

resources, promote economic revitalization, and preserve our cultural heritage.

For 90 days, starting today, communities that have developed plans to restore and reconnect with their rivers may submit nominations to participate in this innovative initiative. Shortly thereafter, a panel of experts will help me select 10 finalist rivers from among the nominations, each of which will earn a designation as an American Heritage River. These rivers, most likely a mix of rural, suburban, and urban rivers, will receive targeted and coordinated assistance to help bring the community plans to life.

Here is how the initiative might work for an urban river linked by junkyards and abandoned buildings. If the riverfront community comes forward with a good revitalization plan and wins American Heritage River designation, we'll first work with the community to select a skilled, full-time liaison, which we call a river navigator. Maybe we should have called it a river rat. [Laughter] The river navigator will then help the community line up Federal and private resources for everything from improving water quality to cleaning up brownfields to designating a riverfront plaza and finding loans for local entrepreneurs.

Every step of the way, the initiative will be driven by the needs and desires of the communities that choose to participate. There will be no Federal mandates, no regulations, no restric-

tions on property holders' rights. All communities interested in this collaborative concept will be able to learn from the success of the program participants by tapping into a very impressive American Heritage Rivers website.

The reason I'm so pleased by the American Heritage Rivers initiative is that it neatly combines three of the concepts that are closest to my heart, as the Vice President said: First, the notion of environmental stewardship; second, the idea of offering citizen support for a re-invented Government that actually works better and costs less; and finally, once again, that economic prosperity and environmental protection go hand in hand.

We must continue to embrace these three ideas. We must believe in them. We must live by them. The American Heritage Rivers initiative is a great first step. Let the nominations begin.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Jose Lopez, member of the Chicago River Restoration Crew, known in Chicago as River Rats; and August Carlino, executive director, Pittsburgh Rivers of Steel. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Congressional Reception *September 11, 1997*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Al. Thank you, Tipper. Thank you, Marianne, and to Trent and Tricia, and the Speaker was here earlier—to all of you, thank you for coming.

We tried to put speakers up in the other rooms. We can't get everyone in here. Sometimes the best laid plans don't work. I love it when there's a picnic outside, but if we'd done this last night, all of our food would have been destroyed. And then if we'd done it tonight—it's not raining, but right before you came it rained, so all of our food would have been destroyed again. And we thought at least we ought to feed you well. [Laughter]

But there is a long history of this. I actually thought the Vice President was going to tell you the story of the very first time a President had the Congress to the White House. John Adams was the first President to live here. He spent the last 4 or 5 months of his term in the White House. And the first time he invited Congress here, it was a bitter, bitter cold day in Washington. And as you can imagine, back in 1800 we didn't have any central heat. So John and Abigail Adams literally, themselves, as the Congress Members and their families were coming in, were going from room to room, from fireplace to fireplace. They started with 20 cords of wood; they were trying to throw them into

the fireplace and get the fire started. You can imagine how it was. And when they finished it—they'd worked themselves to death—they looked around; it was so cold all the Members of Congress were filing out. So at least you haven't left yet. I feel I'm ahead. [Laughter]

I'd like to say a special word about two groups of people here tonight. First of all, all of you who brought your families, I thank you for doing that. I love seeing the children here. There's one child here I especially like to see, Senator Boxer's grandson, because he's also my nephew, and there he is. I'm glad to see him. I'm glad all the children are here.

The second thing I'd like to do is to say—I haven't got a list here, so I'll get myself in trouble—but I want to mention especially with appreciation Lee Hamilton, Elizabeth Furse, and every other Member of Congress of either party who is retiring at the end of this session. Thank you for your service to the United States of America, and thank you for being here tonight. We're very grateful to you.

Finally let me say, as Tipper said, Hillary wanted to be here tonight, but she's going to Mother Teresa's funeral, and I think it very im-

portant that we send a delegation there. I know there's also a congressional delegation going, and I think that is a very appropriate thing to do.

I hope we'll go on, have a little fun tonight. We'll hear more from the Floating Opera—what a great name. I feel like that's what we are, half the time. [Laughter] Then we're going to go in the room over here and shake hands with anybody that wants to come by. But I stood in the hall for awhile and tried to visit with as many of you as I could—do not feel that you have to. This is not an obligatory receiving line. There is no obligation here tonight except to try to have a good time.

Let's give the band a big hand and listen to them. [Applause]

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:14 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marianne Gingrich, wife of House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and Tricia Lott, wife of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. Originally planned as the congressional barbecue, the reception was moved to the East Room due to inclement weather.

Remarks Announcing the Nomination of David Satcher To Be Assistant Secretary for Health and Surgeon General and an Exchange With Reporters

September 12, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. Madam Secretary, our distinguished guests representing the health professions, to the Satcher family, and ladies and gentlemen.

Just yesterday, we learned of the strong public health progress our Nation has been making in recent years. We learned that last year, infant mortality declined to a record low, prenatal care reached a record high, the teen birth rate declined for the fifth straight year, and death from HIV and AIDS declined more than 25 percent. These are huge gains for public health, and much of the credit goes to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and their gifted leader, Dr. David Satcher.

As you heard from the Vice President, Dr. Satcher's many accomplishments are built on a deep foundation of personal experience. On the

small corn and peanut farm where he grew up, he relied on a dedicated country doctor, the only African-American doctor in the area, to come to his family's side in times of need. That man, named Dr. Jackson, helped save David Satcher's life, and then he and other mentors and family members inspired him to dedicate his life to caring for the health of other people's families.

They inspired a man whose parents didn't have the opportunity to finish elementary school to himself become the first black M.D., Ph.D. in the history of Case Western Reserve University, then go on to become president of Meharry Medical College and the Director of the world-renowned Centers for Disease Control.

In part, because of the inspiration of his family doctor, David Satcher is uniquely qualified