved our beloved country. She reveled in its never-ending struggle to live up to our highest ideals.

She once said this: "All we are trying to do is to make this Government of the United States honest. We only ask that when we stand up and talk about one Nation under God with liberty and justice for all, we want to be able to look up at the flag, put our right hands over our hearts, repeat those words, and know that they are true." Well, if Barbara wasn't in the Constitution when it was first written, she made sure that once she got in, she stayed in it all the way.

She also did all she could as a lawmaker and as a teacher to give future generations of Americans for all time to come equal standing under that Constitution. That's what she was doing when God called her home, working with the students at the University of Texas Lyndon Johnson School of Public Affairs.

In 1994, in one of the most enjoyable moments of my Presidency, I was proud to give

to Barbara Jordan the Nation's highest award to a civilian, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. I noticed her wearing it today. And it touched me so to know that she is now going to a place where her rewards will be greater.

As Ann Richards said, if we're all going to tell the truth today, Barbara Jordan made every one of us stand a little straighter, speak a little clearer, and be a little stronger. She took to heart what her Grandpa Patten told her when she was a little girl. "You just trot your own horse, and don't get into the same rut as everyone else." [Laughter] Well, she sure trotted her own horse, and she made her own path wide and deep.

Let me close with these lines from a poem I love by Stephen Spender. I understand Barbara loved it, too, and liked to read it aloud. I can't read it as well as she would have, but you'll see it could have been written about her. "I think continually of those who are truly great, who from the womb remembered the soul's history, who wore at their hearts the fire's center. Born of the sun, they traveled a short while toward the sun, and left the vivid air signed in their honor."

Barbara's magnificent voice is silenced. But she left the vivid air signed in her honor. Barbara, we the people will miss you. We thank you, and Godspeed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. in the Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. D.Z. Cofield, pastor, Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church; Barbara Jordan's sisters, Bennie Crisswell and Rosemary McGowan, and her brother-in-law, John McGowan; Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston, TX; Ann Richards, former Governor of Texas; and Liz Carpenter, distinguished alumna of the University of Texas.

## Remarks on the Return of the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* Astronauts in Houston

January 20, 1996

Ladies and gentlemen, I am so glad that I happened to be in Houston and at the airport at the right time. I just want to take a minute—I know you came to see this fine crew and

their families and to celebrate with them—but I just want to say on behalf of the people of the United States, we are very proud of this mission, proud of this crew. We were thrilled

Jan. 20 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

by its success, and we're glad to have them home.

And let me just make one plug to—I know that I'm preaching to the saved here, but I want to make one plug for the space program. You see all of our friends and allies from Japan here celebrating their participation in the person—where is he?—of Mr. Wakata. We thank him.

Our space program is an important part of our partnership for world peace. It is an important part of how we relate to and work with the Japanese, the Russians, and others in building a more cooperative, safer world for the 21st century. Our space program is also an important part of research we do in trying to solve medical

mysteries and environmental mysteries. NASA has been a major, major force in helping us to figure out ways to save our planet Earth as we accommodate more population growth and more economic growth. So I ask all of you, remain steadfast in your support for America's investment in space and in our future together with our friends and allies throughout the world.

Thank you. God bless you.

Welcome home, gentlemen. Job well done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. at Ellington Field. In his remarks, he referred to Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement on the 100th Birthday of George Burns

January 20, 1996

Hillary and I extend our warmest wishes for a wonderful birthday to one of the most talented entertainers of our time. George Burns' knowing smile and dry wit have touched the hearts and funny bones of three generations. His impec-

cable timing breathed life into the mundane, and his clever humor crystallized many ageless skits. His youthful attitude, now a century old, continues to inspire us today. We send him all our best on this happy occasion.

## Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Foreign Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

January 22, 1996

### *State of the Union Address*

Q. Is your State of the Union all ready, Mr. President?

*The President.* Just about ready.

Q. Some people are expecting a campaign-style speech.

*The President.* I don't think so. What I'm going to say tomorrow night is that the state of the Union is strong but it can be stronger, that I am absolutely confident and optimistic about our ability to meet the challenges that our country faces. And I'm going to say what I think they are and what I believe we should all do about them.

Q. Are you going to reach out to the Republicans to try and get things done?

*The President.* Absolutely. I did last year, and I will again. I think, you know, we have differences, but we should attempt to resolve those differences. And we should attempt, where we can't resolve them, to set them aside and do what we can do. Remember, throughout our history, the system that the framers of the Constitution set up demands honorable, principled compromise.

### *Public Debt*

Q. Did Dick Arme's comments concern you?

*The President.* Well, I don't think we should default on the debt. I think that would be a terrible mistake. It's an unacceptable thing for a great nation to do, and we've never done it.