

So I'm just so grateful that we had this opportunity to share with everybody. And I want to wish everybody around the country a day in which they reflect on the extraordinary contributions that ordinary citizens can make each and every day to make America the most hopeful country in the world.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Raye Lyneer Thomas, husband of activist Romaine Thomas.

## Statement on the Death of Carlos Hernandez Gomez *January 18, 2010*

I was saddened to hear of the passing of Carlos Hernandez Gomez. Our paths first crossed when I was a State senator. He was a throwback in the style of Chicago's storied political reporters. He loved Chicago, and he relentlessly sought to tell its story with the commitment to truth and the insatiable curiosity that any good reporter has to have. I quickly learned that when you saw his sharp fedora in

a crowd, hard questions were coming. But Carlos always played it straight. And I always enjoyed our interactions in Springfield, Chicago, or on the campaign trail.

Carlos was a role model to many and an integral part of the Chicago story he strived to tell. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife Randi and his family.

## Remarks at the "Let Freedom Ring" Concert Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. *January 18, 2010*

Thank you. To Dr. DeGioia, thank you so much; to the entire Georgetown family; to my Cabinet, who is working tirelessly each and every day on behalf of the American people; to Members of Congress who are in attendance; to dignitaries and Ambassadors; to tonight's honorees; to Coach. It is wonderful to be here this evening. It is a great privilege. Thank you.

It is a great privilege to be with all of you tonight in this place that we set aside to celebrate America's arts, but on this day we set aside to commemorate an American giant. And it's fitting that we are commemorating the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King with an evening of song. Because songs played, as all of you know, an important part in the movement that he led.

It's been said that during the movement, Dr. King and his associates would go around to different communities in the hopes of organizing and mobilizing them, and they'd know which were serious about the boycott, which had the discipline to actually help pull it off, if folks in those communities were singing free-

dom songs. And when he saw young people singing in the face of hostility, he said that's when he first saw "the real meaning of the movement." He said it was about the "faith in the future." He said that it was "based on hope." So I'm pleased to be here tonight to listen to some beautiful music that I think would have made Dr. King share a little extra faith in our future.

Of course, as we gather here to celebrate Dr. King's life with an evening of the arts, we're also mindful that this is a difficult time for our people and for our world. Across this country, Americans are struggling, and few more than African Americans, those very same inheritors of progress sown by Dr. King and the movement; too many are struggling right now. Around the world, our sons and daughters are fighting two wars. Closer to home, our Haitian neighbors are in desperate need. Across an ocean, in Africa, many people are still living amid poverty and violence and disease—of the kind that Dikembe Mutombo, who's being honored here tonight, is attacking