

Henry Ford helped revolutionize American industry; performers such as Gregory Peck and Helen Hayes have enriched the arts; patriots such as Audie Murphy, our most decorated soldier of World War II, redefined the meaning of courage; and social reformers such as suffragist Leonora Barry and labor organizer Mary Kenney O’Sullivan fought for the rights of others. Generations of Irish Americans have worked alongside their fellow Americans to build a more perfect Union, and America is a stronger Nation because of them.

During his visit to Ireland in 1963, President Kennedy reminded us that “our two nations, divided by distance, have been united by history.” Today, people on both sides of the Atlantic are united not only by history, but also once again by a dream of a better way of life. In the spring of 1998, the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland sought to make that dream a reality at home when they voted overwhelmingly in support of the Good Friday Accord. America remains committed to the Irish people as they continue working to forge a brighter future in their own land. The road ahead is long, but the promise of peace is still within reach, and its rewards are great. This month, as we celebrate Saint Patrick’s Day and our shared heritage with Ireland, we remember as well our common love of liberty, commitment to progress, and quest for lasting peace, and we look toward a future as proud as our past.

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 March 2000 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7280 of March 6, 2000

Save Your Vision Week, 2000

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

Sight is a precious gift that enables us to experience the wonder of the world around us; but few of us think about what we would do if we lost our vision. Unfortunately, millions of Americans must face this challenge because of conditions like cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, or age-related macular degeneration.

Our most powerful tool in the battle against vision loss is early detection. A dilated eye examination can reveal signs of many eye diseases and disorders long before a patient experiences pain or any other noticeable symptom. Through early intervention and treatment, the vision loss accompanying such diseases can be reduced, postponed, or even prevented. Pro-

protective eyewear can also play a vital role in saving vision, particularly for individuals who use chemicals or operate machinery.

There is hope as well for people who suffer from low vision. Affecting 1 in 20 Americans, low vision is an impairment that cannot be corrected by standard glasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery, and interferes with one's ability to participate in everyday activities. While it can occur in people of all ages and backgrounds, low vision primarily affects the growing population of people over 65 years old; other higher risk populations, including Hispanic and African Americans, are more likely to develop low vision at an earlier age.

While vision loss usually cannot be restored, vision rehabilitation techniques and products can make daily life much easier for people with low vision. From improved lighting in stairways and closets to talking clocks and computers to large-print labels on appliances, there are numerous products and services that can help people with low vision maintain their confidence and independence, and improve their overall quality of life.

Every day, physicians and researchers make progress in the search for better treatments—and ultimately a cure—for vision loss. In this new century, emerging technologies will improve upon existing visual devices and techniques, and new medications will ensure more effective treatment of eye diseases and disorders. By investing in research and technology and committing to regular comprehensive eye examinations, we can ensure a brighter, healthier future for ourselves and our children.

To remind Americans of the importance of safeguarding their eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 138), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 5 through March 11, 2000, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate by making eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives and to ensure that dilated eye examinations are included in their regular health maintenance programs. I invite eye care professionals, the media, and all public and private organizations dedicated to preserving eyesight to join in activities that will raise awareness of the measures we can take to protect and sustain our vision.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON