

I want to thank you all very much on the American side for your hard work. I also want to thank Rejjie Tremblay. He made sure I got to my meetings on time. [Laughter] I hope word has filtered out of Washington that I believe on starting meetings on time. [Laughter] I don't believe in making people wait. I want to make sure that Lori Fortin gets thanks, as well. Not one member of this huge delegation had to sleep on a couch, thanks to you. [Laughter] I want to thank Fred Bishop. He's known as Emergency Guy. [Laughter] He fixed problems before they became emergencies.

I want to tell you all how much I appreciate your service to the country. It's more

than just making sure the mission works—however, this mission worked well—it's to make sure the mission always works. I want to thank you for understanding that there is something greater than yourself in life, and that's the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. at the Loews le Concorde Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Canada Paul Cellucci and his wife, Jan Garnett; Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada; President Vicente Fox of Mexico; and Lois Aroian, U.S. Consul General in Quebec.

Remarks Honoring the NCAA Men's and Women's Basketball Champions April 23, 2001

Welcome. Please be seated. This might be a long speech. [Laughter]

First of all, I want to welcome two great teams from two great universities. It is our honor to host you all here at the White House. I want to say congratulations to Coach K—the reason I call him Coach K is because sometimes I have trouble pronouncing long words. [Laughter] Coach McGraw and the players and the representatives from Duke and Notre Dame, welcome.

I want to welcome two fine United States Senators, Senator Helms from North Carolina, Senator Lugar from Indiana. Members of the United States Congress who are here, thank you all for coming.

In reviewing the rosters and the success of this club, it is clear that both Duke and Notre Dame recruited for athletic talent, but they also recruited character, as well. These championships go to prove that good people do finish first.

It is such an honor to welcome Duke back here. It turns out that there was an-

other President named Bush that welcomed the Duke team. And they dedicated a basketball court right here on the South Lawn during that visit. The weather has been such that I haven't been practicing my sky-hook lately. [Laughter] Looking at the size of some of these guys, I'm not sure I want to try to do it now, anyway. [Laughter]

I know it took a lot of hard work to get here, and there were some very close games and tough contests, particularly the Fighting Irish in their final—in the final game, won in the last second. I'm reminded about what Coach McGraw's son, Murphy, said as he watched the game. He said, "That was scary." Murphy, I know what you're talking about. It reminds me of election night. [Laughter]

There's no question that teams require good leadership. And I was struck by the quote of one of the stars here who said about Coach K—just to prove to the press I can say it—Coach Krzyzewski—[laughter]—"To me, he's been a friend, a mentor, and a brother. I am the luckier person for

having him had me as a part of my life.” That’s what leadership is all about. That’s what it means to be somebody who can set an example and somebody who understands the responsibilities of the assignment. It’s not just to win championships; it’s to shape lives in a positive way.

And I loved what Coach McGraw said. She said, “Usually there are negative things that occur during the season. But this year I’ve had not to call a single team meeting; I’ve gotten no complaints from professors. We can’t even yell at the players, because they do everything we ask.” I need your help with Congress. *[Laughter]*

Championships bring an awesome responsibility. Not only do you win a trophy, I think you have the obligation of understanding that you have enormous influence on people’s lives, people you don’t even know. People look at the champs and say, “How does a champ behave? What is a champ supposed to do?” Champions not only cut down nets, but they can influence people’s lives by sending positive signals by how they behave, not only on the court but off the court. It’s a big responsibility. It’s a huge responsibility. And that’s why these two teams are so fortunate to have great teamwork and great players.

I know this was a team effort, and I’m sure the two players I’m going to mention, Battier and Riley, are going to be somewhat concerned that the President has singled

them out. But I want to remind people who may not know their histories that not only were they great players, they’re great people. Not only did they set goals about being the best on the basketball court, they set goals of becoming all-academic stars, and they were. They set goals of understanding the Golden Rule and living by it. These are good people. And I’m sure your teammates are, as well. But they set the kind of example that America needs.

And all of us who have got positions of responsibility—all of us, whether we’re a President or a coach or a player or a president of a university—must understand that with that responsibility comes the necessity to set the right signal all throughout America that there’s a difference between right and wrong, that we can be compassionate, and that we can love a neighbor like we’d like to be loved ourselves.

So it’s my huge honor to welcome good teams and good people to the White House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mike Krzyzewski, head men’s basketball coach, and player Shane Battier, Duke University; and Muffet McGraw, head women’s basketball coach, and player Ruth Riley, University of Notre Dame.

Remarks on the Observance of National Park Week and National Volunteer Week and an Exchange With Reporters *April 23, 2001*

The President. It’s my honor for me to welcome and to be in the presence of one of my finest ambassadors. The White House, I often say, doesn’t belong to Laura and me; it belongs to the American people. And William Toth is a volunteer who works hard every day to ensure that every Amer-

ican feels right at home in the White House.

Mr. Toth has lived a life of service. In World War II, he served with distinction in General George Patton’s army. He later became a professor at New York University. He worked hard to put his own daughters