

June 22 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1993

Q. He's showed some reticence.

*The President.* He's been, I think, very appealing and humble the way he's handled this whole thing. I've been impressed.

*Pat Nixon*

Q. Any thoughts on the death of Pat Nixon?

*The President.* Well, I'm very sad, and I intend to try to speak with President Nixon today. I talked with him a couple of times in the last month, once when he was at the hospital and once when he had just come from the hospital in the last month or so, to ask his advice about various things. You know, they had a very long and very close marriage. And this must be a

very difficult time for him. I think the American people really appreciate the dignity with which she served as First Lady. And I hope and believe that the Nixon family has the thoughts and prayers of all the American people today.

Q. Is Panetta going to tell us anything we don't know? [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Well, that's not so much a condemnation of me as a compliment to you. You know everything already. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The exchange portion of this item could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Statement on the Death of Pat Nixon

June 22, 1993

The Nation is deeply saddened today by the loss of former First Lady Pat Nixon.

Patricia Ryan Nixon was a quiet pioneer whose concern for family and country will leave a lasting mark on history. Mrs. Nixon personified a deep reverence for the cherished American traditions of community service, voluntarism, and personal responsibility to one another.

As First Lady, she was indeed a lady of "firsts." She was the first First Lady to represent the President of the United States on an official overseas visit. She was the first incumbent First Lady to publicly support the equal rights amendment. And she was an early advocate of promoting a woman to the U.S. Supreme Court.

While always dignified and gracious, Mrs. Nixon was also a passionate believer in volunteer service and the importance of Americans helping one another. The appearance of the White House today and its accessibility to visitors at special times each year owe themselves in large

degree to her generous and creative efforts. During her first Thanksgiving as First Lady she invited 225 senior citizens from area nursing homes to the White House for a special meal. She invited hundreds of families to non-denominational Sunday services in the East Room. And she offered the White House as a meeting place for volunteer organizations dedicated to solving community problems.

Mrs. Nixon, a mother of two, was also a loyal and steadfast believer in family. She traveled extensively with her husband across the Nation and abroad and was widely praised for her diplomatic gestures overseas. As she said in 1971, "We've always been a team." We are heartened that former President Nixon and Mrs. Nixon were able to celebrate their 53d wedding anniversary yesterday. Our thoughts are with Mrs. Nixon's family today as we remember her many accomplishments and contributions to the Nation.

## Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's Task Force on National Health Care Reform

June 22, 1993

The United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled today that the Presi-

dent's Task Force on Health Care Reform, chaired by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton,

was not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Court of Appeals decision confirms that the task force operated in full compliance with the law.

In reversing the United States district court on this issue, the court of appeals held that Mrs. Clinton is a "full-time officer or employee of the Government" for purposes of the advisory committee act. The court of appeals decision means that the advisory committee act's requirements for open meetings and production of documents did not apply to the task force.

The President announced the creation of the health care task force, as well as interdepartmental working groups, on January 25, 1993. The task force held over 20 meetings in April and May and has presented health care reform proposals and options to the President. The President is now in the process of reviewing those proposals and options and will be preparing a final proposal for delivery to Congress.

The task force terminated on May 30, 1993. There are no plans to reconvene the task force.

## White House Statement on the Posthumous Award of the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Arthur Ashe

June 22, 1993

The President awarded a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian honor, to tennis great Arthur Ashe at the National Sports Awards ceremony at Constitution Hall Sunday night.

Presenting the medal to Ashe's widow, Jeanne, the President noted that Ashe "battled his way to the top rung of international tennis, and he did it with an inner strength and outward dignity that marked his game every bit as much as that dazzling crosscourt backhand."

## Appointment for the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

June 22, 1993

The President has appointed Olympic gold medalist Florence Griffith Joyner and former NBA star and Congressman Tom McMillen to be the Cochairs of the President's Council on Physical Fitness.

"It is very gratifying that two such distinguished individuals as Florence Griffith Joyner and Tom McMillen have agreed to join my team as Cochairs of the President's Council on Physical Fitness," said the President. "They are he-

res to millions of Americans and deservedly so. I look forward to the advice that they will provide Secretary Shalala and myself on how we can enhance opportunities for all of our people to participate in physical fitness and sports activities."

NOTE: Biographies of the appointees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

## Exchange With Reporters on the Economic Program

June 23, 1993

Q. Mr. President, is there any way the Republicans can put a plan together that meets your criteria without taxes?

*The President.* Well, I don't see how. You know, we've already cut \$250 billion in spending. We've cut Medicare, Medicaid, veterans,