

and jazz, in rhythm and blues, and in rock and roll. Lyrics first heard in the country churches in the Mississippi Delta and songs first played in the clubs of Harlem and Chicago and Memphis are now recognized and loved in every part of America and throughout the world. The music we honor this month could have only come from the unique experience of Black Americans.

Yet, at its best, this music speaks to every heart. Your day is a little better when you hear Nat King Cole sing “Unforgettable,” or Aaron Neville “Tell it Like it Is”—[*laughter*]—or Diana Ross singing “Reflections,” or B.B. King lamenting, “The Thrill is Gone.” [*Laughter*] Or how about when James Brown proclaims, “I Feel Good”? [*Laughter*] Or Mahalia Jackson praising our “Precious Lord.”

This is some of the greatest music America has ever produced. America is thankful

to the men and women who have shared this gift with us all. And so today I’ve signed a proclamation designating June 2003 as Black Music Month in the United States of America.

May God bless your talents, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:38 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor James A. Garner of Hempstead, NY; President Mireya Elisa Moscoso, Foreign Minister Harmodio Arias, and Ambassador to the United States Roberto Alfaro of Panama; writer and jazz critic Stanley Crouch; jazz musician Loren Schoenberg; and the Harlem Jazz Museum Artists musical group. The Black Music Month proclamation of June 24 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on the Death of Bob Stump *June 24, 2003*

Congressman Bob Stump lived a distinguished life of service as a World War II veteran, an Arizona State legislator, and a United States Congressman. He was a gifted leader who remained true to his principles and made an indelible mark on those who were fortunate enough to know him. As one of the few Members of Congress

who served as chairman of both the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee and the Armed Services Committee, he was admired for his tireless efforts on behalf of the men and women in uniform. Laura joins me in sending our thoughts and prayers to Nancy and the entire Stump family during this difficult time.

## Statement on House of Representatives Action on Homeland Security Legislation *June 24, 2003*

I commend the House of Representatives for acting quickly to approve funds for our continued effort to strengthen homeland security and protect the American people. I’m particularly pleased that the House bill

supports my request to help train, equip, and prepare first-responders across our Nation. The bill also supports important core functions of the newly created Department

of Homeland Security, including border security, infrastructure protection, and information analysis.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders on Medicare Reform

June 25, 2003

*The President.* Thank you all for coming. I'll take some questions at the end of the EU Summit. I'm so honored that members of both political parties from the House of Representatives have come to discuss our mutual desire to get a Medicare reform package passed. Members of both parties have made up their minds that we can do a good job on behalf of seniors by making sure that Medicare is a modern system.

We are making great progress on this issue. We have an historic opportunity to seize the moment and get a good bill done. There's good momentum on the side of those of us who believe that we have an obligation to serve something greater than ourselves or our political parties. And I want to thank, again, members of both parties who are working hard to reach a consensus on behalf of our country's seniors.

We've got Nancy Johnson and Congressman Israel here, who are very competent spokesmen for what is necessary to achieve

a common objective. And I want to thank the Members. I look forward to working with you. Whatever amount of energy and effort is required from the White House, we will provide it, to get a bill done this summer, one that I can sign, and then we can all go back to our districts—in my case, tour the country—and say we have accomplished a major objective. Together—we work together.

Thank you all for coming. Now you're supposed to yell a question so I know what you're going to ask later on. [Laughter]

Q. What are you going to tell the undecided Republicans this afternoon?

*The President.* Wrong question. [Laughter]

Q. The economy?

*The President.* The economy? Okay, good, yell about that. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:53 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

## The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders

June 25, 2003

*President Bush.* Thank you all for coming. We'll have opening statements; each of us will answer one question apiece.

It's my pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Simitis and President Prodi here to the White House. We've had constructive discussions. We had a nice lunch.

Since the end of World War II, the United States has strongly supported European unity as the best path to European peace and prosperity. We believe as well that strong ties between America and Europe are essential to peace and the prosperity of the world.