

bers of our Special Forces at Fort Bragg. Folks, for those of you who don't know what they do, the Special Forces are just what the name says: they are special forces. If I walk off this stage tonight and call them on the telephone and tell them to go halfway around the world and risk their lives for you and be there by tomorrow at noon, they will do it. They do not deserve to have swastikas on their doors.

So look around here, look around here: Old or young, healthy as a horse or a person with a disability that hasn't kept you down, man or woman, Native American, native born, immigrant, straight or gay, whatever, the test ought to be, I believe in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence; I believe in religious liberty; I believe in freedom of speech; I believe in working hard and playing by the rules; I'm showing up for work tomorrow; I'm building that bridge to the 21st century. That ought to be the test.

My fellow Americans, 68 nights from tonight the American people will face once again a critical moment of decision. We're going to choose the last President of the 20th century and the first President of the 21st century. But the real choice is not that. The real choice is whether we will build a bridge to the future or a bridge to the past, about whether we believe our best

days are still out there or our best days are behind us, about whether we want a country of people all working together or one where you're on your own.

Let us commit ourselves this night to rise up and build the bridge we know we ought to build all the way to the 21st century. Let us have faith, American faith that we are not leaving our greatness behind. We're going to carry it right on with us into that new century, a century of new challenge and unlimited promise. Let us, in short, do the work that is before us, so that when our time here is over, we will all watch the sun go down, as we all must, and say truly, we have prepared our children for the dawn.

My fellow Americans, after these 4 good, hard years, I still believe in a place called Hope, a place called America.

Thank you, God bless you, and good night.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. at United Center. In his remarks, he referred to actor Christopher Reeve, who was paralyzed in an equestrian accident; and Sarah Brady, head of Hand Gun Control, Inc., wife of former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady, who was wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan.

Remarks at the Democratic National Committee Post-Convention Celebration in Chicago

August 30, 1996

Thank you, thank you very much. Well, I can't believe we're all still standing. *[Laughter]* I'd like to join the Vice President and Hillary and Tipper in thanking the leadership of our party, Don Fowler and Chris Dodd and Marvin Rosen—who had a birthday yesterday but has really put 15 or 20 years on his life since he took this modest little part-time job as the finance chairman of our party—and all the other people from the DNC. And I thank the committee here tonight.

I would like to say to Carl Lewis, thank you for being here. We're honored by your presence, and we were thrilled by your last victory and every other one you had in your career.

And Candice Bergen, thank you so much for what you said. When you and Chloe came to visit us at the White House and Ron Brown and our other friends had just been killed in that plane crash, I don't think you know what a wonderful thing it was for me to meet a person like your daughter and remind us that life goes on and we have to think about that. So I think she helped me get through those 2 days a lot more than I helped you by being around the White House. And thank you for your gracious comments tonight.

I would like to just thank two other groups of people. First of all, Mr. Mayor and Maggie and Bill Daley and Dick Notabaert and the entire committee of people from Chicago did a

magnificent job with this convention, and we thank them. [Applause] We thank you.

You know, when it's all over and it looks good, it's easy to say it was easy, but the truth is there were some considerable risks for the mayor and the city for taking on this convention after what happened here so long ago. At least we all were afraid of that. But I spent a lot of time in Chicago in the last several years; I've seen how it works, and I see how it continues to work better and better. And I believe that America should see this. And I think America has seen it. And I hope that, in addition to whatever benefit the Vice President and I and our Democratic candidates for Congress and Governor and the other races have received from this convention, I hope that Chicago got its just due. And I believe it did. And we thank you.

Finally, and most importantly, we should recognize the people who pulled this convention off. And I would like for Debra DeLee and every person here on the convention staff to please stand and receive a warm applause. You all were magnificent, and we thank you. Thank you, Debra, and thanks to everyone else. You were wonderful, wonderful, wonderful.

I have a very emotional feeling about being here tonight not only because of my wife's roots in Chicago, but on Saint Patrick's Day in 1992 we were here in Chicago when we won the primaries in Illinois and in Michigan and virtually sealed the Democratic nomination. And David Wilhelm, my campaign manager in 1992, of course, is from Chicago, and so many other people who were then on our staff or people like Kevin O'Keefe who are still there. This is a wonderful town, and I am very grateful to everyone here and throughout the State of Illinois.

Just to show you we're not taking this for granted, we're actually going to start this bus trip again tomorrow. After I finished the speech—and I can see I've almost lost my voice from being on the train—I figured that in the 3½ days on the train we saw at least 150,000 people in the events alone. It was unbelievable.

So I said to Al Gore tonight, I said, "Man, I'm dog-tired. Why in the world are we getting

on that bus tomorrow?" [Laughter] "Why aren't we taking our kids to the Shed Aquarium tomorrow? Why aren't we sort of just chilling out tomorrow?" And he looked at me with that inevitable sense of humor of his and he deadpanned, "We do not want Mr. Dole to be President of the United States." So I said, "Okay, but when I get up in the morning and I'm whining about this and talking about how I'm older than you are and I hurt everywhere, just say that again so I'll remember why I'm doing this." [Laughter]

We're going to do our best to make you proud. We've all worked so hard this last year and a half or so. I was looking out in this crowd tonight just really feeling bad that I couldn't go to every table and shake every hand and thank every person personally, because I just look at you and I know that we wouldn't be here if you hadn't been there for us. And many of you were there when nobody gave us a prayer of coming back, when people did not believe in what we were trying to do and did not believe that it would ever work or did not believe it would ever be apparent to the American people. And you all know who you are.

And I can't be at your table tonight, and I can't tonight—when I would especially like to do it—look into your eyes and thank you. But you know who you are, and tonight I want you to be very, very proud. And tomorrow I want you to be determined that tonight will not have been in vain. We'll celebrate in November.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 a.m. at the Sheraton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Donald L. Fowler, national chairman, and Senator Christopher J. Dodd, general chairman, Democratic National Committee; U.S. Olympic athlete Carl Lewis; actress Candice Bergen and her daughter, Chloe; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, his wife, Margaret, and his brother William; Richard C. Notebaert, cochair, Chicago '96; and Debra DeLee, chief executive officer, Democratic National Convention Committee.