

work will serve not only to strengthen the Federal workforce and ensure that the American taxpayers receive the best service possible, but can also accelerate the development of technologies useful in schools and companies throughout the Nation.

I appreciate your leadership, the commitment of the Task Force, and the dedicated service of your staff, particularly Emzell Blanton, the Executive Director of the Task Force, in ensuring the success of this important effort.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks to the NCAA Men's and Women's Basketball Champions October 14, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Well, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. I want to say a special word of welcome to Purdue Coach Carolyn Peck and UConn Coach Jim Calhoun and their wonderful teams; and we're honored to be joined by two Members of Congress from Connecticut, John Larson and Nancy Johnson.

Usually, you know, the Members of Congress, they stand in front of the team, and I shake hands with them, and then I go shake hands with the team. And I started shaking hands with the UConn team, and Nancy Johnson was the fourth person in the line, and I wondered what position she could possibly have played. [*Laughter*]

Well, we're delighted that they're both here, and the two Connecticut Senators, Joe Lieberman and Chris Dodd were also here. They had to go vote, and they're going to try to get back before we finish. But we thank them for coming.

It's a great honor for me today to welcome the Purdue Lady Boilermakers and the UConn Huskies, two talented basketball teams who remained focused enough to win the most coveted prize in college basketball. It's a kind of a joke around the White House that I am a fanatic basketball fan, that I frequently misbehave during the NCAA tournament—[*laughter*—especially if the Arkansas Razorbacks aren't playing well that year.

But I studied these teams very closely. I'd like to—I think that I would like to begin by making two acknowledgements that are important to the human element of basketball. First of all, the Lady Boilermakers lost one of their teammates, Tiffany Young, last August in a car accident, and her parents are here. And I'd like to acknowledge their presence and thank them

for coming. Would you—well, they're here somewhere. There they are.

And in this week, I can't help noting that on Monday we lost one of the greatest basketball players of all time, Wilt Chamberlain, whose dedication, determination, and performance inspired countless Americans, most of whom never scored 100 points in a single game.

Wilt Chamberlain once said, in his rather wry and funny way, "They say nobody is perfect. Then, they tell you practice makes perfect. I wish they'd make up their mind." [*Laughter*] One thing is clear. With practice and talent, UConn and Purdue got pretty close to perfect. They both beat two very talented Duke Blue Devil teams.

This was a season of firsts. First time a men's team from New England had won the NCAA tournament since Harry Truman lived in the White House; the first time the Purdue women or the UConn men ever won a national championship.

Let me begin by saluting the Lady Boilermakers. All America was awed by your performance. I understand it was fueled by power naps and peanut butter. [*Laughter*] If that's true, I think I'll stay with them both. [*Laughter*]

They had a dazzling 34–1 season record. I told the coach when we were starting this that I happened to see one night, on television, their early-season victory against Tennessee. Because, you know, Tennessee's coming here has become a kind of regular event—[*laughter*—Coach Summitt and her husband and her wonderful son have become friends of ours. And Al Gore was in a slump the next day. [*Laughter*] And he said, "Well, they must have had an off night." And I said, "Al, I watched the game. They didn't have an off night." [*Laughter*] "That Purdue

team is great. It's going to be hard for anybody to beat them." And it turned out to be right.

I want to mention the extraordinary contributions of the co-captains of the team. MVP Ukari Figgs turned around the final game with 18 points. All-American Stephanie White-McCarty amassed the second-highest number of points in the history of Purdue.

Basketball is a team effort. It depends upon everyone working together and relies heavily on good leadership. The Boilermakers had a lot of both. As the first African-American woman ever to win the NCAA championship as a coach, Carolyn Peck has demonstrated extraordinary leadership, carrying Purdue to two Big 10 tournament championships in only two seasons. And I'm glad she's back here with her team today. She's just finished her first season as a pro coach, where she missed the playoffs, I think she said, by one game. And next year is your second season; you've got to deliver. And we wish you well. *[Laughter]* So I'd like to call on Carolyn Peck and give her the microphone now. Thank you.

[At this point, Coach Peck made brief remarks.]

The President. I also want to acknowledge, before I leave the State of Indiana, the presence here of a man who has been my friend for 20 years, the former Senator from Indiana and the father of the current Senator from Indiana, Mr. Birch Bayh. Thank you, Senator. Thank you. I'm glad to see you. Thank you.

Now, the Huskies. I watched them all year, too. They won 34 games, and they were supposed to be a big underdog in the championship. They had a team that was determined not to be defeated. Richard Hamilton's outside touch and the tough defensive play of Ricky Moore and Khalid El-Amin gave them a 77-74 down-to-the-wire thriller that will never be forgotten by people who love basketball.

I also want to say that I'm glad Richard is coming to Washington to help the Wizards. We need it. *[Laughter]* Jim Calhoun's achievements as the Huskies' coach are tremendous. He's the only coach in NCAA history to win 250 games at two different Division I programs. He's the winningest coach in UConn history, with the third most wins in all of college basketball in the last six seasons.

When I called Jim to congratulate him on the victory, we had a wonderful talk about a lot of things, and I'll always remember our con-

versation. But I told him, and I thought that the Duke coach, Mike Krzyzewski, gave him and these fine young men the ultimate compliment; you can only imagine how disappointed he was. He has all those great players; they were supposed to win everything easily. It was a fabulous game.

The truth is, UConn was better than they thought they were. And it was—at a moment of enormous disappointment, he got before the national television cameras, and he said, "We did not lose this game. We were defeated by a better team." And that says a lot about this coach and these players.

So, Coach, the microphone is yours.

[Coach Calhoun made brief remarks, and the team captains presented a jersey and ring to the President.]

The President. Look at this. I think it's a little big for me, don't you? *[Laughter]* Thank you. I really love this, thank you.

Now, when does practice start? *[Laughter]*

Coach Calhoun. I'll see you Saturday morning at 11.

The President. Thank you very much.

Coach Peck. Can we make a presentation?

The President. Sure. Give them another hand, guys. *[Applause]*

[Coach Peck and the team's senior captains presented a jersey to the President.]

The President. I can wear this. It's the right size, right? It's the right size. I love it.

[A Purdue senior captain thanked the President and congratulated the University of Connecticut Huskies.]

The President. You know, in a year and a half when I'm not President anymore, people will, all of a sudden, start treating me as an elder statesman or something, and they will all want my advice on various things. One of the things people ask me all the time is, isn't it hard to keep your feet on the ground and the sense of basic humility when, you know, the Secret Service are with you, you fly around on Air Force One, every need is just at your fingertips? And I think I will have two pieces of advice: One is, have regular press conferences; that'll cut you down to size. *[Laughter]* And the other is, always meet with the champions of the men and women's NCAA basketball tournament. They will make you feel very small.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to Tiffany Young's parents, Gloria and Billy Ray Young; and Pat Summitt, coach, University of Tennessee Lady Volunteers, her husband, R.B. Summitt, and son, Tyler.

Remarks on Unveiling Public Service Announcements on Youth Violence October 15, 1999

The President. Thank you very much, Epatha; welcome back to the White House. She was here back in February, again trying to help children, when we unveiled the PSA to help our children get the health care they need. So she is becoming the Federal Government's number one volunteer for America's children, and we're grateful for her.

I think she knows that if she and the rest of us could do enough for our children in a preventive and preparatory way, we'd put a lot of police officers and actors playing police officers out of work—[laughter]—because we wouldn't have nearly as much trouble. I thank you so much.

Attorney General Reno and Secretary Shalala, thank you both for your commitment to helping our children and to unifying our Government's resources, not having a lot of little, indistinct programs that are separate, one from another.

I want to thank all of those who are here supporting this campaign. Thank you, Dr. Roz Weinman, from NBC. Thank you for everything you've done. I want to thank the ADL national director, Abraham Foxman, the Human Rights Committee's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, the people from La Raza, and all the other groups that have supported this endeavor.

I'd also like to acknowledge the young people behind me. They're from Eastern High School in Washington, DC, and they are actively and personally working to prevent youth violence. They are the symbols of the people we are trying to empower with this public service campaign, and we ought to give them a hand. [Applause]

Six months ago next week we will observe the half-year anniversary of the tragedy at Littleton, Colorado. As awful as it was, we all know it was not an isolated event. We have seen since and we saw before, in a string of violent incidents at school and in the fact that 13 young

people lose their lives every single day to gunshots in ones and twos, that our children—notwithstanding the fact that we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years and a dramatic drop in the murder rate—are still subject to a nation that is too dangerous and can be made safer.

That is why we have asked every sector of our society to get involved in the search for solutions to youth violence, to hatred, to the absence of control, to environmental and cultural factors that need to be dealt with. We've asked people to help at home and school, in Hollywood and in the heartland, in our State capitals and in the Nation's Capital.

In August we helped launch the national campaign against youth violence, to pull together commitments from people and organizations from all different walks of life. Although this new campaign is not even 2 months old, it has already made a remarkable start. Over the coming months, it will roll out a major media campaign, begin supporting antiviolenence concerts and townhall meetings, in-school and after-school programs, and sponsor a city-by-city effort to shine a spotlight on the local initiatives that are producing the most promising results.

The executive director of this national campaign, Jeff Bleich, is here with us today. I introduced him when we named him, but I want to thank you again for your great work.

Today we are pleased and grateful that NBC is making its own commitment to protect our children from youth violence. As part of it's "The More You Know" campaign, NBC has created a series of ads that speak to parents and children about how families can help to stop violence and hate before they start. I would like to now stop and show one of these ads, which features Epatha and her "Law & Order" colleague, Angie Harmon. So could we show the ad?