

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol.

Remarks on Departure for Augusta, Georgia

February 5, 1997

Death of Ambassador Pamela Harriman

Hillary and I were very sad to learn that our good friend and America's outstanding Ambassador to France, Pamela Harriman, passed away just a few moments ago in Paris.

She was an extraordinary United States Ambassador, representing our country, as well as our Government, to the people of France and to the Government, earning the trust of the leaders and the admiration of people.

She was one of the most unusual and gifted people I ever met, with an extraordinary life, from her years growing up in Great Britain to being a part of what the British went through in World War II as the Prime Minister's daughter-in-law and then her remarkable life in America with Averell Harriman, with all the work she did as a force for political activism for the Democratic Party and with the friends she had in both parties, in business, in labor, and in politics.

Our country will miss her. We are deeply indebted to the work she did in France in maintaining our relationships with one of our oldest and closest allies. She was a source of judgment, an inspiration to me, a source of constant good humor and charm and real friendship, and we will miss her very, very much.

I had a good talk this morning with her son, Winston Churchill, and our prayers are with him and the rest of her family and her legion of friends. She will be brought home to America later this week, and we'll have more announcements about her funeral later.

America has lost a great public servant and another immigrant who became a great American.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks Prior to a Roundtable Discussion on Education in Augusta

February 5, 1997

The President. First of all, I want to thank all of you for agreeing to be part of this. And I'll be very brief because I want to hear from you.

I very much appreciate the fact that Senator Coverdell and Senator Cleland and Congressman Norwood came down with me today, along with Governor and Mrs. Miller. And I wanted to, after the State of the Union last night—which I believe was the most extensive treatment a President has ever given to the question of education in the State of the Union—I wanted to come here because I know a lot about what you've done here and what you're trying to do, and I think it's very important that the American people respond to the challenge that I laid out last night to make American education the best in the world, to understand that it won't be done overnight, and not to be afraid of trying to reach higher standards.

I went over—and I won't belabor it now, but this is a little booklet that I had done that Secretary of Education Riley, who is here with us today, put together for us, incorporating the 10 points that I made in the State of the Union last night. But in virtually every one of these areas, the State of Georgia is trying to move forward, and that's the important thing, whether it's opening the doors of college education with a HOPE scholarship or the pre-kindergarten program or the remarkable thing you're trying to do on the Internet, which will have a huge impact around the country if you do it, because then a lot of other States will get in here and help us. The Vice President and I have been trying to get all the schools hooked up by the year 2000, but we might get there ahead of time if every State would take the kind of action that you're taking here.

Then the thing that I really want to focus on is how we can achieve the objectives that were set out way back in 1989 by the Governors and then President Bush. How can we achieve those national education goals? The only way we can ever do it is if we maintain the right blend of local control of our schools, State leadership, but adherence to