

don't stop at admiring a Mandela or a Cardinal Bernardin. Strive to be more like them. Keep your spirits up. There is profound truth in the proverb, "A happy heart maketh good medicine, but a broken spirit dryeth the bones."

Third, be of service to others. Much has been given to you already, and a lot more is coming your way. You owe it to yourself to give something back, to help to build a society and a world in which more people have your chance to live out their dreams, and all people in need at least know the touch of a caring hand and the embrace of a kind heart. From your service here, many of you already know that it not only gives more joy to others, it will bring more joy to you than you can even imagine.

Fourth, be both humble and proud. Be humble because you're human, subject to error and frailty, incapable, no matter how intelligent you are, of ever knowing the whole truth. Show mercy as well as judgment to those with whom you disagree in life. Keep in mind Benjamin Franklin's adage that even our enemies are our friends, for they show us our faults.

Be proud because your life is God's unique creation, worthy of its journey, graced with a soul the equal of every other person's. Eleanor Roosevelt once said that no one can make you feel inferior without your permission. Do not give them permission.

I regret that in our time, the essential role of constructive criticism often degenerates into what Deborah Tannen has called "the culture of critique," where too many brilliant minds and prodigious energies are spent simply putting people down. Do not be put down.

Thirty-seven years ago, I was a student in Vernon Dokey's eighth grade science class. On first impression, Vernon Dokey, to put it charitably, was a very physically unattractive man. [Laughter] He knew it. He laughed about it. And he used it to teach us a valuable lesson in life I still remember. He told us that every morning when he woke up, he went to the bathroom and he shaved, and then he looked at himself in the mirror and he said, "Vernon, you're beautiful." [Laughter]

Well, Class of '97, you're beautiful. Go out and live like it. Be humble and be proud. Be of service. Be optimistic and grateful. Be brave, and dream your dreams.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:07 a.m. in the gymnasium at the school. In his remarks, he referred to Ralph Bryant, chairman, board of directors, Earl Harrison, head of school, and Bernard Noe, upper school principal, Sidwell Friends School.

## Statement on the National Economy June 6, 1997

Four years ago, we put in place an economic strategy that has helped give America the strongest economy in the world. That strategy had three critical components: cutting the budget deficit; making smart investments in education, the environment, and our children; and opening new markets through tough trade agreements.

Today we received one more piece of solid evidence that this invest-and-grow strategy is working. We learned that our economy added 138,000 new jobs and that unemployment dropped to 4.8 percent, the lowest in 24 years. The American economy has now added 12.3 million new jobs since I took office, and unemployment has now been below 6 percent for

almost 3 years. America's economy is the strongest it has been in a generation.

Now we must press forward with the economic strategy that we adopted in 1993 and that has helped create the conditions for sustained growth. The balanced budget agreement I reached with leaders of Congress embodies our strategy. It is a balanced budget that is in balance with our values, and yesterday's strong endorsement of it by the House and Senate ratifies that economic strategy. This bipartisan action is a hopeful sign that both parties can work together to keep our economy growing. I look forward to working with leaders of both parties to write our balanced budget plan into law.

The progress of the balanced budget shows what America can accomplish when we reach across party lines and work together. Unfortunately, the Republican leaders of Congress have chosen the path of partisanship and confrontation in their actions on the disaster relief bill. Because congressional leaders chose to attach unacceptable political items to vital disaster re-

lief legislation, I have no choice but to veto that measure. Once again, I call on the Congress to honor the sacrifice and aid the recovery of the families in the Dakotas, Minnesota, and across the country by passing straightforward disaster relief legislation and sending it to my desk.

## **The President's Radio Address**

*June 7, 1997*

Good morning. This morning I want to talk about one of America's greatest challenges and greatest opportunities: conquering the forces of hatred and division that still exist in our society so that we can move forward into the 21st century as one America.

We are clearly the world's most diverse democracy, bound together across all of our differences by a belief in the basic dignity of every human being's life and liberty and the right of every American who lives by our laws and lives up to his or her responsibilities to share in the full promise of the greatest nation on Earth.

Especially as we move into a new century, with its global economy and its global society, our rich diversity is a powerful strength, if we respect it. We are clearly stronger as a nation when we use the full talents of all of our people, regardless of race or religious faith, national origin or sexual orientation, gender or disability. Much of America's story is really the stories of wave after wave of citizens struggling over our full history for full equality of opportunity and dignified treatment.

We stand today in sharp contrast to the racial, ethnic, tribal, and religious conflicts which continue to claim so many lives all around the world. But we have still not purged ourselves of all bigotry and intolerance. We still have our ugly words and awful violence, our burned churches and bombed buildings.

In a predominantly white suburb of Atlanta, Georgia, last month, an African-American couple was greeted with racial epithets as they moved into their new home. Just a week later, their home was sprayed with gunfire in the middle of the night. In a recent incident right here

in Washington, DC, three men accosted a gay man in a park, forced him at gunpoint to go under a bridge, and beat him viciously while using antigay epithets. Last fall in Los Angeles, a Jewish student's dormitory room was bombed with a quarter stick of dynamite, and a swastika was drawn near the door.

Such hate crimes, committed solely because the victims have a different skin color or a different faith or are gays or lesbians, leave deep scars not only on the victims but on our larger community. They weaken the sense that we are one people with common values and a common future. They tear us apart when we should be moving closer together. They are acts of violence against America itself. And even a small number of Americans who harbor and act upon hatred and intolerance can do enormous damage to our efforts to bind together our increasingly diverse society into one nation realizing its full promise.

As part of our preparation for the new century, it is time for us to mount an all-out assault on hate crimes, to punish them swiftly and severely, and to do more to prevent them from happening in the first place. We must begin with a deeper understanding of the problem itself. That is why I'm convening a special White House Conference on Hate Crimes this November 10th. We'll bring to the White House victims of hate crimes and their families to understand why the impact of these acts runs so much deeper than the crimes themselves. We'll bring together law enforcement experts and leading officials from Congress and the Justice Department to take a serious look at the existing laws against hate crime and consider ways to improve enforcement and to strengthen them. We'll