

love of country, and respect for others, virtues that transcend ethnicity, reflect the American spirit, and are nobly exemplified in the Hispanic American community.

The strong ties that Hispanic Americans maintain with their ancestral homeland remind us that the United States must pursue robust relations with its trading partners in Latin America and the Caribbean. The future of our hemisphere is closely tied to these relationships, and improving trade will play a vital role in building important links with our Hispanic neighbors. Maintaining open and free trade creates job opportunities and promotes economic growth, improving the welfare of every citizen in every land it touches. Thus, we will negotiate for freer markets, which will allow us the opportunity to obtain better protections for our hemisphere's environment and will promote political freedom throughout the region.

We have a great opportunity before us. By working together, we can achieve a fully democratic hemisphere, bound together by good will, cultural understanding, and free trade. The many contributions of Hispanic Americans to our Nation will help us reach this important goal by helping connect our country with the Hispanic nations to our south. This month, we celebrate the talents, culture, and spirit of Hispanic Americans, which deeply enrich our country and bless our people.

The Congress, by Public Law 100–402, has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating September 15 through October 15, as “National Hispanic Heritage Month.” I am proud to do so.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, 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 September 15 through October 15, 2001, as National Hispanic Heritage Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7472 of September 28, 2001

**National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week,
2001**

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

For more than a century, our Nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have played a vital role in providing opportunities for excellence in higher education to millions of African American students.

Throughout their history, these institutions of higher learning persevered in the face of many obstacles, offering university degrees to African Americans at a time when most schools refused them admission. Some of our HBCUs began when society was deeply segregated; and some were founded when the Nation still permitted the scourge of slavery. The Civil War eradicated slavery in America; and the United States Supreme Court ended the racial segregation of our schools. Notwithstanding the removal of these blights from the American scene, HBCUs have remained committed to providing African American students with extraordinary educational opportunities. The HBCUs' consistent tradition of offering high-quality, academic programs has enabled their students and graduates to prosper.

The success of our HBCUs should be a source of great pride for all Americans. Almost 300,000 African Americans currently are enrolled in HBCUs, and among their graduates are Members of Congress, hundreds of elected officials, military officers, physicians, teachers, attorneys, judges, ambassadors, and business executives.

Committed to excellence as well as to opportunity, our HBCUs reflect the determination and spirit that are essential to achieving my Administration's goal of educational success at every level. All Americans should have opportunities to pursue the American dream. Historically Black Colleges and Universities play an essential role in providing access to that dream for African Americans, and I salute them for their continuing commitment to serving African American students.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, 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 September 24 through September 30, 2001, as National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week. I call upon the people of the United States, including government officials, educators, and administrators, to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, thereby demonstrating our appreciation of and support for these important educational institutions.

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

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7473 of September 28, 2001

National Public Lands Day, 2001

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

The United States has the world's greatest public lands. The National Park System, established in 1916, protects some of America's most beautiful and essential natural resources. Our parks connect Americans with their land, giving us a common landscape and shared national treasures. With more than 80 million acres, these majestic and diverse parks, home to thousands