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our administration in this great national conversation we're having about our racial and ethnic diversity. It's going to be quite a challenge, you know, sometime in the next century the United States will have no single majority ethnic group—even Americans of European origin. I know you hate being lumped with we Irish and the Germans and all the rest of us—[*laughter*]—but even the Europeans won't be a majority in America anymore.

And somehow, we have to find a way to celebrate our differences, just as you come here to celebrate your heritage and still be bound together by fundamental values that are more important, into one America. If we do that—and I believe we will—it will be in no small measure because of the accomplishments, the achievements, the attitudes of people like you, people who are proud to have succeeded and want other people to have the same chance.

Sometimes, I think late at night about if I could say in one sentence what it is that I want, I'd like for every single child in this country to have that chance at the brass ring. And so many of you have enjoyed it, so many of you have been helped by your parents to do so. I hope that when we're done here—it won't be much longer, just a little over 3 years—virtually every child will be able to feel that he or she has that chance. If so, we will have fulfilled the mission that so many of you have been on.

So, once again, my congratulations to all the honorees. I thank you for giving Leon a chance to come back to Washington. He tries to stay away from here as much as he can now. [*Laughter*] I thank you for bringing all these wonderful Italian-American artists here so that I can see people I usually only watch on the screen or listen to with my CD's. But most of all, I thank you for all you've done to make America a much, much greater country than it would have been without you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:35 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Frank J. Guarini, vice chairman, Frank D. Stella, chairman, National Italian-American Foundation; Jack Valenti, president, Motion Picture Association of America; actors Danny DeVito and Al Pacino; and former Chief of Staff to the President Leon Panetta and his wife, Sylvia.

Remarks Honoring the 1997 NCAA Men's and Women's National Basketball Champions

October 27, 1997

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. You see my voice is a little weak. You'll be happy it will be a shorter speech.

But we're celebrating two other athletic events here today. I think I would be remiss if I did not congratulate the Florida Marlins and the Cleveland Indians on a magnificent World Series, and the Vice President on finishing his first marathon yesterday. [*Laughter*]

I'd also like to welcome the Lady Vols back. It's tough to win those back-to-back championships. Al Gore and I know something about that. [*Laughter*] And there are many benefits about having Pat Summit come back here year-in and year-out. I'm getting to watch her son grow up—[*laughter*]—and I enjoy it very much.

I want to say a special word of appreciation, since the Vice President got to talk about his native team—you know, a lot of you know that I am a fanatic basketball fan, and I got hurt last year right before the tournament. The only good thing about my agonizing injury incurred under humiliating circumstances—I fell 6 inches and tore my leg off—[*laughter*]—was that I got to see every game in the tournament that was on any channel on television. And I must say I was astonished by the performance of the Arizona Wildcats. They were young, they were energetic, they never quit. And I think that it will be a long time before we see another team so young, so full of energy, so full of depth, beat three number one seeds, which had never happened before, and produce the kind of record they did in that tournament.

I want to congratulate Miles Simon, who was named the MVP of the tournament; Michael Dickerson, a First Team All Pac 10; Michael Bibby, who was the All Tournament Team and the Pac 10 Freshman of the Year. He didn't look like a freshman on the court,

I must say. And Coach Olson, I want to congratulate you on taking a team to the tournament I think every year since 1985, which is a truly astonishing record.

I think that I would be remiss if I did not also say that there are many of us in the United States who love basketball, who also want basketball to be a good experience for the basketball players, and who want them to become fine citizens, fine young men and fine young women. We talked about Pat Summit's students all getting their degrees. I think everybody who knows anything about Lute Olson admires him as a person, as well as a basketball coach, and admires the qualities that he represents and tries to impart to his players. So, in spite of all the championships, I think that's the most important thing of all, and we thank you for that, as well.

Now I'd like to get on with having the two coaches, in clear and strong voice, and their players presented to all of you. So I'd like to invite Coach Summit and Coach Olson to come up and share a few words.

NOTE: The President spoke at noon in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Pat Summit, coach, University of Tennessee Lady Volunteers; and Lute Olson, coach, and team members Miles Simon, Michael Dickerson, and Michael Bibby, University of Arizona Wildcats.

Remarks to the Democratic Leadership Council

October 27, 1997

Thank you very much. If you listen closely, you will hear that I am in my annual voiceless mode. [*Laughter*] I think I can get through this talk. We celebrated Hillary's 50th birthday over the weekend. A lot of our friends came in, and the weather changed. And about once a year when this happens, this happens. [*Laughter*] I'll do my best.

Let me thank Al From and Senator Lieberman. My good friend Sandy Robertson, thank you for what you said. To all the Members of the Senate and House who are here and who have been so good to the DLC over the years; to all my predecessors as chairman of the DLC, including several Members of the Congress and former Congressman McCurdy.

It's hard for me to believe that it's been 7 years since Al From, in his sort of gentle, demure way—[*laughter*]—persuaded me to become chairman of the DLC. It's hard to believe it's been 6 years since I announced my candidacy for President, nearly 5 years, since we began to work together to prepare America for the 21st century. But it has been.

And for nearly 5 years, we have worked together on a simple but profound vision to say that the American dream should be alive for everybody who is responsible enough to work for it, that our country must continue to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity, that we have to find a way to bring our people together across all the lines that divide us into one America.

The success of the last 5 years owes much to the ideas and the work of the DLC and its grassroots leaders, going back to the mid-1980's, when a small handful of us organized it. Even then, the DLC was working to go beyond the stale debate and the false choices of Washington, DC, with modern policies, good ideas, mainstream values. Today, from time to time, I still lament the fact that we have not rid the rhetoric of our Nation's Capital of a lot of the old debate and a lot of the old false choices. But believe you me, out there in the real world where Americans live, we're a long way from where we were just 5 years ago, and you should be very proud of it.

First, we had to define what the role of Government should be in preparing our country for the future. We had to reject the idea of those who say we should do nothing with Government and reject those who say we should try to do everything. Instead, we gave the American people a Government that is very much smaller, more focused, but more committed to giving people the tools and the conditions they need to make the most of their own lives.

Then we had to go area by area to abandon those old false choices, the sterile debate about whether you would take the liberal or the conservative position, that only succeeded in dividing America and holding us back.