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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

remote places where most people never went, just to listen to people's hopes and dreams and hurts and fears. And I learned what ferocious power can beat in the heart of any ordinary citizen who believes that he or she can make a difference. Hilary Jones always believed he could make a difference. And he always believed he had an obligation to try, whether it was in the lives of his children or his grandchildren or his friends.

I always felt that somehow, some way, he had adopted me into his family. And I believe he would want me here today if I had never been reelected Governor and had gone out in life as one of history's losers, because Hilary didn't judge people by whether they were on top or on the bottom, he judged them by what they thought was in their hearts.

I loved this man. He was my friend, my brother, my surrogate uncle or father. But what he was to me he was to literally hundreds of other people. Look around this church today. God gave Hilary Jones a great gift, a unique blend of heart and mind and energy and passion that very few people in this life in any position ever have. And he used it well.

We will miss him. We may not ever see anybody like him again. But I ask his family to remember as their hearts are broken that this, too, is part of God's plan and how blessed they were that he was their father and our friend.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10 a.m. in the Jasper First Baptist Church. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Manual Macks, pastor, Jasper First Baptist Church; Bo Forney, longtime friend of the President and Mr. Jones; and Steve N. Wilson, director, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 12

In the morning, the President addressed the U.S. Embassy staff in the Margrethe Salon at the Hotel Store Kro in Copenhagen, Denmark. In the afternoon, he participated in a wreath laying ceremony at Mindenluden Memorial Cemetery. In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

July 14

The President announced the appointment of Judith A. Winston as Executive Director of One America in the 21st Century: The President's Initiative on Race.

July 16

The President announced his intention to appoint Thomas Leonard, Kevin O'Keefe, Eli J. Segal, Kathryn G. Thompson, and Jose Villarreal as members to the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) Board of Directors.

July 17

In the morning, the President traveled to Pittsburgh, PA, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Chicago, IL. In the evening, he traveled to Harrison, AR.

The President announced his intention to nominate Harold C. Pachios as a member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Maurice R. Greenberg and Susan Hammer, and appoint William J. Hudson and Terry K. Watanabe to the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Lee Williams to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

July 18

In the morning, the President traveled to Jasper, AR, and in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President met with President Eduard Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia in the Oval Office.

The President announced his nomination of Felix G. Rohatyn as U.S. Ambassador to France.