AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

lieve that terrorism is simply politics by other means. We have had our hearts ripped out, and now we know better. So we must stand with them against terrorism.

The second thing we have to do is to work with them to achieve the benefits of peace, for the peace has to bring people the opportunity to work with dignity, to educate their children, to clean up their environment, to invest in their future. Hundreds and hundreds of Arab-Americans and Jewish-Americans have the capacity to work with these people in partnership to transform the future of the Middle East. And I say again, let us do our part.

Finally, let me say to all the Members of Congress here present and those who were there this afternoon, I thank you for your presence and your support of this process.

We know that in this era where we have gone from the bipolar world of the cold war to a global village with all kinds of new and different threats to our security, only the United States can stand consistently throughout the world for the cause of freedom and democracy and opportunity. We know that, and we must continue to do that, not simply for the people of the Middle East but for ourselves as well. For when we work for peace in Northern Ireland, in Southern Africa, in Haiti, in Bosnia, when we work to dismantle the threat of nuclear war and fight terrorism, we help ourselves and our children's future.

But I will say again what I said today: If we can make peace in the Middle East, if we can help the people who live there to make their own peace, it will have a special meaning for ourselves and for the world in the 21st century for the simple reason that the world's three great religions who believe that one God created us, watches over us, and ultimately will hold us to account for what we do—we all study through the Koran, through the Torah, through the Holy Bible those lessons—surely if those people can resolve all their differences, we can bring peace to all the world.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:15 p.m. at the Corcoran Gallery. In his remarks, he referred to President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and his wife, Suzanne; Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and his wife, Lea; PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and his wife, Suha; Queen Noor, wife of King Hussein; Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel; and Director General Uri Savir, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom

September 29, 1995

Good morning, and welcome to all of you, especially to the honorees, their family members, their friends, the distinguished Members of Congress.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the highest honor given to civilians in the United States. It has a special history, established 50 years ago by President Truman, to honor noble service in time of war. In 1963, President Kennedy expanded its purpose, making it an honor for distinguished civilian service in peacetime. The 12 Americans we honor today embody the best qualities in our national character. All have committed themselves, both publicly and privately, to expanding the circle of freedom and the opportunities the responsible exercise of freedom brings, at home and around the world.

In this time of change, where people's living patterns and working patterns are undergoing such dramatic transformation, it is necessary and fashionable to focus on new ideas and new visions of the future. We are here today to celebrate people who have always been for change and who have changed America for the better but who have done it based on the enduring values that make this country great: the belief that we have to give all of our citizens the chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given capacities; the conviction that we have to do everything we can to strengthen our families and our communities; the certainty that when the chips are down, we have to do what is good and right, even if it is unpopular in the short run; the understanding that we have the obligation to honor those who came before us by passing better lives and brighter opportunities on to those who come after.

This medal commemorates the remarkable service and indelible spirit of individual Americans. But it also serves as a beacon to all Americans and especially to our children.

For our children, especially now when so many of their lives have been darkened by violence and irresponsible or absent role models, the robbers of innocence, is poverty and drug abuse and gang life, the excesses of our modern commercial media culture and other forces that are undermining the fabric of good lives, all of these things require more and more people to live by the values and measure up to the example of the winners of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. They represent in so many ways the true face of American heroism today.

Let me begin now by introducing each of them in turn.

As a young mother 27 years ago, Peggy Charren took a good look at her children's frequent companion, television. And she did not like what she saw. But unlike others who simply bemoan the problem, she actually did something about it. She took a stand against entrenched and powerful institutions in Government and in business, and she made them listen. She started Action for Children's Television. As a result, she uplifted the quality of what comes into our homes and inspired a whole generation of citizen activists. In 1990, the campaign that began in front of Peggy Charren's television set reached Capitol Hill when Congress passed the Children's Television Act. And for the first time, the television industry was challenged to fulfill its responsibility to educate our children, not just to entertain them. Peggy Charren, mother and now grandmother, leader and reformer in the best American tradition, has put all of our children first, and we thank her for it.

Now, I'm going to change the order here a minute, just a little, and go to Joan Ganz Cooney. While Peggy Charren forced television to change its ways from the outside, Joan Ganz Cooney did the same thing from the inside. In 1968, she launched the Children's Television Workshop, and a whole new landscape of joyful education opened up before our children's eyes. Out of this effort came "Sesame Street," "The Electric Company," "3–2–1 Contact," and other programs that enlighten not only our youngsters but older people as well. With a host of lovable characters like the Cookie Monster and Big Bird, who became as familiar to me at one point in our family life as the people I grew up with—[*laughter*]—these shows have helped teach a generation of children to count and to read and to think. They also teach us more about how we should live together. We all know that Grover and Kermit reinforce rather than undermine the values we work so hard to teach our children, showing kids every day what it means to share, to respect differences, and to recognize that it's not easy being green. [*Laughter*]

Joan Ganz Cooney has proven in living color that the powerful medium of television can be a tool to build reason, not reaction, for growth, not stifling, to help build young lives up rather than tear them down. We all know that TV is here to stay. Most of us, frankly, love it even when we curse it. But we also know that there are clear damaging effects to excessive exposure to destructive patterns of television. As the Vice President and Mrs. Gore have pointed out on so many occasions and as their recent family conference on media and the family demonstrated, the numbing effects of violence or the numbing inability to concentrate that comes from overexposure to mindless, repetitive programming are things that we have to fight against.

Peggy Charren sounded the alarm; Joan Ganz Cooney developed an alternative. And even today as we grapple with this challenge—how to get the best and repress the worst—we know that we would be nowhere near where we are were it not for these two remarkable American heroes. We thank them. Thank you so much.

William T. Coleman, Jr.'s first public act to advance equal opportunity came early in his life. He tried out for his high school swim team, and in response, the school disbanded the team. [*Laughter*] For four decades in the courtroom, the boardroom, the halls of power, Bill Coleman has put his brilliant legal intellect in service to our country. He was the first African-American accepted on the Harvard Law Review, the first to serve as a clerk on the United States Supreme Court, the first to serve in the President's Cabinet—the second to serve in the President's Cabinet, and the first to reach the pinnacle of the corporate bar. As Secretary of Transportation to President Ford, he helped

to open the doors of opportunity to thousands of black entrepreneurs. As a corporate director, he broke the color barrier in the Nation's executive suites. Today, as chairman of the board of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, he continues the fight.

I have known Bill Coleman for a long time. I had the honor and pleasure of being his son's roommate for a year in law school. I think it is fair to say that the first time we saw each other, he never dreamed that I would be here and he would be there. [*Laughter*]

But I can honestly say, if you are looking for an example of constancy, consistency, disciplined devotion to the things that make this country a great place, you have no further to look than William Coleman, Jr. Thank you.

Fifty years ago, John Hope Franklin was on a train in North Carolina, jammed into a compartment reserved for baggage and for African-Americans. When he asked the conductor if he and his fellow passengers could move to a near-empty car occupied by just five white men, he was told it couldn't be done, for the men, the conductor said, were German prisoners of war. John Hope Franklin and those with him were prisoners of something else, American racism.

John Hope Franklin has both lived and chronicled the history of race in America. He is the author of many books, including the classic ''From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African-Americans.'' He provided Thurgood Marshall with critical historical research for the landmark case of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. He has taught throughout America and around the world, and he has influenced countless, countless students of the American scene with his profound scholarship.

''I look history straight in the eye and call it like it is,'' John Hope Franklin has said. This has meant telling the untold stories of northern racism and of slaves successfully striking for better conditions under the sinful confines of slavery. It has meant blazing a trail through the academy, but never confusing his role as an advocate with his role as a scholar. It has meant holding to the conviction that integration is a national necessity if we are to truly live by the values enshrined in the Constitution.

John Hope Franklin, the Son of the South, has always been a moral compass for America, always pointing us in the direction of truth. I think I can speak for Hillary and for the Vice President and Mrs. Gore in saying that one of the most memorable moments of our campaign in 1992 was having John Hope Franklin take a ride with us on our campaign bus. And he sat in the front. [*Laughter*]

In 1944, at the age of 16, Leon Higginbotham arrived at his midwestern college only to be pushed back by the icy hand of racism. There, he and 12 other African-American students were housed in an unheated attic. Fed up with sub-zero nights, Leon Higginbotham went to the university president to protest. ''Higginbotham,'' the president said, ''the law doesn't require us to let colored students in the dorm, and you either accept things as they are or leave the university.'' So Leon Higginbotham set out to change the law. He went to Yale Law School, and after he was rejected by every major Philadelphia law firm because of his race, he turned to public service, working as a community lawyer and a State and Federal official.

When Leon Higginbotham was named to the Federal bench at the age of 36 by President Kennedy, he was the youngest Federal judge to be appointed in three decades. He served with distinction and eventually became judge of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. He also found the time to write and speak with idealism and rigor on the great dilemmas of race and justice.

His retirement has been spent, remarkably, helping to draft the constitution for a democratic South Africa and teaching a fresh generation of students at Harvard. We honor Judge Higginbotham whose life as much as his scholarship has set an example of commitment, enlargement, and service to new minds at home, and now, thank God, to a newly free South Africa an ocean away.

Thank you, Leon Higginbotham.

Judge Frank Johnson could not be here today and so had to send the young gentleman to my left to receive his award for him. He was advised by his doctor not to travel. I admire that doctor. I imagine that he is the first person who ever got Frank

Johnson to do something he did not want to do. [*Laughter*]

For his steadfastness, his constitutional vision, his courage to uphold the value of equal opportunity, even at the expense of his own personal safety, for these things, we honor Frank Johnson with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

During 40 years on the bench, Judge Johnson made it his mission to see to it that justice was done within the framework of law. In the face of unremitting social and political pressure to uphold the traditions of oppression and neglect in his native South, never once did he yield. His landmark decisions in the areas of desegregation, voting rights, and civil liberties transformed our understanding of the Constitution. He fought for the right of Rosa Parks to sit where she wanted on the bus and battled for the right of Martin Luther King and others to march from Selma to Montgomery.

Armed with a gavel and the Constitution, Frank Johnson changed the face of the South. He challenged America to move closer to the ideals upon which it is founded and forever will be an inspiration to all who admire courage and value freedom. We wish you were here with us today, but his spirit is in this place, and we thank him.

For a good long while now, Dr. C. Everett Koop, as Surgeon General of the United States and afterward as America's most well-known private doctor, has told the Nation the truth as he sees it, whether we want to hear it or not. In so doing, he has saved countless lives and left an enduring legacy of the doctor as a healer in the broadest and deepest sense of the word.

Dr. Koop's life has been defined by doing the right thing. He chose children's medicine for the simple reason that his colleagues were ignoring it. He refused to let political considerations leave Americans vulnerable to the epidemics of AIDS and teen pregnancy. He fought for sex education knowing that if he were to be true to the value of protecting our children, we could not let them live in perilous ignorance. He told America that tobacco is addictive, that it kills, and that we have to get cigarettes out of our children's hands.

He helped us to come to grips with the painful shortcomings in America's health care delivery system and what it means for children that over 40 million of our people have no health insurance. And we value his support for the action now being taken to try to protect children's lives from the epidemic of smoking, which embraces 3,000 of them a day and will shorten 1,000 of their lives every day.

Dr. Koop's record is a priceless reminder that disease is immune to ideology and that viruses do not play politics. Over the course of his career, I have seen him attacked from both the left and the right for his strong convictions. But all of us who have watched him, not only in public but as Hillary and I have had the chance to do in private, know that in the very best sense, he stands for life in America and for the potential of all of our children. And for that, the United States should be eternally grateful to C. Everett Koop.

Twenty-five years ago this year, Americans came together for the very first Earth Day. They came together to make it clear that dirty air, poison water, spoiled land were simply unacceptable. They came together to say that preserving our natural heritage for our children is a national value. And they came together, more than anything else, because of one American, Gaylord Nelson. His career as Wisconsin's Governor, United States Senator, and now as counselor of the Wilderness Society has been marked by integrity, civility, and vision. His legacy is inscribed in legislation, including the National Environmental Education Act and the 1964 Wilderness Act,

As the father of Earth Day, he is the grandfather of all that grew out of that event: the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act. He also set a standard for people in public service to care about the environment and to try to do something about it. And I think that the Vice President would want me to say that young people like Al Gore, back in 1970, realized, because of Gaylord Nelson, that if they got into public service, they could do something to preserve our environment for future generations.

In the 1970's, when a river was so polluted it actually caught on fire, Gaylord Nelson

spoke up. He insisted that Americans deserved the safety that comes from knowing the world we live in will not make us sick. He warned that our leaders should never let partisan politics divert us from responsibility to our shared environment. He inspired us to remember that the stewardship of our natural resources is the stewardship of the American dream. He is the worthy heir of the tradition of Theodore Roosevelt, and the Vice President's work and that of all other environmentalists today is the worthy heir of Gaylord Nelson.

Today as much as at any time in modern American history, we need to remember what we share on this precious planet and in this beloved country. And I hope that Gaylord's Nelson shining example will illuminate all the debates in this city for years to come.

Walter Reuther was an American visionary so far ahead of his times that although he died a quarter of a century ago, our nation has yet to catch up to his dreams. A tool and die maker by trade, Walter Reuther built a great union that lifted industrial workers into the middle class. But he always understood that the UAW stood for something greater and nobler than a few more dollars in the paycheck. So he fought for causes on the edge of America's horizon, from racial justice to small cars that would conserve fuel and compete successfully both here and abroad.

He wanted America to create an economy strong and supple enough to convert from peacetime production to defense work and back again without costing workers and their families their livelihoods. As the journalist Murray Kempton said later, ''Walter Reuther was one man who could reminisce about the future.'' The union he led and the future he built stand as a memorial to what is bravest and best in the American spirit. Would that we had more people like him today. We are honored that his daughters are here and that his award will be received by his young grandson. Walter Reuther.

Our homes, our cities, our neighborhoods, our communities, all these represent who we are. With the helping hand of James Rouse, many of these places have come to reflect our best values. In the 1960's, James Rouse saw a problem. Poorly planned suburban neighborhoods did more than take away from the landscape, they had a corrosive effect on our sense of community. So he did something about it; he conceived and built Columbia, Maryland. By updating the colonial village for modern times, he gave a generation of architects and designers a blueprint for reviving community all across our Nation.

A decade later, James Rouse turned to another monumental task, healing the torn-out heart of America's cities. He met the challenge head-on. With Boston's Faneuil Hall, Baltimore Harbor Place, and other developments, he put the town square, squarely back into America's urban life. He proved that we could reclaim and recreate our urban frontiers. Adviser to Presidents, foe of economic and racial segregation, champion of high-quality, affordable housing, James Rouse's life has been defined by faith in the American spirit. He has made our cities and our neighborhoods as beautiful as the lives that pass through them.

He has shown us that we can build communities worthy of the character and optimism of our people. I know that he has had a special impact on our Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Henry Cisneros. And I can tell you that he has had a very special impact on my life. Every time I see James Rouse I think, if every American developer had done what James Rouse has done with his life, we would have lower crime rates, fewer gangs, less drugs; our children would have a better future; our cities would be delightful places to live; we would not walk in fear, we would walk in pride down the streets of our cities, just as we still can in the small towns in America. James Rouse has changed this country. And if more will follow his lead, we can do the entire job we need to do in our cities. Mr. James Rouse.

His name was William C. Velasquez, but everyone knew his as Willie. Willie was and is now a name synonymous with democracy in America. Through the organization he founded, the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, he nearly doubled Hispanic voter registration, and dramatically increased the number of Latino elected officials in this Nation. His appeal to the Hispanic community was simple, passionate, and direct: ''*Su voto es su voz*,'' your vote is your voice.

The movement he began here at home went on to support democracy abroad in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Mexico, and in South Africa. From the farm fields of California, where he organized workers with Cesar Chavez, to the halls of Harvard, where he taught politics, Willie Velasquez was driven by an unwavering belief that every American should have a role in our democracy and a share in the opportunities of our great Nation.

Willie Velasquez died too young. He was just 44 when he passed away in 1988. But in his vibrant life, he restored faith in our ideals and in ourselves. And no person in modern America who has run for public office wherever Hispanic Americans live has failed to feel the hand of Willie Velasquez. He made this a greater country and we're honored that his wife is here with us today.

It is not surprising that Lew Wasserman has devoted his life to helping others to see. For it was his vision that led him from the streets of Cleveland to the top of Hollywood and his perspective that inspired him to give so much back to a nation that had given so much to him. Lew Wasserman helped to build MCA from a small booking agency into a vast multimedia company. His feat awakened the world to the infinite promise of the American entertainment industry.

It also showed a new generation of American business leaders that a company's success can be measured by the depth of its values as well as by the size of its revenues. In honor of MCA's founder, the eye doctor Jules Stein, Lew Wasserman has made an astonishing contribution to treat and to cure blindness. He has devoted himself to strengthening the American community through his role as citizen adviser to almost a half century of Presidents, of both parties, and with his support for countless humanitarian efforts.

Never for a moment has he forgotten his roots, the value of hard work, or the importance of giving people in far, far less fortunate conditions a chance to make something of their lives. The story of Lew Wasserman is the story of the American dream, not—not—just for what he has achieved but far more important for what he has given back. I have met a lot of philanthropists and successful people in my life. I don't know that I ever met anybody that more consistently every day looked for another opportunity to do something for somebody else, to give somebody else the chance to enjoy the success that he had in life.

I thank you, Lew Wasserman.

Let me close, before we hear from the official citation and present the medals, by saying that I think that all the people who are here, were they to speak, would tell you that they did not come here alone. They were guided by parents and teachers, by neighbors and mentors. Many were inspired by other great Americans who themselves at some time in the past received this very medal.

The miracle of American life is that this cycle can be repeated over and over again with each succeeding generation; and that with each succeeding generation, we make freedom a little more real and full to all Americans. I ask all of you to think about that. You couldn't help feeling, when you heard these stories, that this is a very great country. And we do not have to give in to our lesser selves. We do not have to be divided. We do not have to achieve less than we can. If we will follow their examples, we will make sure that in the next century, this country will be all it was meant to be for all of our children.

I'd like to now ask the Military Aide to read the citations as I present the Medals of Freedom.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt

September 29, 1995

President Clinton. I thought it was great. I thought your talk was great, what you said. There were some unusual things said yesterday, even more so in some ways than the last time when they were here. What you said and—we've got a transcript we haven't made up our mind about—[*laughter*].

Good morning, everyone.