

*Apr. 15 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997*

*The President.* Yes. Paid them all.

*Mr. Berman.* Because I might be able to get you an extension.

*The President.* I don't think I ought to. I've got to set a good example, you know. [Laughter] I'm surprised all these baseball players shook hands with me tonight. They make more money than Jackie Robinson did, so they probably weren't very happy to see me tonight. [Laughter]

*Mr. Berman.* Oh, I think they were. I think you honored everybody with your presence. Thank you for joining us.

*The President.* Thank you. I'm glad to be here. Thanks.

NOTE: The interview began at 8:45 p.m. at Shea Stadium. In his remarks, the President referred to civil rights activist Rosa Parks. He also referred to Executive Order 9981 of July 26, 1948 (13 FR 4313). The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of the President.

## Remarks in Queens Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Jackie Robinson's Integration of Major League Baseball *April 15, 1997*

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, Mrs. Robinson, members of the Robinson family. It is hard to believe that it was 50 years ago at Ebbets Field that a 28-year-old rookie changed the face of baseball and the face of America forever. Jackie Robinson scored the go-ahead run that day, and we've all been trying to catch up ever since.

Today I think every American should say a special word of thanks to Jackie Robinson and to Branch Rickey and to the members of the Dodger team who made him one of their own and proved that America is a better, stronger, richer country when we all work together and give everyone a chance. And today I think we should remember that Jackie Robinson's legacy did not end with baseball, for afterward he spent the rest of his life trying to open other doors and keep them open for all kinds of people. He knew that education, not sports, was the key to success in life for nearly everyone, and he took that message to young people wherever he went. I congratulate Rachel Robinson for continuing that mission through the work of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, which has given hundreds of young people a chance to build the life of their dreams.

I can't help thinking that if Jackie Robinson were here with us tonight, he would say that we have done a lot of good in the last 50 years, but we can do better. We have achieved equality

on the playing field, but we need to establish equality in the boardrooms of baseball and throughout corporate America. And we need to make sure that, even as we celebrate his brilliant successor Tiger Woods' victory in the Masters, we need even more of our young people from all walks of life to get their master's degrees and help to make more of their lives in this country.

And he would remind us—look around this stadium tonight—that as we sit side by side at baseball games, we must make sure that we walk out of these stadiums together. We must stand for something more significant even than a grand slam home run. We ought to have a grand slam society, a good society where all of us have a chance to work together for a better tomorrow for our children. Let that be the true legacy of Jackie Robinson's wonderful, remarkable career and life.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Mrs. Rachel Robinson.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:39 p.m. at Shea Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Branch Rickey, owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, and professional golfer Tiger Woods.

## Remarks at the Opening of the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning April 17, 1997

Thank you very much, and welcome to the White House. I was relieved to hear Hillary say that the brain is the last organ to fully develop. It may yet not be too late for me to learn how to walk down steps. *[Laughter]* Or maybe I was thinking it was because I was always hugged when I fell down as a child, I did this subconsciously on purpose. *[Laughter]*

Let me begin by thanking the members of the Cabinet who are here. I see Secretary Riley and Secretary Glickman. I thank Governor Romer and Governor Chiles for being here. I think Governor Miller is coming. There are many others who are here. Congresswoman DeLauro is either here or coming. Thank you, Governor Miller. I see I was looking to the left there. *[Laughter]* He's from Nevada—he just went up five points in the polls when I said that. *[Laughter]*

Let me say, first of all, the first time I met Hillary, she was not only a law student, she was working with the Yale Child Study Center, and she began my education in these issues. And for that, I am profoundly grateful. And I thank her for bringing the scientists, the doctors, the sociologists, the others whose work is the basis for our discussion today here. And I, too, want to thank the thousands of others who are joining us by satellite.

This unique conference is a part of our constant effort to give our children the opportunity to make the most of their God-given potential and to help their parents lead the way and to remind everyone in America that this must always be part of the public's business because we all have a common interest in our children's future.

We have begun the job here over the last 4 years by making education our top domestic priority, by passing the family leave act and now trying to expand it and enact a form of flextime which will give parents more options in how they take their overtime, in pay or in time with their children, by the work we have done to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act, and by the work we've tried to do to give parents more tools with the V-chip and the television rating system and the work we are still carrying

on to try to stop the advertising and marketing and distribution of tobacco to our children and other work we've done in juvenile justice and trying to keep our kids away from the dangers of alcohol and drugs.

All these are designed to help our parents succeed in doing their most important job. Now, it seems to me maybe the most important thing we can actually do is to share with every parent in America the absolutely stunning things we are learning from new scientific research about how very young children learn and develop. In that regard, I'd like to thank Rob Reiner and others who are committed to distributing this information, and I'd like to thank the media here in our Nation's Capital and throughout the country for the genuine interest that they have shown in this conference.

I think there is an instinctive understanding here that this is a very, very big issue that embraces all of us as Americans and that if we learn our lessons well and if we're patient in carrying them out, as Hillary said, knowing that there is no perfect way to raise a child, we are likely to have a very positive and profound impact on future generations in this country. So I want to thank, again, all of you for that.

Let me say there are some public programs that bear directly on early childhood development: the Head Start program, which we've expanded by 43 percent over the last 4 years; the WIC program, which we've expanded by nearly 2 million participants. I have to say that I was a little disappointed—or a lot disappointed—to see a congressional committee yesterday vote to underfund the WIC program. I hope that if nothing else happens out of this conference, the results of the conference will reach the members of that congressional committee and we can reverse that before the budget finally comes to my desk.

I would also like to remind all of you that this conference is literally just a start. We have to look at the practical implications of this research for parents, for caregivers, for policy-makers, but we also know that we're looking at years and years of work in order to make the findings of this conference real and positive