

partment of Commerce also supplies oceanic information and formulates telecommunications and information policy.

The employees of the Department of Commerce have always reflected the finest traditions of public service. That was surely true of the Department's late Secretary, Malcolm Baldrige, and our present Secretary, C. William Verity, Jr.

In recognition of the contributions of the Department of Commerce and the dedication of its officers and employees, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 251, has designated March 4, 1988, as "Department of Commerce Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 4, 1988, as Department of Commerce Day, and I urge the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5775 of March 7, 1988

Women's History Month, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Women's History Month is a time for us to recognize and salute women's contributions to the American family and to society. Women have been making these contributions since this continent was explored and settled and America won its independence.

Women continue to strengthen the family and enrich our lives with intellectual gifts, creative talents, and an indomitable spirit—in business, government, volunteer activities, religious life, education, health, the military, sports, the arts, and many other areas. Historians will record the accomplishments of women at home as well, chronicling the tremendous contributions countless women have made by helping to raise children who adhere to the moral, ethical, civic, and patriotic principles that have made us, and kept us, a great country. We should be proud and grateful as we celebrate Women's History Month.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 262, has designated the month of March 1988 as "Women's History Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 1988 as Women's History Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5776 of March 16, 1988

Freedom of Information Day, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Freedom of Information Day reminds us of some of our most important principles. "We the People," as the framers of the Constitution called us in the Preamble, govern ourselves through representative government. All of us, of course, have the right to do so. We are best able to do so when every citizen is informed on matters of public importance and can therefore take full part in civic affairs and in the exercise of fundamental rights. We can all be grateful indeed to the Founders who through the Constitution—including the Bill of Rights—provided for freedoms for all Americans that make a well-informed electorate possible.

No one understood these principles more thoroughly than James Madison, our fourth President, whose birthday, March 16, is the occasion for Freedom of Information Day. Long before he became President, he served as chief recorder of the Constitutional Convention; he was perhaps the most influential architect of our charter of liberty and limited government. Throughout life he championed conditions that could foster responsive government, such as a free press and a vigorous flow of information among the public, tempered with the recognition that for legitimate government to function, some matters must remain outside the public domain. He maintained this balance eloquently when he helped draft the Bill of Rights, and especially the First Amendment, while restricting access to most of the documents that form the Constitutional record.

Two centuries later, Madison's ideals continue to strengthen our Nation. We Americans cherish our freedoms and use them; we thrive on the benefits of free exchanges with those who represent us in government and discharge the public trust. This interaction requires forthrightness in government and public access to most government information. Indeed, the responsible flow of such information to the public is entirely compatible with the necessary and proper protection of vital public interests such as national security, privacy, and effective law enforcement.

On the anniversary of President Madison's birth, let us celebrate our history and heritage of freedom of information by remembering and revering the life and example of this wise and generous patriot and lover of liberty.