

affection for President Ford. I've ordered flags to fly at halfstaff for 30 days in his honor. This weekend, his body will lie in state at the United States Capitol. And on Tuesday, Laura and I will join former Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Carter at a funeral service at the National Cathedral as part of a National Day of Mourning.

Gerald Ford's life spanned nine decades and took him from the football fields of his boyhood in Michigan to the halls of power in Washington, DC. At every stage of his journey, he displayed a decency, patriotism, and courage that Americans will always admire. As we say goodbye to the year 2006, we bid farewell to one of the finest public servants America has ever

known. We give thanks for the gift of his remarkable life, for the caring man who touched so many lives, and the wise President who helped heal our Nation.

May God bless Gerald R. Ford. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on December 29 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 29 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Message on the Observance of New Year's Day 2007 *December 31, 2006*

Over the past year, we have reached important goals and confronted new challenges. At the start of this New Year, we move forward with trust in the power of the American spirit, confidence in our purpose, and faith in a loving God who created us to be free.

In 2006, the number of jobs steadily increased, wages grew, the unemployment rate dropped, and we achieved our goal of cutting the deficit in half three years ahead of schedule. Thanks to the hard work and innovation of the American people, our economy has been growing faster than any other major developed nation. Significant tax relief has helped our citizens keep more of what they earn and fuel an economy that is vigorous and healthy. My Administration will continue to work to help create more jobs, reduce the deficit, and spread prosperity to all our citizens.

Last year, America continued its mission to fight and win the war on terror and promote liberty as an alternative to tyranny and despair. In the New Year, we will re-

main on the offensive against the enemies of freedom, advance the security of our country, and work toward a free and unified Iraq. Defeating terrorists and extremists is the challenge of our time, and we will answer history's call with confidence and fight for liberty without wavering.

Our Nation depends on the fine men and women in uniform who serve our country with valor and distinction, and we remain mindful of their dedication and sacrifice. America's troops and their families exemplify the great character of our country, and they have earned the respect and admiration of a grateful Nation.

As we celebrate the New Year, we look with hope to the year ahead and the opportunities it will bring.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a happy New Year. May God bless you, may God bless our troops and their families, and may God bless America.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Dec. 31 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2006

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.