

So I say to you again in closing, I thank you for coming here, but we know we're all preaching to the saved today. Tomorrow when the Congress comes back, there are many other things that will claim their attention. I will ask them to think about many other things. You must say, "Pass the crime bill now."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. at the Department of Justice. In his remarks, he referred to Ernest Williams, veteran police lieutenant, Albany, GA; Earline Williams, longtime volunteer for the Trenton, NJ, police department; and Eddie Cutanda, 15-year-old beneficiary of Boston, MA, community policing programs.

## Remarks at the Thomas Jefferson Dinner *April 11, 1994*

Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention, please? We thought of how we might best honor Mr. Jefferson on this evening. And I did a little research and discovered that in addition to this being the end of our observation of the 250th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth, it is also the 200th anniversary of the birth of Edward Everett, who, like Thomas Jefferson and Warren Christopher, served as Secretary of State and whom you will all remember was supposed to be the person who delivered the real Gettysburg Address, at least according to Garry Wills. [Laughter] And so I thought I could follow Edward Everett's lead and speak for 2 hours tonight. [Laughter] And then I decided I wouldn't do that, that tonight should belong to Thomas Jefferson.

Let me say that any person who is fortunate enough to be Secretary of State or Ambassador to France or Vice President or President feels immediately, in many ways, a great debt to Thomas Jefferson. But in a larger sense, every citizen who ever benefited from the powerful ideas of the Declaration of Independence, the devotion to education embodied in the founding of the University of Virginia, the belief in the first amendment enshrined in the statutes of religious liberty, all of us are in his debt.

Tonight, I ask you to think of only one or two things as we begin this fine evening. Jefferson had the right tensions and balances in his life, and that is why he seems so new to us today. He believed that life had to be driven by fixed principles—life, liberty, the pursuit of

happiness—but that we all had to be willing to be constantly changing. Life belongs to the living.

He believed that we all had a right to a radical amount of freedom, in return for which we had to assume a dramatic amount of responsibility. He always was trying to accomplish very big things, but the richness and texture of his life, and the reason it seems so relevant to us today, is that he took such great joy in all the little things of daily life. And it was those things that enabled him to be not just a philosopher and a politician and a lawyer but also an architect and a scientist, a person who enjoyed the large and the small, who believed that life should be driven by eternal principles in constant change, who would gladly have given his life for freedom and who exercised that freedom so responsibly. Oh, if only we could do as well.

On this 200th anniversary of his beginning, at the end of a wonderful year which included, for me and Hillary and our administration, the fact that we got to start our Inaugural at Monticello, let us raise our glasses in a toast not to the memory of Thomas Jefferson but to the vitality of his spirit and his ideas in our own lives and those of our country men and women for all time to come.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:20 p.m. in the Benjamin Franklin Room at the Department of State. In his remarks, he referred to Garry Wills, author and adjunct professor, Northwestern University.