

Remarks at the Presentation Ceremony for the Senior Executive Service Presidential Rank Awards

January 9, 1991

Thank you all and welcome. And I am delighted to be here with such a distinguished group of Government officials and, of course, delighted to see Secretary Derwinski and Secretary Mosbacher here. Secretary Yeutter will probably be along, but he was to be here to salute you as well; also the Acting Secretary, Ted Sanders, from the Department of Education. Bill Sessions is here; Bruce Gelb; Dick Truly is supposed to be—I'm getting in trouble here. [Laughter] And I'll stop there. Many senior officials—and of course, the one we all know and for whom I have great respect, Connie Newman of OPM.

But we're here today to congratulate some people whose names may not be as well-known as some that I've mentioned here but whose accomplishments are recognized by everyone who's had the privilege to work alongside of them. And on behalf of our administration, I would like to welcome and congratulate the 69 men and women who have been selected for this year's Presidential Distinguished Rank Award.

As you know, this award is the highest honor given to career members of the Senior Executive Service. And this year's honorees are an impressive bunch, indeed. You come from across the Federal Government, representing virtually every part of the executive branch, from the Department of Defense to the National Transportation Safety Board.

But what all of you have in common is outstanding ability and unsurpassed devotion and dedication to Government service. The dedication, expertise and zeal that you have brought to your work have made you invaluable assets to your Agencies and Departments and to the Federal Government as a whole. You've also achieved something else. You've enhanced the dignity and the stature of public life, of public service. And that is an achievement for which you have every reason to be proud.

It's often thought that a career in public

service is a thankless one. And it's true that the people who put in the long hours and keep the Government moving rarely make the front page or the Sunday talk shows. That last point, that may be a blessing for all of you. [Laughter] But as someone who has devoted a fair amount of my own life to parts of government and public service, I know that good government simply cannot exist without serious, committed, and hard-working individuals willing to devote their career to public service. Your integrity and professionalism have helped make our Federal Government a model for the rest of the world. And that's why I am so pleased that we can take the opportunity to recognize your achievements and honor every one of you for such distinguished service to the Nation.

So, on behalf of your colleagues in the Federal service and on behalf of the American people that you serve so well, let me say thanks for a job well done. And now I believe we can get on with the business at hand, Connie. But I really congratulate you all from the bottom of a very, very grateful heart. Thank you so much.

Note: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Edward J. Derwinski; Secretary of Commerce Robert A. Mosbacher; Secretary of Agriculture Clayton K. Yeutter; Acting Secretary of Education Ted Sanders; William S. Sessions, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Bruce S. Gelb, Director of the U.S. Information Agency; Richard H. Truly, Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and Constance Berry Newman, Director of the Office of Personnel Management.