

## Message to the Citizens of Oklahoma City Commemorating the Fourth Anniversary of the Bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building *April 14, 1999*

Greetings to everyone gathered in Oklahoma City to remember those who died in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

The bombing on April 19, 1995, stole the lives of 168 people and brought grief to the victim's families and to our entire nation. This cowardly act of terrorism outraged not only the people of the United States, but also civilized men and women everywhere.

As you gather to mark the fourth anniversary of that tragedy, I know that your memories of the loved ones you lost are undiminished by the passing of time. I know, too, that all Americans still share your sorrow.

Four years ago, you were brought together by your devastating loss. In the years since, you have reached out to forge new ties of community, turning your shared sadness into a source of strength for all Americans. As you prepare to dedicate the national memorial at next year's observance, I commend you for your courage and your dedication in creating a lasting tribute to the memory of your loved ones.

Hillary and I are keeping all of you in our thoughts and prayers.

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 19.

## Remarks at the Award Ceremony for the National Teacher of the Year *April 19, 1999*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Terry. I also want to acknowledge and welcome Congresswoman Patsy Mink from Hawaii, who is here with her husband, John. We're very delighted to see them. I'd like to thank the Chief State School Officers for sponsoring this award along with Scholastic, and I believe Gordon Ambach and Ernie Fleishman are both here.

Terry said I'd given 131 speeches on education. I didn't know that until I just came in here. *[Laughter]* I wasn't keeping count. It is true that a few years ago I started reeling off all my teachers, beginning at kindergarten. And when I started running for office a long time ago now, I remember I asked—the fellow who was helping me put my first campaign together said, “People don't know much about you; we've got to do a little biographical film, and we ought to put one of your teachers in it.” And I said, “Well, I still carry on a correspondence with my sixth grade teacher, Kathleen Scher.” I did until she died at about 91 years of age. And I used to see her about once a year.

“But you can't use her,” I said. And they said, “Well, why? That sounds like a wonderful

story.” I said, “It is, but she's liable to tell you what she told me the day I finished my elementary school career.” *[Laughter]* True story. My sainted sixth grade teacher, who is one of these wonderful—she lived with her first cousin, and they lived until their late eighties or early nineties, and they taught school for a gazillion years. And she looked at me when I left elementary school for the last day and she said, “Bill, I just don't know about you.” *[Laughter]* She said, “You know, if you ever learn when to talk and when to keep quiet, there is nothing you can't achieve. But if you don't learn the difference, I'm not sure whether you're going to be Governor or wind up in the penitentiary.” *[Laughter]* So we found someone else to do the film. *[Laughter]* But Kathleen Scher continued to write me for the rest of her days, including a letter I have that I received just a week before she passed away.

So I want to thank all of you for being here today. I also would like to thank Terry for the magnificent perspective she's provided to us for years now, in the Department of Education, on education and on teachers. And I'd like to thank