

walking advertisements for what they're doing, as you can see. [Laughter] Come on up.

[The President and the First Lady presented the award.]

Now, don't you feel better than you did when you got up this morning? [Laughter] Isn't this great?

Henry Ford—a small entrepreneur—once said that the best Americans were those with “an infinite capacity to not know what can't be done.” We honor those kinds of Americans, testaments to the power of enterprise and the strength of the human spirit.

I ask you to leave here committed to work in the years ahead to bring this spirit, and this

opportunity, to every corner of every community in our land and on our globe.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Carol Willoughby, owner, Let the Whole World Know, who introduced the President; former Senator Donald W. Riegle, Jr.; Muhammad Yunus, founder and chief executive, Grameen Bank, Bangladesh; and President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia Courts' Fiscal Year 2000 Budget Request

February 5, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the District of Columbia Code, as amended, I am transmitting the District of Columbia Courts' FY 2000 Budget request.

The District of Columbia Courts have submitted a FY 2000 Budget request for \$131.6 million for its operating expenditures and \$17.4 million for courthouse renovation and improvements. My FY 2000 Budget includes recommended funding levels of \$128.4 million for

operations and \$9.0 million for capital improvements for the District Courts. My transmittal of the District of Columbia Courts' budget request does not represent an endorsement of its contents.

I look forward to working with the Congress throughout the FY 2000 appropriation process.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 5, 1999.

Remarks at a Gala Honoring Hank Aaron in Atlanta, Georgia

February 5, 1999

Thank you very much, Tom. I want to thank Ted and Jane and you, Tom, and Gerry Levin and all the people from CNN and Time Warner for your role in this magnificent evening—all the sponsors, all the previous speakers.

You know, the truth is, I wanted to come down yesterday just to get ready for this. [Laughter] I saw the list of the baseball players who were going to be here. You know, my job is not always the most fun in the world. [Laughter] I was interested in this.

Governor Barnes told a story about Hank Aaron appearing with him. I want to tell you a story that's even more compelling. In 1992, on the weekend before the Presidential election, I was struggling to prevail in Georgia and Governor Miller said, “You have to come one more time. And if you come, I think Hank Aaron will appear with you.” I forgot about how many electoral votes we had—I forgot, you know, I just—so I came. And we went out to this high

school football stadium, which held 25,000 people; it was completely full. Way over half of them came to see him. [Laughter] Three days later, after Hank Aaron blessed me in front of 25,000 people, we carried Georgia by 13,000 votes. [Laughter] I have never forgotten it, and I never will.

Ladies and gentlemen, the essayist Jacques Barzun once wrote, "Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball." Well, probably more than any other sport, baseball revels in statistics. I wish we could have a contest tonight. We'd all know that Ty Cobb has the highest lifetime batting average and Cy Young the most wins; Mark McGwire, closely followed by Sammy Sosa, the most home runs in a single season. Most all of us here know that Henry Aaron has more baseball records than any other single player: most RBIs, most extra base hits, the only player to hit at least 30 home runs in 15 seasons, at least 20 homers in 20 seasons. First, as you heard on the film, to reach 300 hits—3,000 hits and 500 home runs.

He also had an exquisite sense of timing. When he broke what appeared to be the most unbreakable record of all, he had the presence of mind to do it on opening night so all of us could plan to watch. Because Henry Aaron's story is so much the story of baseball and because it is the story of a changing America being manifest in baseball, knowing it is necessary to know the mind and heart of modern America.

All of us honor him tonight not only for the power of his swing but for the power of his spirit; not only for breaking records but for breaking barriers; not only for chasing his dream but even more for giving children, like those we saw tonight, the chance to chase theirs. From Mobile to Milwaukee to Atlanta, through a segregated South in the old Sally League where he was the only member of the team that didn't stay in the same motel, the only one who couldn't get served at the dinner counter, he moved through a changing America. And he changed the mind and heart of America.

When he came here, he had an interesting experience. Many of you have referenced tonight that when Hank Aaron approached Babe Ruth's record there was a dark, deep undercurrent which led him to get lots of hate letters and death threats so serious the FBI had to watch his home and the pall of violence began to hang over the games. But he said that very

little of this mail came from Atlanta. And so as President of this whole country, I'd like to also take my hat off to Atlanta tonight.

When Andy Young was up here talking, and then I saw the reference on the film by Mayor Allen—I remember as a boy growing up, burdened with the awful stain that the crisis in the high school in my State's capital caused us, that every one of us who felt as I did envied Atlanta because it had a mayor and business leaders who said they were determined to be known as the city too busy to hate. And they gave us, all of us, Martin Luther King and John Lewis, and leaders like Andy Young and Maynard Jackson and so many more, too many to mention. It was fitting that a son of the South who braved the storms of segregation would come home to the most important baseball record of all and go indelibly into the mind and heart of America.

I came here tonight as a baseball fan, to remember a golden moment. I came as a friend, to thank a person who was there for me when I needed him in the worst way. I came here as President, to honor a great American—for courage and decency and dignity, for caring about all the kids coming along behind him, for giving them a chance to chase those dreams. America is a land of dreamers. Hank Aaron has made it even more so.

So Hank and Billye, we thank you for the path you blazed, for the voices you raised, for the helping hands you gave. We thank you. God bless you. [Applause] Thank you.

Now, don't sit down. I almost forgot my exit line. [Laughter] Ladies and gentlemen, our honoree, on the 25th anniversary of his 40th birthday and his 715th home run, Henry Aaron.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 p.m. in the Centennial Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to W. Thomas Johnson, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, Cable News Network; Ted Turner, vice chairman, and Gerald M. Levin, chairman and chief executive officer, Time Warner, Inc.; Gov. Roy E. Barnes and former Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia; former Mayors Andrew Young, Ivan Allen Jr., and Maynard Jackson of Atlanta; Mr. Aaron's wife, Billye; and Mr. Turner's wife, actress Jane Fonda. The President also referred to the South Atlantic (Sally) League.