

after his. He has traveled the world to represent our country, and set hands clapping from London to Lagos. He still averages—listen to this—275 performances a year. Music is his life, and yes, the blues is B.B. King.

When Sidney Poitier left Cat Island in the Bahamas for Miami at the age of 15, he was stunned at the signs of segregation, signs that read “colored” and “white.” More than any other person, he would remove those signs from the world of film. He broke these barriers by sheer force of his powerful presence on screen. From the start he was a leading man, and his performances have become landmarks in America’s consciousness of itself. When he filmed “Cry, The Beloved Country,” he had to enter South Africa as an indentured servant to the director. But we are all grateful to him and in his service for the way he has graced the screen with films like “To Sir, With Love,” “Guess Who’s Coming To Dinner,” “A Raisin In The Sun,” and many, many others. He has captivated us with his performances and reminded us that excellence comes in all colors.

Thank you for entertaining and educating America with dignity, strength, and grace, Sidney Poitier.

Marvin Neil Simon’s humor distills the essence of his life and our lives, sometimes whether we like it or not. [*Laughter*] He has written the lines behind the laughs of Phil Silvers, Victor Borge, Buddy Hackett, and Jackie Gleason. He collaborated with Sid Caesar on what many people hailed as “the best show ever on television.” He has written a string of magnificent hit plays unprecedented in the history of the American theater.

Audiences found them so funny that at first, that few people noticed the gentle, deep, and sometimes sharp truths behind the comedy. Felix and Oscar became American archetypes. We saw what it was to grow up in “Brighton Beach Memoirs” and to grow older in “The Sunshine Boys.” We saw flaws and foibles and faults, but always, through them all, the indomitability of the human spirit. Neil Simon takes his work seriously, but he challenges us and himself never to take ourselves too seriously.

Thank you for the wit and the wisdom.

Today we meet at the summit of five lives of artistic grace and greatness. Jacques d’Amboise, Marilyn Horne, B.B. King, Sidney Poitier and Neil Simon, we are pleased to honor all of you for your work. But more importantly, we honor you for your spirit and your heart.

Thank you, and congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:03 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

### **Remarks on Signing the Human Rights Proclamation**

*December 5, 1995*

Thank you very much. Thank you for being here. And most important of all, thank you for your commitment to the people of Bosnia, for your care and your courage.

Many of you in this room have worked throughout the war to stop the human rights abuses that horrified the world and to ease the suffering of the people of Bosnia. Now the Balkan leaders have ended the war and have made a commitment to peace, so that now I can say to you, we need your help more than ever to make sure the peace takes hold and endures.

I have just had a remarkable meeting in the Oval Office with a group of Bosnians who just came in and took their seats. They were forced to flee their country, and they have resettled in ours: the Capin family, the Ibisovic family, and Dr. Oljaca. They are all here with me. They bear witness to loved ones lost, homes destroyed, careers shattered, families separated. They can tell us what it’s like to leave the land they love, where they were born and went to school, where they married and raised families, where they should have been able to enjoy the basic human right to build a good future in peace.

These people and so many more like them are the human faces of the war in Bosnia. They are the story behind the unbelievable numbers of a quarter of a million dead, 2 million people displaced, more than half the population of pre-war Bosnia.

Many of you have actually witnessed and documented the war’s atrocities firsthand, the executions, the ethnic cleansing, the rape

of young women and girls as a tool of war, the endless lines of despairing refugees. We cannot bring back the war's victims. So many of them were little children. We cannot erase its horrors. But because the parties have said they will turn from war to peace, we can now prevent further suffering; we can now shine the light of justice in Bosnia; we can now help its people build a future of hope.

All of us have a role to play. This weekend, as you all know, I visited our troops in Germany, those who will soon set off for Bosnia not to make war, but to wage peace. Each side in Bosnia has asked NATO to help secure their peace agreement, to make sure the armies withdraw behind the separation lines and stay there, to maintain the cease-fire so that the war does not start again, to give all the parties the mutual confidence they need so that all will keep their word.

Creating a climate of security is the necessary first step toward rebuilding and reconciliation. That is NATO's mission, and it must be America's mission.

I have to say that the families who just visited with me said repeatedly that they felt that the presence of Americans in Bosnia, the American troops, was absolutely critical to giving the people of Bosnia the confidence they need to believe that they can once again live in peace together as they did before the war.

I am absolutely convinced that our goals are clear; they are limited; and they are achievable in about a year's time. I'm also satisfied that we have taken every possible precaution to minimize the risks to our troops. They will take their orders from the American general who commands NATO; there will be no confusing chain of command. Our troops are very well-trained, and they will be heavily armed. They will have very clear rules of engagement that will allow them to respond immediately and decisively to any threat to their security.

The climate of security NATO creates in Bosnia will allow a separate, broad international relief effort for relief and reconstruction to begin. That's where many of you come in. I cannot overstate the importance of that effort. For peace to endure, the people of Bosnia must receive the tangible benefits of peace. They must have the food, the

medicine, the shelter, the clothing so many have been denied for so long. Roads must be repaired, the schools and hospitals rebuilt, the factories and shops refurbished and reopened. Families must be reunited and refugees returned home. Elections must be held so that those devoted to reconciliation can lead their people to a future together. And those guilty of war crimes must be punished, because no peace will long endure without justice.

Over the next year the civilian relief and reconstruction effort will help to realize the promise of peace and give it a life of its own. It can so change the face of Bosnia that by the time the NATO mission is ready to leave, the people of Bosnia will have a much, much greater stake in peace than in war. That must be all of our goals.

Once the people of Bosnia lived in peace. Many people have forgotten that, but it wasn't so very long ago. It can happen again. It must happen again. And every one of us must do what we can to make sure that the stakes of peace and the faces of children are uppermost in the minds of the people of Bosnia when the NATO mission is completed.

Sunday is International Human Rights Day, the anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations of the universal declaration of human rights in 1948. For nearly 4 years the war in Bosnia did terrible violence to the principles of that declaration. It destroyed hundreds of thousands of lives. It ruined countless futures.

But on this Human Rights Day, we have something to celebrate. The war in Bosnia is over. The peace, however, is just beginning. Together, if we work hard to help it take hold, to help it endure, on the next Human Rights Day, the faces of Bosnia will not be the victims of war but the beneficiaries of peace.

I am now very pleased to sign this proclamation designating December 10th, 1995 as Human Rights Day, and December 10th through 16th as Human Rights Week. Let us make sure that for the next year, it will be a human rights year in Bosnia.

Thank you very much.

[At this point the President signed the proclamation.]

You look at these children, and they make you smile. They should not have to come here to look as good as they look and to be as happy as they are. I'm glad they're here. I'm honored to have such fine people strengthening the fabric of America. They are very welcome here. But the people like them who want to live at home and raise their children to look just like this ought to have the same rights. That's what this piece of paper is all about.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:42 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

**Proclamation 6855—Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, 1995**

*December 5, 1995*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

More than 200 years ago, America's founders adopted the Bill of Rights to ensure the protection of our individual liberties. Enshrined in our Constitution are the fundamental guarantees to freedom of conscience, religion, expression, and association, as well as the rights to due process and a fair trial. Our Nation was formed on the principle that the protection and promotion of these rights are essential to a free and democratic society.

Peoples throughout the world look to the United States for leadership on human rights. In the aftermath of the Holocaust and the devastation of two world wars, our country led the international effort toward adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For the nearly 50 years since December 10, 1948, this document has served as the standard for internationally accepted behavior by nations toward their citizens.

This year, our work to promote peace in areas of conflict and to support human rights, democracy, and the rule of law have continued to make a difference around the globe. Most recently, our efforts to foster a settlement to the terrible conflict in Bosnia resulted in an agreement that contains clear

protections for human rights and humanitarian principles.

In Bosnia, and throughout the world, we have paid special attention to the most vulnerable victims of abuse—women and children. At the Fourth World Conference on Women in September of this year, the First Lady underscored our commitment to defending the rights of women and families, and we have undertaken a range of initiatives to raise awareness of child exploitation, to oppose child labor, and to assist young victims of war.

We live in an era of great advances for freedom and democracy. Yet, sadly, it also remains a time of ongoing suffering and hardship in many countries. As a Nation long committed to promoting individual rights and human dignity, let us continue our efforts to ensure that people in all regions of the globe enjoy the same freedoms and basic human rights that have always made America great.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 10, 1995, as Human Rights Day, December 15, 1995, as Bill of Rights Day, and December 10 through December 16, 1995, as Human Rights Week. I call upon the people of the United States to celebrate these observances with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that demonstrate our national commitment to the Constitution and the promotion of human rights for all people.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 4:35 p.m., December 5, 1995]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 7.