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but how we're going to become one America in the 21st century. We need your help.

In September, I'm going home to Little Rock to observe the 40th anniversary of the integration of Little Rock Central High School. When those nine black children were escorted by armed troops on their first day of school, there were a lot of people who were afraid to stand up for them. But the local NAACP, led by my friend Daisy Bates, stood up for them.

Today, every time we take a stand that advances the cause of equal opportunity and excellence in education, every time we do something that really gives economic empowerment to the dispossessed, every time we further the cause of reconciliation among all our races, we are honoring the spirit of Daisy Bates, we are honoring the legacy of the NAACP. We have to join hands with all of our children to walk into this era, with excellence in education, with real economic opportunity, with an unshakable commitment to one America that leaves no one behind.

I came here to offer you my hand and to thank you for your work and to challenge you for the days ahead.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the David Lawrence Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Myrlie Evers-Williams, chair, and Kweisi Mfume, president, NAACP; Bishop William H. Graves, presiding bishop, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Dale Charles, NAACP Arkansas State conference president; the late Hanley Norment, NAACP Maryland State conference president; the late Betty Shabazz, widow of civil rights activist Malcolm X; the late Aaron Henry, NAACP Mississippi State conference president; and Rosa Parks, civil rights activist.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the National Association of Black Journalists in Chicago, Illinois

July 17, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. I must say, when Arthur was speaking, I thought to myself that he sounded like a President. [*Laughter*] And I said to myself, if I had a voice like that, I could run for a third term, even though the—[*laughter*].

I enjoyed meeting with your board members and JoAnne Lyons Wooten, your executive director, backstage. I met Vanessa Williams, who said, "You know, I'm the president-elect; have you got any advice for me on being president?" True story. I said, "I do. Always act like you know what you're doing." [*Laughter*]

I want to say to you, I'm delighted to be joined here tonight by a distinguished group of people from our White House and from the administration, including the Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman, and the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, and a number of others from the White House. Where is my White House crew? Would you all stand up—everybody here from the administration, Department of Education, Department of Labor.

I don't know whether he is here or not, but I understand Congressman Bobby Rush was here earlier today, and I know there are some other local officials from Chicago who are here. And this is a great place to come. Chicago is such a wonderful city that there was an article this morning in the New York Times bragging on Chicago. And I saw the mayor today; he said, "I know we have finally arrived. If they're bragging on us in New York, we have made it." And I congratulate all the people here on the remarkable improvements they've made in this magnificent city in the last few years.

I'd also like to say a special word of thanks to Reverend Jesse Jackson. I see him here in the audience, and I know he's here. Thank you. I always kind of hate to speak when Jesse is in the audience. [*Laughter*] You know, I mean, every paragraph gets a grade. [*Laughter*] Most of them aren't very good. I can just hear it now—all the wheels turning.

I want to thank Reverend Jackson for agreeing to cochair, along with the Secretary of Transportation, Rodney Slater, an American delegation to an economic conference in Zimbabwe, where he'll be going next week. And I know you all wish him well on that. We are doing our best to have a major initiative reaching out to Africa, recognizing that more and more countries in Africa are becoming functioning, successful democ-

racies; that half a dozen countries in Africa have had growth rates of 7 percent or more last year and will equal that again this year; and that this is an enormous opportunity for us not only to promote better lives for the millions and millions of people who live on that continent but also better opportunities for Americans and better partnerships with Africa in the years ahead.

Well, you heard your president say that I promised to come here in 1992 if I got elected. And I'm trying to keep every promise I made. And I'm sure glad I got a second term so I didn't get embarrassed on this one. [*Laughter*]

In the years since I assumed office, I have worked very hard to create an America of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, with a community of all Americans, a country committed to continuing to lead the world toward greater peace and freedom and prosperity. And that begins with giving every person in this country the chance to live up to his or her God-given abilities. Many of you chose to become journalists because you thought it was the best way to use your God-given talent, your gift with words, your knack for asking tough questions, which some of us find maddening—[*laughter*]—and for getting the answers, your instincts with a camera or a microphone, your ability to connect with people and get them to understand what it is you're trying to get across. And you did it not just to make a living but to make a difference. I thank you for that. And I think that all of us want that opportunity for everyone in this country.

Last month in San Diego I called upon Americans to begin a dialog, a discussion over the next year and perhaps beyond, to deal with what I think is the greatest challenge we'll face in the 21st century, which is whether we really can become one America as we become more diverse, whether as we move into a truly global society, we can be the world's first truly great multiracial, multiethnic, multireligious democracy. I asked the American people to undertake a serious discussion of the lingering problems and the limitless possibilities that attend our diversity. I came here tonight to talk a little more about this initiative, to ask each of you to examine what role you can play in it and the vital contributions as journalists and as African-Americans you might make in leading your news rooms, your communities, and our Nation in the right kind of dialog.

Five years ago, I talked about how we could prepare our people to go into the 21st century, and we've made a lot of strides since then. Our economy is the healthiest in a generation and once again the strongest in the world. Our social problems are finally bending to our efforts. But at this time of great prosperity, we know we still have a lot of great challenges in order to live up to our ideals, in order to live up to what we say America should mean. And it seems to me that at this time when there is more cause for hope than fear, when we are not driven by some emergency or some imminent cataclysm in our society, we really have not only an opportunity but an obligation to address and to better resolve the vexing, perplexing, often painful issues surrounding our racial history and our future.

We really will, whether we're prepared for it or not, become a multiracial democracy in the next century. Today, of our 50 States, only the State of Hawaii has no majority race. But within 3 to 5 years, our largest State, California, where 13 percent of us live, will have no majority race. Five of our school districts already draw students from over 100 different racial and ethnic groups, including the school district in the city of Chicago. But within a matter of a couple of years, over 12 school districts will have students from over 100 different racial and ethnic groups.

When I was a boy, I knew that a lot of people went from my native State in Arkansas to Detroit to make a living because they couldn't make a living on the farm anymore. Many of them were African-Americans, and they joined the white ethnics, many of whom were from Central and Eastern Europe and from Ireland in the Detroit area, working in the car plants, getting the good middle class jobs, being able to educate their children, looking forward to a retirement. Some of them actually are coming back home now and buying land. Nicholas Lehman traced that movement in a great book he wrote not so long ago.

But now Detroit is not just a place of white ethnics and African-Americans. In Wayne

County, there are over 145 different racial and ethnic groups represented today. So the paradigm is shifting. And so, as part of our engagement in this national dialog, we have to both deal with our old, unfinished business, and then imagine what we are going to be like in 30 years and whether we can actually become one America when we're more different. Is there a way not only to respect our diversity but even to celebrate it and still be one America? Is there a way to use this to help us economically and to spread opportunity here? Why are there so many people in the Congress in both parties excited about this Africa initiative? Because we have so many African-Americans. Even people who were never concerned about it before understand this is a great economic opportunity for America. Why do we have a unique opportunity to build a partnership with Brazil and Argentina and Chile and all the countries in Latin America? Because we have people from all those countries here in our country. Why do we have the opportunity to avoid having Asia grow but grow in a more closed and isolated way, running the risk of great new problems 30, 40, 50 years from now? Because we have so many Asian-Americans who are making a home here in America with ties back home to their native lands and cultures. We are blessed if we can make this work.

We also may have a chance to make peace in other parts of the world if we can make peace within our borders with ourselves. But let's not kid ourselves; the differences between people are so deep and so ingrained, it's so easy to scratch the surface and have something bad go wrong. And we see that in countries less privileged than ourselves when things go terribly wrong, whether it's between the Hutus and the Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi; or the Catholics and the Protestants in the home of my ancestors, Ireland; or the Croats, the Serbs, and the Muslims who are, interestingly enough, biologically indistinguishable, in Bosnia; or the continuing travails of the Jews and the Arabs in the Middle East.

If you look through all of human history, societies have very often been defined by their ability to pit themselves as coherent units against those who were different from themselves. Long ago in prehistory, it probably made a lot of sense for people that were in one tribe to look at people in another tribe as enemies, because there was a limited amount of food to eat or opportunities for shelter, because people did not know how to communicate with each other so they had to say, ''People that look like me are my friends; people that don't look like me are my enemies.'' But why, on the verge of the 21st century, are we still seeing people behave like that all over the world? And why here even in America do we find ourselves, all of us at some time, gripped by stereotypes about people who don't look like we do?

So we shouldn't kid ourselves. This is not going to be an easy task. But there is hardly anything more important, because we know we have a great economy; we know we have a strong military; we know we have a unique position in the world today with the fall of communism virtually everywhere and the rise of market economies and the success that we've offered. But we know we also have these lingering inequalities and problems in America. And if we can overcome them and learn to really live together and celebrate, not just tolerate but celebrate our differences and still say, ''In spite of all those differences, the most important thing about me is that I am an American,'' that there is no stopping what we can do and what our children can become.

This week in Washington, John Hope Franklin convened the first meeting of the advisory board I appointed on racial reconciliation. The executive director of that board, Judy Winston, who has been our Acting Under Secretary of Education, is also here with me tonight. I am very proud that she has agreed to do that and very excited about what has happened. The first meeting was full of lively debate and honest disagreement. I like that. We should discover quickly that people who are honestly committed to advancing this dialog will have honest differences and they ought to be aired.

Earlier today, as your president said, at the NAACP convention in Pittsburgh, I reiterated my long-held belief that we will never get to our one America in the 21st century unless we have both equality and excellence in educational opportunity. We have to give

every American access to the world's best schools, best teachers, best education. And that means we have to have high standards, high expectations, and high levels of accountability from all of us who are involved in it.

But I want to say to you, we know our children can learn. For years and years, ever since 1984, when the Nation at Risk—1983—when the Nation At Risk report was issued, people said, well, you can't expect American education to compete favorably with education in other countries because we have a more diverse student body and because we have so many more poor children and so many immigrants and because, because, because, because.

This year, on the International Math and Science Tests given to fourth and eighth graders, for the first time since we began a national effort to improve our schools over a decade ago, our fourth graders—not all of them, but a representative sample, representative of race, region, income—scored way above the international average in math and science, disproving the notion that we cannot achieve international excellence in education even for our poorest children. It is simply not true. This year, again, our eighth graders scored below the international average, emphasizing the dimensions of the challenge, because when the kids who carry all these other burdens to school every day, the burden of poverty, the burden of crime and drugs in their neighborhoods, the burden of unmet medical needs, often the burden of problems at home—when they hit adolescence and when they are pressured and tempted to get involved in other things, it gets to be a lot tougher.

So we haven't done everything we need to do. But the evidence is here now; it is no longer subject to debate that we can't compete. And that's good, because we need to, and because our children, however poor they are, are entitled to just as much educational opportunity as anybody else.

Now, I believe that we made a big mistake in the United States not adopting national standards long before this. And I believe our poorest children and our minority children would be doing even better in school had we adopted national standards a long time ago and held their schools to some measure of accountability. It is not their fault; it is the rest of our faults that we are not doing it.

So when I say by 1999 we ought to test all our fourth graders and all our eighth graders—the fourth graders in reading, the eighth graders in math—it's not because I want the individual kids to get a grade, it's because everybody ought to make that grade. If you have a standard, everyone ought to clear the bar. And if they're not, there is something wrong with the educational system that ought to be fixed. And you can't know it unless you understand what the standard is and hold people to some accountability. But don't let anybody tell you that these kids can't do it. That is just flat wrong. They can do it.

Today I did announce one new initiative that I think is very important, and that is a $350 million multiyear scholarship program modeled on the National Medical Service Corps. You know, a lot of us come from places that have a lot of poor rural areas that are medically underserved. We got doctors into those areas, into the Mississippi Delta, because we said, hey, if you'll go to medical—we'll help you go to medical school, but you've got to go out to a poor underserved area and be a doctor to people who need you. Then later you can go make all the money you want somewhere else. But if we help you go to medical school, will you go out here and help people where they don't have doctors? And the National Health Service Corps has done a world of good.

So what I proposed today, and what we're going to send up to Capitol Hill with the reauthorization of Higher Education Act, is a series of scholarships that will go to people who say, ''I will teach in a poor area for 3 years if you will help me get an education.''

This is the first specific policy to come out in connection with our yearlong racial reconciliation initiative. There will be more policies. But it's not just a matter of public policy. There will also be local actions, private actions which will have to be taken. And we also need the dialog, the discussion. It is about the mind and the heart. And therefore, I say again, your voices and your observations are going to be very valuable.

In the communities where we have a constructive, ongoing dialog, where people not

only talk together but work together across racial lines, there are already stunning stories that stir the heart and give us hope for the future. There is nothing people can't do. Most people are basically good. Their leaders have to give them a framework in which the best can come out and the worst can be repressed. And that's what we have to do here. We've got to learn how to deal with a fundamentally new and different situation as well as deal with a lot of old, unresolved problems in our past that dog us in the present.

As journalists, you have experienced firsthand both the progress and the continuing challenge of race in our country. Some of you in this audience are pioneers in your field, perhaps the first people of color ever to claim a desk, a phone, a typewriter in the news rooms of our big-city papers and stations. Some of you, when you were beginning your careers, knew that it was hard enough to find just one editor who would consider your work, let alone the hundreds of newspaper and broadcasting executives who this week have descended on this job fair that you sponsored to recruit the young people who are here today. They've come here not just because they recognize the value of a diverse and racially representative staff but also because they know from experience that they'll find some of the best talent in American journalism here at this convention.

But our news rooms are like all of our other working environments: They've come a long way; they've still got a ways to go. Just as in other workplaces in America, minority representation on many staffs and mastheads is not what it ought to be. Wide gaps continue to exist in the way whites and minorities perceive their workplaces and in the way they perceive each other. We have to bridge this gap everywhere in America.

But it is especially important in the press because you are the voice and, in some ways, the mirror of America through which we see ourselves and one another. I encourage you to continue to reach out to your colleagues, to listen to each other, to understand where we're all coming from, to lead your organizations in the writing, the editing, the broadcasting fare and the thought-provoking stories about the world we live in and the one we can live in. We have a lot to do to build that one America for the 21st century, but I believe we're up to the challenge, and I know that you are up to the challenge.

Thank you very much.

Arthur Fennel. Thank you very much, Mr. President. As is customary in these forums here at our national convention, at this time, we bring forth our questioners. We are journalists, after all, and you knew this was coming. [*Laughter*] We have selected four journalists who will ask the questions of the day: Eric Thomas, reporter and anchor at KGO–TV in San Francisco; Chinta Strausberg, reporter of the Chicago Defender; Cheryl Smith, a reporter at KKDA-Radio, Grand Prairie, Texas——

The President. I know where that is.

Mr. Fennel. Yes. And Brent Jones, our student representative, a junior at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

To the questioners.

Federal Funding for Mass Transit

Ms. Strausberg. Chinta Strausberg, the Chicago Defender newspaper. Mr. President, do you support an $8 billion superhighway, NAFTA superhighway at a time when Congress has reduced funding for mass transit in Chicago as well? And if that superhighway is built, sir, will black contractors be a major part of it as a downpayment on reparations?

The President. What superhighway? Say it again? Did I—what's this project?

Ms. Strausberg. It's a proposed congressional plan—$8 billion NAFTA superhighway that would connect the United States with Canada and Mexico, and it is being discussed in Congress.

The President. Well, I don't know that I'm familiar enough with the project. I do believe we need to continue to improve our infrastructure. Secretary Slater and I have argued that we should not underfund mass transit and urban transportation. And indeed, in the transportation bill I sent to the Congress, we asked for several hundred million dollars more directly targeted to help people on welfare who are required to go to work, get to where the jobs are if their jobs aren't within walking distance. Only about 10 percent of the people on public assistance own

their own cars. And we believe we need more investment in mass transit in the cities. So—and I don't think it should be an either/or situation.

And in terms of contracting, I support affirmative action programs generally in employment, in education, and in economic development. And I've done everything I could to fix what were the generally recognized shortcomings of some of the programs, to graduate out the firms that may not need it anymore but to continue it where I think it is appropriate. So I continue to support that.

And I think it is a mistake for us not to have initiatives to help create minority-owned businesses. I think we should—as a matter of fact, let me just back up and say, when I was in San Francisco at the mayors conference not very long ago, I said to them that I thought we ought to develop a private-sector, job-related model for high unemployment areas in our cities and—because there was no way the government social services could ever create enough economic opportunity for people. And I thought, if we couldn't do it when the national unemployment rate was the lowest in 23 years, when could we do it?

So I think we need to do more to help people organize and start their own businesses, to help build economic clusters of activity, to help give people models as well as opportunities to work, to see that we can do this. I don't think we're doing nearly enough in this area, and I think we have a new opportunity to do it because the unemployment rate is low in the Nation.

As I've heard Reverend Jackson say for 20 years, the biggest undeveloped market in America are the poor unemployed and underemployed people in our inner cities and our rural areas. Now is the time we should be creating more businesses there, not having fewer businesses. That's what I believe.

Affirmative Action

Mr. Thomas. Mr. President, Eric Thomas with KGO–TV in San Francisco. Mr. President, your scholarship proposal notwithstanding, there is still an assault on affirmative action in this country. In my home State of California, in the wake of Proposition 209 and last year's vote by the University of California Board of Regents, minority applications and enrollment in the UC system this year are down. There will be not one new black student enrolled at the prestigious Bolt Hall School of Law at the University of California this fall. What specific programs, scholarship program notwithstanding, do you propose to stem this tide and make sure that there is diversity in higher education in this country?

The President. First of all, I think we need to make sure that we continue to use Federal law to the maximum extent we can to promote an integrated educational environment so that we have to review, whether in the Education Department, in the Justice Department, whether there are any further actions we can take legally to promote an integrated educational environment in higher education in the States where these actions have been taken.

Secondly, I think we need to look at whether there is some way by indirection to achieve the same result. I know that the legislature in Texas, in an attempt to overcome the impact of the Hopwood decision in Texas, just passed what they call the "ten percent solution," which would be to guarantee admissions to any Texas public institution of higher education to the top 10 percent of the graduating class of any high school in Texas. And because of the way the African-Americans' and Hispanics' living patterns are in Texas, that may solve the problem. Whether that would work in California, I don't know. I haven't studied the way the school districts are organized enough. But I think we have to come up with some new and fairly innovative ways to do that.

Thirdly, I think, on the professional schools, my own view—I'm a little stumped here. We have to really—we're going to have to reexamine what we can do. I don't know why the people who promoted this in California think it's a good thing to have a segregated set of professional schools. It would seem to me that, since these professionals are going to be operating in the most ethnically diverse State in the country, they would want them to be educated in an environment like they're going to operate. I don't understand that.

But there may be some ways to get around it, and we're looking at it and working on it. But I think it's going to be easier to stop it from happening at the undergraduate level than at the professional school level. And we're going to have to really think about whether there is some way around it, whether it would be some sort of economic designation or something else. But we're working on that.

And finally, let me say, I think we need to continue to provide more resources, because one of the real problems we have is, even in the last 5 years, when we've had economic recovery, the college enrollment rates of minorities in America have not gone up in an appropriate way. And in this budget that I'm trying to get passed through Congress, we've got the biggest increase in education funding in 32 years, the biggest increase in Pell grant scholarships in 20 years, another huge increase in work-study funds, and the tax proposals, as we structured them, would, in effect, guarantee 2 years of college to virtually everyone in America and help people with 2 more years of college.

We've got a huge dropout problem in higher education among minorities that I think is having an impact on then what happens in the graduate schools and in the professional schools. I don't think there is a simple answer. And I think, frankly, the way 209 is worded, it's a bigger problem even than the Hopwood case in Texas. But I can tell you we're working on it: First, is there anything the Justice Department or the civil rights office of the Education Department can do? We're examining that. Second, is there a specific solution like the Texas ''ten percent solution'' that would overcome it at least in a specific State. Third, come up with some more funds and some more specific scholarship programs to try to overcome it.

It's a great concern to me, and I think it is moving the country in exactly the wrong direction. And I might say, if you look at the performance of affirmative action students, it doesn't justify the action that was taken. That's another point that ought to be made.

So the one thing that I believe is, I believe that the rather shocking consequences in the professional schools in both Texas and California will have a deterrent impact on other actions like that in other States. And I believe you will see more efforts now to avoid this. I think a lot of people who even voted for 209 have been pretty shocked at what happened, and I don't believe the people of California wanted that to occur. And I think the rhetoric sounded better than the reality to a lot of voters.

So I can tell you that, while I'm very concerned about it, I think if we all work on it, we can reverse it in a matter of a couple of years. And we just have to hope we don't lose too many people who would otherwise have had good opportunities because of it. But it is an urgent matter of concern to me.

Education

Mr. Jones. Brent Jones, University of Florida. Good afternoon, Mr. President.

The President. Good afternoon.

Mr. Jones. My question also has to do with education for more at a high school and middle school level. The dropout rate, crime, and drugs are more prevalent in inner-city schools than in suburban schools, consequently leading to a lower quality education in many inner-city schools. What will your administration do through Government-aided programs or initiatives to combat these problems and ensure everyone in America is receiving a comparable education?

The President. I want to answer your question, but first I'd like to start with a compliment to the African-American community. Last year the high school graduation rate nationally among African-Americans was well above 80 percent and almost at the level—almost equal to the level for white Americans. And it's a little known and appreciated fact. And it's a great tribute, since, as you pointed out, people who are in inner-city schools, particularly where there's a lot of violence, a lot of drugs, a lot of problems, have to struggle harder to stay in, get through, and come out. It's a stunning achievement that the differential in graduation rates is now only about 4 percent. That's a stunning thing. That's very, very good.

Now, I'll tell you what we're trying to do. We're trying to do several things. We're trying, first of all, to help these schools work better with helping the teachers and the principals to operate drug-free and weapon-free

schools, with supporting juvenile justice initiatives like the one in Boston where, I might add, not a single child has been killed by a handgun in nearly 2 years in Boston, Massachusetts. So we've got to create a safe and drug-free environment.

Then we're trying to support more parents groups in establishing their own schools. For example, I met with a number of Hispanic leaders recently—a lot of you are familiar with the group La Raza. They are operating—La Raza is operating 15 charter schools, where the parents have been permitted to work with teachers to establish their own schools within the public school system and set up the rules which govern them and make sure that they're good for the kids.

There are a number—there's no magic bullet here, but what we're trying to do is to take the lessons from every public school that is working in a difficult environment where there's a low dropout rate and a high performance rate, and say, they all have five or six common elements, and then we're trying to provide the funds and the support to people all over America to replicate that.

I want to take my hat off to the people of Chicago here who have had a very difficult situation in their schools, and they have been turning it around and raising student performance quite markedly in the last couple of years with the involvement—aggressive involvement of parents and students. There's a student who sits on the local board governing the schools here now. And I think that's—I guess the last thing I'd say is, I would favor having communities have someone like you on their governing boards because I think if they'd listen more to the young people about what it would take to clean up and fix up the schools, I think we'd be ahead.

Let me just make two other comments. I think there are some places where money will make a difference. I mentioned one in trying to get good teachers there. We're going to have to replace 2 million teachers within the next decade, 2 million, with retirements and more kids coming to school. Another is old school buildings. I was in Philadelphia the other day. The average age of a school building in Philadelphia is 65 years of age. The school buildings in Philadelphia should be drawing Social Security. That's how old they are. [*Laughter*] Now, a lot of those old buildings are very well-built and can last for another 100 years, but they have to be maintained. We have school buildings in Washington where they're open—where there are three stories in the school building, and one whole floor has to be shut down because it's not safe for the kids to be there. So we've got to be careful about that. We need an initiative to help repair the school buildings.

And finally, let me say that I think technology offers young, lower income kids an enormous opportunity. If we can hook up every classroom in America to the Internet by the year 2000, get the computers in there—a lot of you do things with computers that people who are in your line of work couldn't even imagine 5 years ago. When I go on a trip now on Air Force One, I go back and watch the photographers send their pictures over the computer back to the news room. If we can hook up every classroom to the Internet, have adequate computers, adequate educational software, properly trained teachers, and then involve the parents in the use of this to keep up with the schoolwork and all that and get to the point where the personal computer is almost as likely to be in a home—even a below-income person has a telephone—we can keep working in that direction.

I think technology will give young Americans the chance, for the first time in history, whether they come from a poor, a middle class, or a wealthy school district, the first time ever, to all have access to the same information, at the same level of quality, at the same time. That has never happened in the history of the country. So if we do it right and the teachers are trained to help the young people use it, it will revolutionize equality of educational opportunity at the same time it raises excellence in education. So those are basically some of my thoughts about this.

And thank you for asking and for caring about the people that are coming along behind you.

Ms. Smith. Mr. President, Cheryl Smith, KKDA-Radio, Dallas, Texas. Every 4 years, African-Americans cast their votes for a Pres-

idential candidate who will hopefully address some of the issues affecting black Americans. Do you feel African-Americans should be pleased with your efforts thus far? And what can we expect from you in the future, especially in the area of judiciary appointments?

The President. Well, the short answer is, yes. [*Laughter*] I do. I mean, if you look at what's happened to African-American unemployment, African-American homeownership; if you look at the fight that I've waged on affirmative action and what I've tried to do for access to education as well as quality of education; if you look at my record on appointments in the administration, in the judiciary, which far outstrips any of my predecessors of either party; if you look at the larger effort that I've made to try to get Americans to come together and bridge the racial divide and to make people understand that we are each other's best assets, I would say that the answer to your first question is, yes.

Now, what else do we still have to do? The first thing that I think is terribly important is we have to, in addition to what I've talked about—I've already talked about education and the racial initiative, so we'll put those to the side; I've already talked about them—I think we have got to recognize that there is a legacy here which has not been fully overcome and that the United States is consigning itself to substandard performance as a nation, if we continue to allow huge pockets of people to be underemployed or unemployed in our inner-city neighborhoods and in our poor rural areas, who are disproportionately minority. At a time when we have a 5 percent unemployment rate, we ought to be able to seriously address what it would take to put people to work and to give people education and to create business opportunities.

But let me just give you two examples. We've had a Community Reinvestment Act requiring banks to make loans in traditionally underserved areas for 20 years. We decided to enforce it. Seventy percent of all the loans made under the Community Reinvestment Act have been made in the 4½ years since this administration has been in office. In the 20 years, 70 percent of all the loans. That's the good news. The bad news is, not enough money has been loaned.

We set up these community development banks modeled on the South Shore Bank here in Chicago. A lot of you are familiar with it if you've been around here. In our new budget agreement, we have enough funds to more than double that. We set up the empowerment zones and the enterprise communities. In our new budget act, we have enough funds to more than double that. We have a housing strategy that we believe can attract middle class people as well as low income people to have housing together in the inner cities so that we can also attract a business base here. We know a lot more than we used to about what it would take to have a thriving and working private sector in our urban areas. I have not done that yet. And that's what you ought to expect me to be working on.

And then there are a lot of unmet social problems that we need to deal with. It's still—you know, I got my head handed to me, I guess, in the '94 elections because I had this crazy idea that America ought not to be the only country in the world where working families and their children didn't have health care. It seemed to be a heretical idea, but I still believe that, and I'm not sorry I tried. So now we're trying to give our children health coverage. And I think you ought to expect all the children in the African-American community to be able to go to a doctor when they need it. I think you ought to expect us to continue our assault on HIV and AIDS. And until we find the cure, I think you ought to expect us to stay at the task. I think you ought to expect us to continue to make headway on other medical problems which have a disproportionate impact in your community.

These are some of the things that I think that you should expect of us: more opportunity, tackling more of the problems, bringing us together. I have tried to be faithful to the support I have received, not only because it was the support I have received but because I believed it was the right thing to do. And I believe that when our 8 years is over, you'll be able to look back on it and see not only a lot of efforts made but a lot of results obtained.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. in the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Arthur Fennel, president, JoAnne Lyons Wooten, executive director, and Vanessa Williams, vice president/print, National Association of Black Journalists; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; and civil rights leader Jesse Jackson.

Remarks at the Funeral Service for Hilary Jones in Jasper, Arkansas

July 18, 1997

Pastor, to the members of Hilary's family, and to the legion of friends who are here today, let me say, first of all, that I feel profoundly honored to have been asked by the family to speak for a moment or two about my friend. There's not a person here today who couldn't stand up here and entertain us and relieve our grief for a few moments with Hilary Jones stories. So as we come here to mourn the death of our friend, let us remember, as the pastor said, that death is a part of life for all of us. And let us take a few moments to celebrate his life, for he would have wanted that very much.

I first met Hilary Jones over 23 years ago now, when I first came to Newton County. And I can't exactly describe it, but after the first time I met him, I knew that my life would never quite be the same. He wasn't like anybody I had ever met before, and I have seen a little bit more of the world since then, and I never have met anybody like him since. [*Laughter*]

He introduced me to the beauty, to the history, and the fantastic characters of the Arkansas Ozarks. Some of them are in this church building today. He took me into his home and his heart. I learned a lot about politics and people. I learned that he was quite a disarming human being. The language he spoke was pure Arkansas hillbilly, and I think he enjoyed it if you underestimated his intelligence, which could be a fatal error, for he was a very smart man.

He was deeply interested in people who were different from him and deeply compassionate with people who were in trouble if he thought they were basically good-hearted. And he was so passionate about what he cared about. He cared about his family, and he was so passionate, he had a very big one. [*Laughter*] And he was very proud of them.

He was so passionate about politics that, when I first him, he could actually look at the vote totals in Newton County, precinct by precinct, and tell you whether a family had told him the truth or not about how they were going to vote. [*Laughter*]

He was so passionate about being a Democrat that 22 years ago, when I spoke at the Jasper High School commencement and commended to the seniors the example of Abraham Lincoln as a person who could overcome adversity time and again and keep going in his life, Hilary and a few others—some of whom are in this church today—took me outside and said, "Bill, that is a wonderful speech. And you can give that speech in Little Rock any day. Don't you ever come up here and brag on that Republican President again." [*Laughter*]

I must say that years later I was amused when I finally talked him into coming to visit me at the White House. I persuaded him to spend the night in the Lincoln Bedroom—[*laughter*]—something I failed to do with Bo Forney, sitting right there. [*Laughter*] And afterward, as we kidded him about spending the night at the Lincoln Bedroom, he said, "I did that for the President, but I slept on the side of the bed that was under Andrew Jackson's picture." [*Laughter*]

He was passionate about fish and wildlife. He loved his service on the Game and Fish Commission, and I was honored to appoint him. I think Steve Wilson, whom I see here today, will tell you that they never had a commissioner like him either. He was absolutely fool enough to believe we could bring the elk back to Arkansas. No one else in the State believed it, but he kept doing it. And sure enough, somehow we had the elk come back to Arkansas.

If you were his friend, he was your friend—through thick and thin, in lightness and dark, no matter what happened. If you were his political friend, he was your friend whether you won or you lost. But he believed that people were basically good. And he believed that the purpose of politics was to help ordinary people live their lives better.

And I learned a lot from him about going to the sale barns and the country stores and