

White House now to either call him or write him a note. I hope he's fine.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:22 p.m. at the food bank's warehouse. In his remarks, he referred to Lynn Brantley, executive director, Capital Area Food Bank.

Videotaped Remarks on the Observance of Ramadan *November 22, 2000*

It is a privilege to deliver again this year, on behalf of the American people, a message of friendship and respect to Muslims around the world as they begin the sacred month of Ramadan.

As America's 6-million-member Muslim community grows in numbers and prominence, Americans of every religious tradition are learning more about the origins and meaning of Islam—that on “the Night of Power,” the angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet Muhammad and revealed to him the first verses of the Koran; that the Koran declares that Ramadan was the month Allah's words were sent down and so should be spent in fasting.

The rigors undertaken by devout Muslims inspire respect for Islam among people of all faiths. And this can bring hope of greater understanding for good will. It can overflow old boundaries when wholehearted devotion to one's own faith is matched with a devout respect for the faith of others.

That is why we welcome Islam in America. It enriches our country with Islam's teachings of self-discipline, compassion, and commitment to family. It deepens America's respect for Muslims here at home and around the world, from Indonesia to Pakistan, the Middle East, and Africa.

We all had hoped that when this month's crescent Moon first appeared and the month of Ramadan was announced, fasting would begin in a time of peace. Yet, tragically, violence continues, and lives are being lost in the land that is holy to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. For all Americans, these deaths are a source of great sorrow. The Muslim chaplain at Georgetown University, where I attended college, has told me of a verse in the Koran in which Allah tells us that He created nations and tribes so we may know one another, not so we might despise one another.

As the fasting of Ramadan begins, I pray people of all faiths may come to appreciate this precious wisdom of the Koran. And when next month's Moon appears and the Muslim world celebrates Eid al-Fitr, we may also celebrate the revival of our hopes for peace throughout the world.

Ramadan Kareem.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 11:15 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room for later broadcast on the Department of State American Embassy Television Network. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Statement on the Death of David Hermelin *November 22, 2000*

Hillary and I are deeply saddened to learn of the death of our good friend Ambassador David Hermelin.

All of us who knew David admired him deeply for his remarkable combination of energy, wit, optimism, and commitment to family, faith,

and the common good. From the businesses he built to the charities he supported to the causes he championed, David demonstrated the qualities of active citizenship which have made our country the greatest democracy in history. He was a magnificent man. I will be forever grateful