

Q. One out, Mike MacFarlane up for the Royals. He doubled and scored his first time up.

We were talking about somewhat of a background in sports as a youngster. Did you take any lessons away from competition that you use now in your life and on the job?

The President. Absolutely. Two, particularly. No matter how good you are at what you're doing, most things work out better when teams do it together. People work better together than they do on their own most of the time. And the second lesson is the obvious one: Never give up. It's not over till it's over.

Q. Were you very frustrated as a sports fan during the baseball strike?

The President. Yes, very. Especially that year. It's something that you can identify with as a pitcher. It was the greatest hitting year in 50 years. I mean, for people like me that grew up memorizing the baseball statistics, not just of all of my heroes in the fifties when I was a boy but going back to the twenties and thirties, I knew the hitting records of all the old players. The idea that we were going to have a—literally a 50-year record in hitting. And I know there are all kind of reasons for it, the expansion teams. I know all that. But to see that just thrown away, it just broke my heart. For all us of nuts, it was a bad deal.

Q. Thanks for being with us, sir. It's been a pleasure.

The President. Thanks.

Q. Come back any time.

The President. Thank you. This, however, is going to be a good year.

Q. Yeah, I imagine, and a busy year.

The President. A good year for baseball.

Q. And also a busy year for you.

The President. But I'll still keep up.

Q. Okay. Good luck. Nice seeing you.

Q. A real pleasure.

The President. Thank you.

Q. We'll be back with more from Camden Yards in a moment. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Give me a golf game some day.

Q. Okay. You got a deal.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:30 p.m. in the HTS broadcast booth at Orioles Park at Camden Yards.

Remarks at a Dinner Honoring President Scalfaro

April 2, 1996

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. President Scalfaro, Mariana Scalfaro, members of the Italian delegation, distinguished guests: Hillary and I are delighted to welcome President Scalfaro to the White House. We were so warmly received by him in both Rome and Naples in 1994.

President Scalfaro's long public career and his lifelong devotion to the people of Italy mark him as one of the great democrats of our era. He has always been a great friend of the United States. And during the tremendous changes that have affected Italy and all Western democracies since the end of the cold war, he has been a clear voice for civility and decency in public life.

Today we had a serious talk about the issues we are working on together, but tonight it is fitting that we celebrate the extraordinary friendship between Italy and the United States and between the people of Italy and the people of the United States. And tonight, Mr. President, on behalf of all the American people, we thank Italy for the greatest of all its gifts to us, its people. For America has been enriched beyond measure by Italian-Americans. In this century we have been treated to supreme grace on our sporting fields by athletes from Joe Dimaggio to Joe Montana. In the fine arts we've been blessed with the exuberance of Italians in music from Toscanini to Sinatra to Jon Bon Jovi. [Laughter] We have seen the path-breaking innovation of Frank Stella in painting, and we have seen Italian after Italian after Italian grace the silver screen, from Frank Capra to this year's best actor, Nicholas Cage.

We have, as everyone knows, benefited enormously from contributions to our public life from the legendary Fiorello LaGuardia to Senator John Pastore, Judge John Sirica, Governor Cuomo, Geraldine Ferraro, the many Italian-American mayors here tonight, the many Italian-Americans now serving in

Congress, and to the Italian-Americans who serve on the court, beginning with the Supreme Court Justice, who has also joined us this evening.

Of course, there are millions more. The Italian-Americans who built our businesses and our farms, who are the backbone of our communities, they deserve so much of the credit for America's strength and greatness.

Many believe the remarkable story of Italians in America began with the immigration at the early part of this century. But in fact, the pattern was set long before that by an Italian named Henry de Tonti, born Enrico Tonti in Gaeta. A renowned soldier, sometime diplomat, fearless adventurer, Tonti was the most trusted deputy of the great French explorer, La Salle. You could say he was La Salle's Leon Panetta. *[Laughter]*

He had an incredible string of accomplishments. He was the first European to build a ship on our Great Lakes. He and La Salle together explored the Mississippi River. He brought settlers and traders to the great State of Illinois. And historians credit him with being the true father of that State.

This remarkable Italian came to my attention because in 1686 he founded a settlement about midway between Illinois and the Gulf of Mexico on the Mississippi River. The town became known as Arkansas Post, the very first settlement in my home State.

La Salle said that Tonti's energy and resolve made him, and I quote, "equal to anything." In their long and rich history, Italian-Americans have proved themselves equal to anything. And so the extraordinary friendship between the United States and Italy has also proved equal to anything.

The extraordinary friendship between the United States and Italy, rooted in our common love of liberty and democracy, our shared energy and resolve, will help us rise to the challenges of the 21st century and will ensure that we will always be the closest of allies, the best of friends.

And so ladies and gentlemen, let us raise a glass to the partnership between our nations, to the Italian-American community, to the President of Italy and his daughter. *Viva l'Italia*, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Proclamation 6877—National Day of Prayer, 1996

April 2, 1996

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

America's heritage is rich with expressions of faith in God. Indeed, the desire for religious freedom was one of the chief reasons that early settlers risked their lives to come to this land. Many of those who braved the long ocean journey were men and women of devout religious beliefs who sought a new home where they might worship without persecution. The authors of our Constitution recognized this history in the language of the first amendment, and through times of uncertainty, sorrow, and pain, the citizens of the United States have called upon the wisdom and mercy of the Almighty for guidance and strength.

A National Day of Prayer, first proclaimed by the Continental Congress in 1775, stems from the understanding that faith is a fundamental part of our Nation's social fabric. In an impassioned speech before the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Benjamin Franklin put the importance of prayer in perspective, proposing that "... prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business" And so it has been to this day in statehouses all over our great land.

Today we cherish the liberties the first immigrants fought so hard to obtain, and we enjoy a degree of freedom and prosperity only dreamed of 200 years ago. And though our citizens come from every nation on Earth and observe an extraordinary variety of religious faith and traditions, prayer remains at the heart of the American spirit. We face many of the same challenges as our forebears—ensuring the survival of freedom and sustaining faith in an often hostile world—and we continue to pray, as they did, for the blessings of a just and benevolent God to guide our Nation's course.