the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2, 2008, as
Italian Independence Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day by celebrating
the contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set
my hand this thirtieth day of May, in the year
of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the
Independence of the United States of Amer-
ica the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

Remarks at the Ford’s Theatre Gala
June 1, 2008

Thank you all. Hal, thanks for the intro-
duction. And I want to thank you all for sup-
porting Ford’s Theatre. Laura and I have
been coming here now for 8 years to the
Ford’s Theatre gala, and this is by far the
best.

We want to thank our choir and our or-
chestra and all the fabulous performers for
taking time out of your busy schedules to
help—to support this really important part
of Washington. And Gatlin is probably say-
ing, of course, I said that for the crowd last
year. [Laughter] But, no, it really was fas-
tastic. And it’s such an uplifting performance
and a reminder of what a great President
Abraham Lincoln was.

I do want to thank Paul Tetreault for being
a really fabulous director of the Ford’s Thea-
tre. And I want to thank the gala cochairs
and all the people who support the Ford’s Thea-
tre. I know you’re excited about the
opening of the renovated Ford’s Theatre in
February 2009. Laura and I are excited too.
Just send the pictures down to Crawford.
[Laughter]

Thanks for a fabulous evening, and God
bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m at the Na-
tional Theatre. In his remarks, he referred to actor
Hal Holbrook; musician Larry Gatlin; and Paul
R. Tetreault, producing director, Ford’s Theatre.
The transcript released by the Office of the Press
Secretary also included the remarks of the First
Lady. The transcript was released by the Office
of the Press Secretary on June 2.

Remarks on Presenting
Posthumously the Congressional
Medal of Honor to Private First Class
Ross A. McGinnis

June 2, 2008

Good morning. Welcome to the White
House. A week ago, on Memorial Day, the
flag of the United States flew in halfstaff in
tribute to those who fell in service to our
country. Today we pay special homage to one
of those heroes: Private First Class Ross
Andrew McGinnis of the United States Army.
Private McGinnis died in a combat zone in
Iraq on December the 4th, 2006, and for his
heroism that day, he now receives the Medal
of Honor.

In a few moments, the Military Aide will
read the citation, and the Medal will be ac-
cepted by Ross’s mom and dad, Romayne
and Tom. It’s a privilege to have with us as
well, Becky and Katie, Ross’s sisters.

I also want to thank the other distin-
guished guests who have joined us: Mr. Vice
President; Secretary Jim Peake of Veterans
Affairs; Secretary Pete Geren of the Army;
Secretary Michael Wynne of the Air Force;
General Jim “Hoss” Cartwright, Vice Chair-
man of the Joint Chiefs. I appreciate other
members of the administration for joining us.

I want to thank Members of the United
States Congress who have joined us today:
Steve Buyer, John Peterson, Louie Gohmert.
Thank you all for coming. I appreciate the
chaplain for the prayer. We welcome friends
and family members of Ross, as well as mem-
bers of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, in-
cluding Charlie Company, that’s with us
today.

We’re also joined by Private McGinnis’s
vehicle crew, the very men who witnessed
his incredible bravery. We welcome Sergeant
First Class Cedric Thomas, Staff Sergeant
Ian Newland, Sergeant Lyle Buehler, and
Specialist Sean Lawson.