

you, you've done a great job, and I am profoundly grateful. Thank you.

As we can all see, thankfully the blast-furnace heat has subsided a little bit here in Chicago, and believe it or not, it was a little better in Washington yesterday and today. Over the weekend, it was scorching. But we probably haven't seen the last of the heat for the season. And we know that many low income people in this area and throughout our country are now saddled with energy bills they can't begin to afford. So earlier today I authorized the release of another \$55 million in emergency funding to help them.

The funding will be used in Illinois and eight other States in the Midwest and the South to help people pay for air-conditioning and pay off their high utility bills. About \$16 million will go to the State of Illinois alone. We have now provided \$150 million-plus for cooling assistance this summer across America, and I hope it will be enough.

We know that some of the elderly people who died in this heat wave were people on fixed incomes who were reluctant to turn their air-conditioning on. We know they were afraid they wouldn't be able to pay their bills at the end of the month. So the one news item I would hope would come out of this meeting is that through this announcement the seniors in this area and in any other area that might be hit by this kind of heat wave will know that

there is Federal help available, Congress has set aside the money for this purpose. We know that when heat waves like this come along that are virtually unprecedented there will be people who need to be cool who can't afford to pay the bill.

So turn on the air-conditioner, and if you don't have one, send for a fan or a room unit; send for something that will keep you alive. That is the message we want to come out of here. I want your efforts all to be successful, and I hope that that message will go out across the country today. People should never have to worry in this country about risking their lives because they can't pay their power bills.

Again, let me say, I want to thank you. The executive director of the Chicago Housing Authority, I understand, said recently, there is no substitute for human contact. That's probably a good general rule, but it is certainly true in this case. You have provided that human contact, and the rest of us are very grateful.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:42 p.m. at the Lake Shore Park Pavilion. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; and Phillip Jackson, chief executive officer, Chicago Housing Authority. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Statement on the Death of Willie Morris

*August 3, 1999*

Hillary and I were greatly saddened to learn of the death of our good friend Willie Morris. When I was a senior in college, I was captivated by his wonderful memoir, "North Toward Home." I had the opportunity to visit New York City and meet him, then the remarkably young editor of Harper's magazine, who had started out in a small Southern town not unlike my own and who never lost his fascination with the human condition. In the 1980's, we became

reacquainted, and I have enjoyed his wit, warmth, and wisdom ever since. Willie Morris was not only my friend, he was a national treasure. He had enormous pride in and love for the South, but he also had a passion to right the wrongs of our racial history. He will take his place beside Faulkner and Welty in the pantheon of the South's greatest writers. Our thoughts and prayers go to his wife Joanne, his son David, and his family and friends.