

June 5 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2010

children, James and Nancy, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and all whose lives

were forever changed because John Wooden lived his so well.

## Remarks at a Reception Celebrating Ford's Theatre June 6, 2010

Hello, everybody. It is a pleasure to welcome all of you to the White House. I'm going to be very brief because I know you're all looking forward to heading down the street a little bit later for a wonderful night—and Michelle just mentioned—and the women are wearing heels. [*Laughter*]

That's why I want to take a moment to thank all the performers for taking time out of their busy schedules to share their gifts with us and be part of this wonderful event. I also want to thank the Cabinet officials and Members of Congress who are with us, including Senator Reid. Thank you all for coming and for your support of this wonderful institution.

Tonight is about celebrating the great work at Ford Theatre, what it's done to preserve the legacy of our 16th President and highlight the importance of the arts and education in our own lives and in the life of our Nation.

In many ways, it's impossible to separate the history of America from the history of its music and its spoken word. Soldiers have sung as they marched to war and raised their voices again while laying a brother to rest. Lyrics on a page and voices on a stage have helped connect us across generations and across cultures, backgrounds, and faiths. Our greatest leaders, including Lincoln himself, have drawn inspiration and courage from the arts. And on a personal level, they help each of us express the

joys and hardships of life while bringing us closer to each other.

This is especially true during moments of trial, and we have had a lot of trials over the past year and a half. Right now we've got brothers and sisters in the Gulf Coast who are going through an incredibly difficult time in the face of a disaster unlike any that we've ever seen of late. I want to emphasize again that we're going to do everything we can in the weeks and months and years ahead to make things right. And I know everybody here feels the same way.

But tonight we will celebrate not only music and song and performances, but we're also going to be celebrating the incredible legacy of the Ford's Theatre, celebrating some award recipients who are extraordinarily worthy and have done so much to help not just people in this country but all around the world.

So on behalf of Michelle and our entire family, I want to say how grateful I am that all of you are here. Thank you for support the theatre. We are looking forward to a wonderful evening. Good night.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 7. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks at a Ford's Theatre Gala June 6, 2010

Please, have a seat. Well, Michelle and I are just thrilled to be part of this spectacular evening. To the performers who lent their voices to this celebration, to the honored guests, to everyone who helped make tonight such a success, I want to say thank you.

I also want to thank the staff and supporters of Ford's Theatre for creating a place where

education and the arts can thrive, and where the legacy of our Nation's greatest President will be preserved for generations.

And I especially want to thank the members of one of our Nation's most hallowed fraternities, the men who were recipients of the Medal of Honor. Please give them another round of applause. To each of those men, I want you

to know your heroism is unquestioned. Your stories are inspirational. Your actions above and beyond the call of duty have earned the admiration of a grateful nation. And we are incredibly honored that you could join us here tonight.

It's that kind of heroism that has always defined what this Nation is all about. After all, it was exactly 234 years ago that a group of patriots—farmers and merchants, lawyers, physicians—pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to an improbable experiment called America. They risked everything in the name of a few simple ideas: freedom, equality, and the right to pursue our full measure of happiness.

And even though the odds of success were not great, even though they were opposed by a powerful and far-reaching empire, these Framers had the courage to take the first steps towards what would become the greatest democracy that the world has ever known.

It was a spirit that would echo through time and space, to an Illinois rail-splitter who vowed that a government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the Earth; to a young preacher who believed that, even if he didn't get there with us, we would reach the promised land; and across an ocean, to generations of South Africans who rose up in search of the same inalienable rights that had been put to paper in this country so many years ago.

As a lawyer fighting for the rights of Black South Africans in the age of apartheid, Albie Sachs was thrown in jail without charge and was nearly killed when a bomb took part of his arm

and the sight of one eye. Despite that fact, Albie knew he was part of something bigger than himself, and after returning from exile, he helped shape South Africa's Constitution, and held a spot on its nation's Constitutional Court for 15 years.

And then there's Archbishop Desmond Tutu. As a crusader for freedom, a spiritual leader, and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and a respected statesman, he has become a symbol of kindness and hope far beyond the borders of his native land. Through it all, he has been guided by the belief that, in his words, "My humanity is bound up in yours, and we can only be human together."

There are few people more deserving of the Lincoln Medal, an honor bestowed on those who exemplify the singular focus, dedication, and generosity of spirit of our 16th President. And as we celebrate Independence Day, there are few better examples of how the spirit of our Founding Fathers did more than just create a nation, it inspired people in every corner of the globe yearning to be free.

So I want to congratulate tonight's honorees, and I thank all of you for being part of this extraordinary celebration. We thank all the talent who performed here today. We thank all the supporters of the Ford's Theatre. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 7.

## Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting *June 7, 2010*

Well, I just completed a meeting with the Cabinet that is directly in charge of dealing with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. From the beginning, we activated 15 agencies for what is now the largest national response ever to an environmental disaster. And what we wanted to do was make sure that every agency was coordinating and that there was clarity about how we're going to proceed in the coming months.

Now, we have gotten reports that have been confirmed by our independent scientists that the top-hat mechanism that was put in place is beginning to capture some of the oil. We are still trying to get a better determination as to how much it's capturing, and we are pushing BP very hard to make sure that all the facilities are available so that as the oil is being captured, it's also being separated properly, that there are