

Message on the Observance of Saint Patrick's Day, 1999
March 12, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Saint Patrick's Day. Each year on this special day dedicated to Ireland's patron saint, I am proud to join millions of Americans in remembering our Irish heritage. We remember with pride our ancestors who stood on Ireland's western shores, yearning for the promise of America. Fleeing famine and injustice, they longed for a new world of opportunities. Millions of these courageous men and women set sail from Ireland to seek the promise of America. They gave to their new homeland their strength and spirit, sinew and determination, eloquence and wit. In return, America offered them the opportunity for a better life, the chance to rise above poverty and discrimination, and a future where they could live out their dreams.

The Irish who came to America endured many hardships, but they prospered and helped to build our country with innumerable physical and intellectual contributions. Irish Americans seized the opportunity of freedom that America promised. They gave us Presidents and patriots,

judges and journalists, social reformers, peacekeepers, artists, labor leaders, and educators. From their grand literary tradition to their deep religious faith, Irish Americans and their descendants have enriched every facet of American history. But this celebration is a time to look to the future as well as to the past. Today as we pay tribute to Saint Patrick and his example of faith and determination, we rejoice that the faith and determination of the Irish people have brought about the promise of peace in Northern Ireland and the resolve to approach differences not with weapons, but with words. Americans are a vital part of the process in Northern Ireland by virtue of our shared heritage and shared goal of lasting peace and a better future for all God's children. By lending our hearts, minds, and prayers to the work of peace, we can best fulfill our obligation to the generations of Irish men and women who have given so much to our Nation's life and history.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks at a Dinner for Representative Max Sandlin in Texarkana
March 12, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to begin just by thanking you all for giving me such a wonderful, warm welcome tonight, coming up, saying hello, shaking my hand, seeing if I still knew how to write my name—[laughter]—taking the pictures. It's wonderful to be back here. I have had a lot of incredible times in this community over the last 24 years or so. And I've seen a lot of old friends here tonight, and I'm delighted to see you.

I came here for a lot of reasons, but I want to begin by just thanking Truman and Anita and the Joyces, the Youngs, the Pattersons, everybody else who had anything to do with this. When I was Governor, and when I started running for President, no one but my mother thought I could win. [Laughter] Maybe on a good day, Hillary did. [Laughter] I don't know if anybody else did. Truman Arnold was there

for me. The people of Miller and Bowie Counties were there for me. And I have never forgotten it, and I never will.

I was sitting here looking at Truman, you know. I just want to tell you it's little things that mean a lot to me. I go all over the country, and I do these events. And I'm paying more attention to them, I think, than I ever have, maybe because they're not for me anymore because I can't run for anything. He thanked more people who worked for me who never get acknowledged by anybody, anywhere, tonight than anyone in the United States of America ever has at one of these events. And I appreciate that. That means a lot.

I also want to thank Molly Beth Malcolm, even though the Congressman ragged her a little bit for agreeing to be head of the Texas Democratic Party. No matter what you think, it is