

committed to becoming a better neighbor. Washington has gotten a lot of lectures from people in national politics about being more responsible, from making the schools work better, to the streets become safer, to the neighborhoods having more hope and economic opportunity. But in the essence of our Constitution is the idea that responsibility requires freedom.

And so I believe in the independence of Washington, DC. I want Washington, DC, to be able to run its own affairs. I want the crime to go down and the schools to go up and the neighborhoods to be strong and full. We are trying to do better. In this last meeting of Congress we did more things to take loads off of Washington that it should not have and to give Washington responsibilities that it should have. And we must do more. I met with the mayor, the city council, the control board, and a lot of community leaders just a few days ago, a meeting that the Congresswoman requested. And we talked about what we could do together.

But I want to say to you that I come here at this Christmas season to say that I hope one of the gifts that I and our administration can leave for the 21st century is a National Capital that is a shining city on the hill for all America, that every American is proud of. I want a National Capital where every child looks like the children that I heard sing and who brought me those letters today, where they're all filled with a spirit of their own goodness, where they all believe they are children of God, where they all are animated to believe that they can have hope to live out their dreams. And this place symbolizes that. Wouldn't you like it if your city and your country worked the way this church did? Wouldn't you like that? *[Applause]*

And I'm not violating the first amendment by saying that. *[Laughter]* This has nothing to do with the separation of church and state. This has to do with the values we all share. Most

people who are not even Christians, who are Jewish people, who are Muslims, who are Buddhist, who are all the different religions we have in our country today, they'd still like it if our country worked more the way this church does—and often the way their houses of worship do.

And so I say to you, it begins when we speak the truth to one another, when we feel free to disagree, when we don't hide what we feel—but if you go on down in that chapter, when we don't let the sun go down on our anger, when we are genuinely kind to one another, for we are members, one of another. Now, on Christmas, we celebrate the birth of a child born in poverty, who never got elected to anything, never had a nickel to his name, and has more followers than any politician who ever lived for simply reminding us that we are children of God and that we are members, one of another.

So let us go out of here resolved to keep working together until every child is in a good school, until every family can be safe in their neighborhoods, until every grownup has a place to go to work in the morning. And we'll all be better off when we are selfishly selfless, recognizing that we are members, one of another.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. H. Beecher Hicks, Jr., senior minister, Metropolitan Baptist Church, and his wife, Elizabeth; Mayor Marion S. Barry, Jr., of Washington, DC; Linda W. Cropp, chair, District of Columbia City Council; Dr. H. Patrick Swygert, president, Howard University, and his wife, Sonja; poet Maya Angelou; David Du Bois, grandson of W.E.B. Du Bois; Sean Nalle and Ahjah Prom, who presented a book of children's letters to the President; and Ian Jackson, who wrote the letter regarding the First Lady.

## Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception

*December 7, 1997*

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, tonight the stars shine over the White House. Tonight we honor artists who in all seasons have lit up generations of our national life.

Ezra Pound once said that artists are the antennae of society, always probing, sensing, guiding us through the terrain of the human mind and spirit. I'm proud to salute five artists whose

sensitivity, vision, and talent have challenged our minds and made our spirits soar.

Especially since Edward Villella danced here in the East Room at the invitation of President and Mrs. Kennedy, the performing arts have increasingly found a home in this, the Nation's house. But the belief that arts are vital to our democracy goes back to our very beginnings, to the first President to live in the White House, John Adams, who envisioned an America that would study not just politics but painting, poetry, and music.

The ultimate worth of our Nation will never be measured fully by the size of our treasury or the might of our military but instead in the endurance of our gifts to the human spirit. Already, our films, our music, our plays, our dance have inspired performers and captured audiences around the globe. Worldwide, they've spurred not only the forces of creativity but also, and especially recently, the cause of freedom. The arts are now, to borrow a phrase from one of our honorees, perhaps the strongest currents blowing in the wind.

Tonight we pay tribute to five men and women who have spent their lives listening to their hearts and lifting ours, whose work and talent make them American originals.

It all began with the look—[laughter]—and I can still hardly stand it—[laughter]—a downward cast of the chin, a shy, yet sly upward glance of the eye. The look captured Bogey and made Lauren Bacall a legend. After seeing her for the first time in "To Have and Have Not," all America recognized that Lauren Bacall had it. The great James Agee wrote, "She has cinema personality to burn, something completely new to the screen."

Bogey and Bacall gave us a series of classic films: "The Big Sleep," "Dark Passage," "Key Largo." Then she showed us "How To Marry a Millionaire" and established herself as a master of stylish comedy. She conquered Broadway in "Cactus Flower," was discovered all over again as a musical star in "Applause," and won a second Tony Award for "Woman of the Year." Just last year, more than half a century after her first film, she won rave reviews and an Oscar nomination for "The Mirror Has Two Faces." I'm grateful that she took time out from being a legend to campaign a little for me last year, too. [Laughter] Tonight, on behalf of all Americans, I salute you, Lauren Bacall, as our woman of the year and an actress for all time.

As a young boy growing up in Minnesota, Bob Dylan spent a lot of time in his room writing poems. Then at the age of 14 he bought a guitar. With it, he would set his poems to music, striking the chords of American history and infusing American popular music, from rock-and-roll to country, with new depth and emotion. With searing lyrics and unpredictable beats, he captured the mood of a generation. Everything he saw—the pain, the promise, the yearning, the injustice—turned to song. He probably had more impact on the people of my generation than any other creative artist.

His voice and lyrics haven't always been easy on the ear, but throughout his career Bob Dylan has never aimed to please. He's disturbed the peace and discomforted the powerful. President Kennedy could easily have been talking about Bob Dylan when he said that "If sometimes our great artists have been most critical of our society, it is because their concern for justice makes them aware that our Nation falls short of its highest potential." "Like a Rolling Stone," Bob Dylan has kept moving forward, musically and spiritually, challenging all of us to move forward with him. Thank you, Bob Dylan, for a lifetime of stirring the conscience of our Nation.

I think our next honoree would want me to acknowledge that I can't thank him for campaigning for me. [Laughter] Now, with that disclaimer—[laughter]—I do have a lot to thank him for. For when I was a young boy in Arkansas and movies were my main source of inspiration, Charlton Heston showed me how to part the Red Sea, drive a Roman chariot, save medieval Spain—even after he was slain—[laughter]—and hold off a siege for "55 Days at Peking." In more than 75 films, Charlton Heston has guided millions of movie lovers through nearly every great era of Western civilization, bringing to life a host of heroes, from Moses to Michelangelo to Buffalo Bill. He's even played Democrats. [Laughter] But he was, to be fair, selective; they were Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. [Laughter]

If the big screen didn't exist, they would have had to invent it for Charlton Heston. A film hero for and of the ages, he's won an Oscar from the Academy, accolades from his peers, admiration from his audiences. But most of all, the characters he created, the courage and integrity and commitment they embody, remind all of us of the limitless possibility of the human

spirit. He has been and always will be larger than life.

The first song she ever performed in public was "God Will Take Care of You." Well, God was taking care of all us when he gave us Jessye Norman's wondrous voice. From a church choir in Georgia to center stage at the Met, Jessye Norman has brought joy to music lovers and critics to their feet. Her voice has been called the greatest instrument in the world. Her greatness, however, lies not just in her sound but in her soul. She has that rare gift for capturing in musical truths of the human experience, truths that can never be fully expressed in words alone. Having brought new meaning to Mozart and Wagner, Berlioz and Stravinsky, Jessye Norman remains an American diva. Indeed, when she sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" at my Inauguration earlier this year, I thought the flag was buoyed by the waves of her voice. I must say, Jessye, you were a tough act to follow. [Laughter]

After 40 albums, Grammy Awards, and the standing ovation of the entire world, she stands at the pinnacle of her art. Jessye Norman once said she wasn't the kind of woman to walk into a room unnoticed. [Laughter] And I can testify that that is true, having been in many rooms with her and never failing to notice. Since she first burst on the scene, her brilliance has held our attention, year-in and year-out. May the supernova of Jessye Norman shine forever.

As a young man, Edward Villella was a varsity baseball player and a welterweight boxing champion. He might have made the big leagues, but his heart led him into a different world. He

was a major league dancer from the moment he joined the New York City Ballet. As graceful as he was athletic, he mesmerized audiences and choreographers alike. Balanchine and Robbins created dances that only Villella could dance. The art rose to meet the man, and the man was always flying. He dominated the stage with space-swallowing charisma and leaps as effortless as they were breathtaking. He toured the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war and became the only American dancer ever to be demanded to give an encore. Today he brings the same energy and creativity to the shaping of the Miami City Ballet into America's next great dance company.

Long before Michael Jordan, Edward Villella showed us that man indeed could fly. [Laughter] Thank you for taking American dance to new heights.

Lauren Bacall, Bob Dylan, Charlton Heston, Jessye Norman, Edward Villella: artists and Americans who have made indelible imprints on the performing arts and on our national character. It is quite a tribute to them that all of you have come for them tonight. In them we find the sass, the raw emotion, the heroic strength, the passionate voice, the soaring aspirations of our Nation.

America salutes each and every one of you. Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to choreographers Jerome Robbins and the late George Balanchine; and NBA basketball player Michael Jordan.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Most-Favored-Nation Trade Status for Certain Former Eastern Bloc States

*December 5, 1997*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

I hereby transmit a report concerning emigration laws and policies of Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan as required by subsections 402(b) and 409(b) of title IV of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "Act"). I have determined that Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are in full com-

pliance with subsections 402(a) and 409(a) of the Act. As required by title IV, I will provide the Congress with periodic reports regarding the compliance of Albania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan with these emigration standards.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON