Proclamation 4411 • **December 31, 1975**

The Bicentennial Year

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In the year 1776, the people of our land dedicated themselves in word and deed to the principles of liberty, equality, individual dignity, and representative government. It was a hectic but heroic beginning of a process which led to the creation of a great Republic symbolizing then, as it does today, the hope of the future.

The year 1776 was a year of revolution, not merely in the rejection of colonial rule, but in the thoughtful, eloquent, and enduring expression of a government to foster and perpetuate the development of a free and independent people.

Now, two hundred years later, we have settled our continent and turned our vision to the limits of the universe. We are the richest nation in the world—rich in our resources, rich in our creativity, rich in our strength, and rich in our people—from our Native Americans to those who have come from every country on earth to share in the hope, the work, and the spirit of our Republic.

The challenges faced by our forebears were not only to their physical capabilities but also to their faith in the future. Their response to these challenges affirmed their deep belief that by their actions they could create a better world for themselves and those that would follow. As we enter America's third century, let us emulate in word and deed, their resolve and vision.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-six as The Bicentennial Year. Let 1976 be a year of reflection, a year of sharing, and foremost, a year of achievement.

I urge all Americans to reflect, from time to time during this Bicentennial Year, on the historic events of our past, on the heroic deeds of those whose legacy we now enjoy, and on the compelling visions of those who helped shape our constitutional government.

I call upon educators, clergy and labor, business and community leaders, as well as those in the communications media, to review our history and publicize the shaping events, people, and ideas of our historic beginnings.

I call upon every man, woman, and child to celebrate the diversity of tradition, culture and heritage that reflects our people and our patrimony. Let each of us resolve to cherish and protect what we have achieved in the United States of America and to build upon it in the years ahead, not by words alone, but by actions which bespeak a continuing commitment to a heritage of individual initiative, creativity, and liberty.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundredth.

GERALD R. FORD

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