

just have to keep after it. We should be gratified and happy in this holiday season that America is safer, but we should be resolved to make it the safest big country in the world.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady, who was wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan, chair, Hand Gun Control, Inc., and his wife, Sarah; and former Secretaries of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin and Lloyd Bentsen.

Statement on the Death of Robert G. Damus

November 30, 2000

I am deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Bob Damus, General Counsel for the Office of Management and Budget. Bob made invaluable contributions to the common good in his 20 years of Government service, embodying the very finest qualities of our Nation's career civil servants.

Bob's fine intellect and the breadth of his knowledge were respected throughout Government and beyond. This administration and the American people benefited greatly from his keen judgment and wise counsel, and he served my two predecessors with the same loyalty, dedication, and commitment to excellence.

With a distinguished academic background, Bob chose Government service out of a deep desire to contribute to the public good. In recognition of his outstanding service, he twice received the Presidential Rank Award as a Distinguished Executive, the highest honor for career civil servants in the Senior Executive Service.

Bob's probity and integrity were unsurpassed. He was a supremely decent man, and his memory will serve as an inspiration to us all.

Proclamation 7382—World AIDS Day, 2000

November 30, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

As the global community observes the 13th annual World AIDS Day, we remember with sorrow our friends, loved ones, neighbors, and colleagues who have lost their lives to AIDS, and we reaffirm our shared commitment to carry on the fight until our battle against this devastating disease is won.

We can be proud of our efforts over the past 8 years. My Administration has worked aggressively to increase funding for AIDS research; to find better treatments, a vaccine, and a cure; to enhance HIV prevention efforts; and to help ensure that those living with HIV and AIDS receive the health care they need. Federal funding for such activities has doubled on the national front and tripled internationally, reaching nearly \$11 billion last year alone, and I recently named a Presidential Envoy for AIDS Cooperation.

Building on this commitment, last month I signed into law the Ryan White CARE Act Amendments of 2000, improving the Federal Government's most comprehensive program for providing services to Americans living with HIV/AIDS. Our investment is producing results and, thanks to new treatments, many people with AIDS are living longer and experiencing a better quality of life than ever before.

But our battle is far from over. Last year, 3 million people died from HIV/AIDS—the highest global total reported since the pandemic began. Current estimates indicate that more than 50 million people have been infected with HIV since the virus was first identified more than 15 years ago, and some 21.8 million people have died from HIV/AIDS. The number of children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS is estimated to be more than 13.2 million.