

Feb. 7 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Our thoughts and prayers are with his loved ones—and with all our men and women in uniform around the world as they serve and sac-

rifice every day to keep Americans safe and America strong.

Remarks at the Festival at Ford's Theatre

February 8, 1998

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. First let me say that Hillary and I, as always, have had a wonderful evening. We look forward to this every year.

I want to thank my special friend Whoopi Goldberg. God's Property was wonderful. I thank all the other magnificent performers who were here tonight. I thank Tricia Lott and Peatsy Hollings, for the work that they do, and all the other sponsors of this extraordinary evening. And a special thanks to you, Frankie, for giving 30 years of your life to a worthy and great American cause.

I also want to thank you for honoring the First Lady tonight. She has worked very hard for the last 5 years and continues to work for the arts and for the preservation of our national treasures, like Ford's Theatre. That's a special focus of our millennium project. And she convinced me that it's something all Americans should do for the 21st century.

President Kennedy once wrote that art is the great unifying and humanizing experience. We are here in Ford's Theatre in the shadow of President Lincoln's memory, a President who

gave his life for the unity and the fundamental humanity of our Nation. And these wonderful young people have just sung a song that, for everyone my age, will live forever. John Kennedy was killed when I was a senior in high school; Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy when I was a senior here at Georgetown. Those of us who grew up as children in a time when our national life meant unity and humanity will be forever grateful for the spirit of Abraham Lincoln and what is embodied in this magnificent theater.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:45 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to comedienne Whoopi Goldberg; gospel music group God's Property; event cochair Tricia Lott, wife of Senator Trent Lott, and Rita L. (Peatsy) Hollings, wife of Senator Ernest F. Hollings; and Frankie Hewitt, producing artistic director, Ford's Theatre Society. The festival was videotaped for later broadcast on the ABC Television Network as "A Gala for the President."

Remarks at Georgetown University

February 9, 1998

Thank you very much. A special thanks to those of you who had to wait all night to get in. *[Laughter]* Hope you won't be disappointed. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Vice President, Father O'Donovan, to all the groups here who are concerned with Social Security, especially to Congressman Penny and the Concord Coalition and John Rother and the AARP, I thank you all for being here.

I thank Senator Bob Kerrey, who when he cast the decisive vote for our budget in 1993

said that he would do so only if I were also committed to dealing with the long-term structural problems of Social Security, to heal the deficit there as well. I thank Gene Sperling and the members of my staff who've worked with us on this. And thank you, Mannone Butler, for embodying what this struggle is all about. Weren't you proud of her? She did a great job, I think. *[Applause]* Thank you very much.

When I first ran for President 6½ years ago now, I came to this hall to set out my vision