

them voluntarily to sign a pledge promising that they will never take a gun to school, that they will never use a gun to settle a dispute, and that they will use their influence to prevent friends from using guns to settle disputes. Finally, I call upon all Americans to commit themselves anew to helping our Nation's young people avoid violence and grow up to be happy, healthy, and productive adults.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6936 of October 10, 1996

General Pulaski Memorial Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On October 11, we observe the 217th anniversary of the death of a great military hero from American history, General Casimir Pulaski. Every year on this date, Americans and Poles together honor this valiant soldier, who spent his life fighting for freedom on both sides of the Atlantic. General Pulaski's life and career are a vivid reminder of the strong historical bonds between Poland and the United States. These bonds have been forged not only by the millions of Polish Americans who have helped make our country great, but also by our two countries' shared dedication to the principles of liberty and independence.

Pulaski, born into a family of nobles, first fought oppression at his father's side, battling the forces of Prussia and Imperial Russia to preserve the liberty of his Polish homeland. Exiled by the Russians, he was recruited into the American colonies' Continental Army by Benjamin Franklin and brought his bravery and passion for freedom to numerous battles during the Revolutionary War. General Pulaski sacrificed his life for the cause of liberty during the siege of Savannah as he protected American troops.

In our own time, we have seen the Polish people follow the example of General Pulaski and renew their dedication to freedom—rebuilding their homeland in spite of Nazi oppression and, later, communist tyranny. Today, Poland has regained its sovereignty and fashioned a sturdy representative democracy. For Americans and Poles alike, Casimir Pulaski's sacrifice for independence remains a model of courage and commitment that can stir us to reach new heights of democratic justice and liberty.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Friday, October 11, 1996, as General Pulaski Memorial Day. I encourage Americans everywhere to commemorate this occasion with appropriate ceremonies and activities paying tribute to Casimir Pulaski and honoring all those who carry on his mission.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6937 of October 11, 1996

National Character Counts Week, 1996

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

One of our most important goals as a Nation is to make this a better world for all people. Millions around the globe look to America as a champion of justice, and we must always strive to encourage the good and denounce the bad.

This week, as a Nation, we celebrate the fact that “Character Counts.” Whether in civic activities or in our daily lives at work and at home, we all contribute regularly to our American community and our national purpose—our sense of who we are as a people. In the end, the character of our Nation is determined by the character of our citizens.

During this special week, we recognize that character is not a quality we are born with; we must learn it. This means we must ensure that it is taught, clearly and thoughtfully, to our youth. Individual character involves honoring and embracing certain core ethical values: honesty, respect, responsibility, hard work, fairness, caring, civic virtue, and citizenship. Americans must do everything possible to create a society in which these virtues are not only taught but also acted out in daily life so that our young people can witness firsthand their value and learn right from wrong.

My Administration has made this effort a top priority. Our Improving America’s Schools Act promotes initiatives in character education, just as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act recognizes the crucial role of the family in nurturing strong values and encouraging children to embrace academic achievement. Our AmeriCorps national service program offers young people a practical means through which to demonstrate their beliefs in the civic virtues that traditionally have given our Nation much of its strength of character.

The family remains, of course, the core source of our values. Parents must teach their children from the earliest age, the difference between right and wrong. But we all must do our part. Teachers, religious leaders, and other early-childhood role models must display the highest standards of respect for themselves and others; young people must commit themselves to dealing nonviolently with the inevitable problems and difficulties they will encounter; and both public- and private-sector institutions must adopt corporate behavior that encourages individual character development.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 13 through