

overstuffed institutions with a brisk three dots, but surely no one knew better the vibrancy and eccentricities of the city, his city, San Francisco, than did Herb Caen. If we listen carefully on those cool mornings when the fog has boiled through the Golden Gate, out beyond the clat-

tering of cables underfoot and the low moan of the horn at Alcatraz, maybe we will still hear Herb Caen's wonderful, witty, irrepressible voice. Herb Caen . . . he will be missed . . . a lot.

## Remarks at the National Governors' Association Dinner February 2, 1997

Ladies and gentlemen, Governor and Mrs. Miller, Governor and Mrs. Voinovich, all the Governors and spouses and children and friends who are here, the leaders of the National Governors' Association, welcome back to the White House.

As all of you know, this is a very special dinner for Hillary and for me. I had to pinch myself this afternoon when I was preparing these notes—very elaborate—[laughter]—when I realized that this is the fifth time I have had the honor of hosting this dinner, which I also attended 12 times as a Governor.

Four years ago when you came here, I told you that I would do my best to chart a new course for our country, to give you a strong economy, a smaller and less obtrusive Federal Government, still one that could be very effective and innovative in dealing with the challenges before us and in forging a new partnership with the Governors to devolve more decisionmaking to the State level. Four years later, we can look back and see that that strategy has worked, thanks to your efforts and what all of us here have been able to do, working together.

Our economy is the strongest it's been in 30 years. Our Government is the smallest it's been since President Kennedy was here. Today one of our major newspapers carried a story chronicling the record decline in the welfare rolls over the last 4 years—2¼ million people—and at last giving the Governors and the States committed to welfare reform a share of the credit, along with the rising economy, for moving people from welfare to work. So this is a good time. Crime rates have dropped now for 5 years in a row, and we know now what to do to keep them coming down.

The main thing I want to say tonight is that we all, together, have an incredible opportunity, standing as we do on the edge of a new century, a new millennium, but also a profoundly different time in human affairs and standing at this point not only as the world's only superpower but one that is free of external threat and internal economic crisis, which means we have an opportunity almost unique in our history to think about not only what we need to do for our people today and tomorrow but what America needs 20 years from now, 50 years from now.

That is the sort of thing that people who were here before us thought about at the end of World War II, and the decisions they made gave us 50 pretty good years as Americans. Tuesday night, when I speak in the State of the Union Address, I'm going to ask the Congress to cross party lines with each other and with me and to think about how we can build the next 50 years for America, how we can bring about true excellence and complete opportunity in education, how we can finish the job of welfare reform so that everyone we are now requiring to work genuinely has the chance to work, how we can meet the other challenges that are before us. Many of them involve the leadership, the initiative, the strength and steadiness of our Nation's Governors.

And so I pledge to you to continue the partnership we've had, to try to deepen it, to try to enrich it, and beginning tomorrow, to try to continue to listen to you and to your concerns and to hear your advice. This has been a good 4 years for America. I look forward to the next 4. And I look forward to our continued partnership.

The National Governors' Association has been a unique and immensely valuable institution for

the United States because it gives the Governors a chance, without regard to their regional and political differences, to reach common positions for the people of their States and to bring those positions not only to life in their States but also to bring them to Washington, where it's too often easy to forget about the real lives of real people out in the country. I know you will be doing that here, and I hope together we will be advancing those lives for 4 more years.

I now ask you to join me in a toast to our partnership, to the Governors, and especially to Governor and Mrs. Miller and to Governor and Mrs. Voinovich.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:50 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada, National Governors' Association chairman, and his wife, Sandy; and Gov. George V. Voinovich of Ohio, NGA vice chairman, and his wife, Janet.

## Remarks at the National Governors' Association Meeting *February 3, 1997*

Good morning, Governor Miller, Governor Voinovich; good morning to all the Governors who are here. It was wonderful to see all of you last night, and I'm glad to welcome you back to the White House.

This is an unusual opportunity for our country and for every State. The Nation is strong; we are at peace; we have extraordinary prosperity. But we know we're living through a time of great change in the way we work, in the way we live, the way we relate to each other, that there are significant challenges which if not faced will have destructive consequences for our Nation in the years ahead. So as we stand on the edge of this new century and this profoundly new era, we have a unique opportunity and a common responsibility, which is to take action together to try to prepare this country not just for the next 4 years but for the next 50 years.

In the State of the Union Address tomorrow night, I'm going to lay out the challenges that I see not only for the President and the Congress but also for the States and local communities and private citizens. Because there will be a great deal in that speech about the States

and the issues of education and welfare reform and other issues of common concern, I want to invite any of you who can stay, to stay tomorrow night and to come into the Chamber of the Capitol and sit as a group, as many as would like to stay, and be there at the State of the Union Address.

I know that many of you have concerns about welfare reform or Medicaid spending or education, the environment, transportation. I'm looking forward to addressing those concerns, beginning today at this meeting but also every day for the next 4 years. I want every one of you to feel that you can always call this White House and that you will have someone, even if we don't always agree, who understands your concerns and will do his best to address them. And I thank you.

Mr. Chairman.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Miller of Nevada and Gov. George V. Voinovich of Ohio, chairman and vice chairman of the association.

## Remarks at the Democratic Governors Association Dinner *February 3, 1997*

Thank you. Thank you, Governor Dean, for that wonderful introduction. And I thank the

orchestra for playing me in. [*Laughter*] Thank you, Governor Rossello, for your leadership here