

them learn the customs and values that unite all Americans, including liberty and civic responsibility, equality under God, tolerance for others, and the English language. In the coming months, I look forward to working with Congress on comprehensive immigration reform that will enforce our laws, secure our border, and uphold our deepest values.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:03 a.m. on December 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception

December 4, 2005

Please be seated. Thanks for coming, and welcome to the White House. The annual reception for the Kennedy Center Honors is always a memorable event, and Laura and I are happy you all could join us. We extend a special welcome to this year's honorees and to their families and friends.

The Kennedy Center Honors are presented for exceptional accomplishment in the performing arts. Once again, the Center has selected five extraordinary Americans for this high distinction. Each of these honorees, in a lifetime of achievement, has set a standard of excellence that is admired throughout the world. All of them have earned a unique place in the cultural life of the United States and a special respect among their fellow Americans.

The first Kennedy Center Honors were presented in 1978 to a group that included the eminent choreographer, George Balanchine. And on that stage that evening, dancing in tribute was the great Suzanne Farrell. Together, Balanchine and Farrell gave the world of ballet one of the rarest and most successful collaborations in history. He created masterpieces just for her, and no one epitomizes the style and grace of Balanchine choreography as much as Suzanne Farrell.

She first came to New York from Cincinnati. And only after a year at the American School of Ballet, she made her professional debut in 1961. Before long, word began to circulate there was something new—someone new, someone very special at the New York City Ballet. When she took the stage as Dulcinea in *Don Quixote*, she became a sensation. In that performance, a reviewer said, Suzanne Farrell was “absolutely flawless, technically impeccable, light as a bubble, perfect in line and style.”

In hundreds of performances over a 28-year period, Suzanne Farrell was never known to depart from that standard. This was a ballerina who had it all, grace, strength, and the ability to act, turn, and jump with perfection. During classes, Balanchine often coached dancers with three words: “Do like Suzanne.” [*Laughter*]

In performances as diverse as “Agon,” “Theme and Variations,” “Scotch Symphony,” and “Clarinade,” she had a mesmerizing effect on her audiences. Watching her was said to be “one of the sublime theatrical experiences of an era.” One admirer said that Suzanne was a dancer who “made audiences sweat.” This remarkable lady is now guiding a new generation of dancers as the leader of the Suzanne Farrell Ballet.

In the words of one of her dancers, Suzanne “inspires you. You want to give her everything you have because she meets you each step of the way.” She does this every day with the spirit and the patience and the kindness of a truly lovely woman. She is widely appreciated as the greatest ballerina this country has produced, and the United States of America is proud to honor Suzanne Farrell.

Julie Harris discovered very early in life she loved to act, and the world discovered that she was better at the craft than almost anyone else. Fifty years ago, when her beautiful face was on the cover of *Time Magazine*, the story inside offered the confident and accurate prediction that she would be a star “for the rest of her life.”

Julie Harris has excelled in every forum she has attempted, from historical drama to tragedy, to musical comedy, to Shakespeare. She is known for one of the most hauntingly loving—lovely voices in theater, and she

stands nearly alone in the depth and range of her talent. She became a star on Broadway at age 24, playing a 12-year-old girl in “The Member of the Wedding,” and was nominated for an Oscar when she played the same role for film. Whatever age or personality or struggle the role calls for, Julie Harris can fill it, with meaning and feeling and complete believability. She has thrilled audiences as St. Joan of Arc and Mary Todd Lincoln and Florence Nightingale, Queen Victoria, and Emily Dickinson.

Her greatest admirers, perhaps, are her fellow actors. Boris Karloff said Julie “is always in complete control of herself, just as a fine pianist is always the master of his music.” The screen pioneer, Ethel Barrymore, put it even more simply. She said, “The girl can do anything.” [Laughter]

The most respected actress in American theatre has received five Tony Awards—more than any other performer—plus a Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre. She has also won a Grammy and three Emmys and has appeared in many television plays and motion pictures. In her career, Julie Harris has starred with Robert Redford, George C. Scott, Lauren Bacall, Shelley Winters, and Sir Lawrence Olivier. She’s the girl who appeared opposite James Dean in the “East of Eden.”

Julie Harris has been called Broadway’s “tiniest tower of strength,” a woman of deep intelligence and discipline. She is known, as well, for her gentle spirit. As one stage manager put it, Julie Harris is “an angel—everyone loves her.” It’s hard to imagine the American stage without the face, the voice, and the limitless talent of Julie Harris. She has found happiness in her life’s work, and we thank her for sharing that happiness with the whole world.

There was a time when Robert Redford thought his life’s work might be as a baseball player. [Laughter] Well, he went to college on an athletic scholarship, but his interests soon turned to the arts and eventually to acting. Years later, when he was hitting home runs as the character, Roy Hobbs, a reviewer of the film said this: “Robert Redford reminds those who need reminding that he is one of the perfect male film stars, extraordinarily handsome, effortlessly fascinating,

and enormously talented. His role here gives us ample chance to see another kind of ‘natural’ in his element.”

For more than four decades, Robert Redford has been one of America’s most watchable and credible actors. From early appearances and televised plays and on Broadway, he moved easily into the film and into film history. We all remember his finest dramatic roles, with Barbra Streisand in “The Way We Were,” with his notebook in “All The President’s Men,” on the election trail in “The Candidate,” and in the Utah wilderness as “Jeremiah Johnson.” Paired with Paul Newman in two legendary films, Robert Redford also proved to be an actor with flawless comic timing, and he earned an Oscar nomination for his role in “The Sting.”

In his capacity to grow and to excel as an artist, Robert Redford has shown very few limitations. In 1980, he decided to try working behind the camera. The result was “Ordinary People,” and it won him the Oscar for best actor [director]*. Soon afterward, he founded a workshop for independent American filmmakers at Sundance, which has done so much to encourage and teach emerging filmmakers.

Robert Redford is a public-spirited man, a Westerner who cares about the issues. He knows what he believes, and he’s not afraid to tell people. [Laughter] Over the years, he’s had a strong influence on public policy. [Laughter] And it doesn’t hurt—[laughter]—and it doesn’t hurt that he’s quite a charismatic guy. [Laughter] One time, he found himself speaking in front of a group of people in a profession he didn’t think too much of. So he stepped to the mike and gave them a piece of his mind. When he finished, one of the people that he had just scolded rushed right up and said, “Did you really make the jump off the cliff in ‘Butch Cassidy?’” [Laughter]

When Robert Redford speaks, you hear more than an actor or director. You hear the voice of an active, passionate, committed citizen. His family can be proud that this man they love is one of the most familiar faces in the world, one of the biggest names in

* White House correction.

movies, and an alltime favorite of his fellow Americans. Congratulations.

Tina Turner's life began in Tennessee in a town called Nutbush. [Laughter] I've never been there, but—[laughter]—I've passed a few sign wavers who apparently want me to know about it. [Laughter] As a girl, she worked in the cotton fields and sang in the church choir. In her amazing journey, Tina Turner went on to sell tens of millions of records and earned a place in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

She's written music classics and a best-selling book. And a movie about her life was nominated for two Oscars. As a performer, Tina Turner is known to "transcend age, gender, race, and social status." On one of her tour stops in Texas, a concert reviewer described an audience that included "college students, and biker chicks wearing jeans and leather vests, ten-gallon-hat-wearing cowboys, and finger-snapping grandpas." [Laughter] Everyone was there for the same reason—to see one of the greatest live entertainers ever to come out of the United States.

Tina Turner, it has been said, "commands that stage with the sheer force of her full-throttle voice and magnetic presence." People stand in wonder at the natural skill, the energy and sensuality, and the most famous legs in show business. [Laughter] Behave yourself. [Laughter]

Her voice has been described as combining "Otis Redding's husky break and James Brown's growl with some of Aretha Franklin's soaring cadences." She moves better and faster than dancers less than half her age; she does it all in four-inch high heels. [Laughter]

She first became a star in the "Ike and Tina Turner Revue." She made music history with a rendition of "Proud Mary" that no artist could ever hope to match. It won the Grammy and still wins her fans.

In the 1970s, the brave lady had to start over again, on her own. It was a hard time. All she owned in the world was her stage name and her God-given talent. These, combined with her persevering character, led to a phenomenal solo career. A single album, "Private Dancer," sold more than 12 million copies, and the year it was released won her three Grammys. She has produced a string

of hits that are familiar across the world, including "What's Love Got To Do With It?" and "Simply The Best." She has played before some of the largest concert crowds ever assembled, and each time, every eye is trained on the stage, not wanting to miss a single note or a single move by this electrifying artist.

There's nobody quite like Tina Turner, and in the arc of her life, there is so much to admire—the incredible musical gifts, the inner strength, and the moral courage. She's a woman of achievement and elegance and class. And it's an honor to welcome you to the White House.

Tony Bennett once said, "What I try to do is give a performance and have everybody say, 'God, I love that song.'" Well, he's known that satisfaction throughout his career. When you hear the title of a Tony Bennett song, all at once you can hear the man singing it—"Fly Me To The Moon," "The Good Life," "The Best Is Yet To Come," "Just In Time."

This son of New York made his singing debut as a little boy in 1936, standing beside Mayor LaGuardia at the opening of the Triborough Bridge. Much time has passed, and at this point, the Triborough Bridge is showing some age. [Laughter] The little boy who sang that day is still looking pretty good. [Laughter]

Perhaps his biggest professional break came in the late 1940s, when he was opening for Pearl Bailey in Greenwich Village, and she introduced him to Bob Hope. When he learned this young man's name was Anthony Dominick Benedetto, Mr. Hope said, "That's too long for the marquee, let's simplify it and call you Tony Bennett."

Soon he was one of the great nightclub singers, performing through the years with the likes of Duke Ellington and Count Basie and appearing on the "Tonight Show" as Johnny Carson's first guest. When Tony recorded "I Left My Heart In San Francisco," he won his first Grammy, and the song took him from the clubs to Carnegie Hall. From that day to this, he's been playing to sellout crowds. He's won a total of 11 Grammys and a lifetime achievement award.

And it's a symbol of his endurance that this man who was making records when

Harry Truman lived in the White House has become a favorite of the MTV generation. As one newspaper declared, “Tony Bennett has not just bridged the generation gap, he demolished it.” [Laughter] The vocal style and interpretive skill of Tony Bennett are without equal. And no other singer is held in higher regard by his fellow entertainers. B.B. King once said, “To be near him is a highlight of my life. I’ve met two Presidents in office; I’ve met the Pope, Pavarotti—and Tony Bennett.” [Laughter] Frank Sinatra declared that Tony Bennett was the best singer in his lifetime.

His vocal talent and love for music came from his dad, John Benedetto, who passed away when Tony was 10 years old. In his memoir, Tony writes that John was a “very poetic man, full of love and warmth, who sang with a gentle, sensitive voice I can still hear.” Tony’s mom, Anna, undoubtedly saw those same qualities in her son. He called her, “my one guiding star.” And in a long life, Anna watched her boy rise to the top and remain there.

Tony Bennett is also a very talented painter whose work is widely exhibited and admired. He’s a deeply committed humanitarian. He’s a man of character who served in the U.S. Army in World War II, and he marched for civil rights with Martin Luther King, Jr.

Of his career, Tony Bennett has said, “The audience has been beautiful to me.” And the sentiment is entirely mutual. Everybody likes the man. He’s been aptly described as “the kind of celebrity who cabdrivers call by his first name.” We’re joyful that he remains a friendly presence in American life, an entertainer still at the top of his game, and a voice we love to hear. Tonight our Nation honors Mr. Tony Bennett.

Each of these honorees has enriched our culture and reflected credit on our great country. It’s a true pleasure to be in their company and to let them know just how much they mean to the people of the United States. Congratulations. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:13 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House.

Remarks at the Children’s Holiday Reception

December 5, 2005

The President. Thanks for coming. Welcome. We’re glad you’re here. This is Laura; I’m George W. [Laughter] We hope you’ve had some fun here. I hope nobody pinched Rudolph on the nose. [Laughter] No, nobody did. That’s good—Rudolph is happy about that too. [Laughter]

We welcome the students from Stratford Landing Elementary School in Alexandria and Glen Haven Elementary School in Silver Spring. We’re glad you all are here. We want to welcome your teachers and your parents. Thanks for coming. We’re glad you’re at the White House.

I particularly want to welcome those of you here who have got a mom or dad serving our country in the United States military. I know it’s hard when they’re away; this has got to be a difficult time for you. But we really want you to know that they’re doing important work. They’re not only protecting the country, but they’re helping other boys and girls live in freedom like we do here in the United States, and that’s important. So one message I want to give you is, we’re really proud of your mom or dad, and you tell them thanks—thanks on behalf of a grateful nation.

And now I get to introduce somebody I’m grateful for, and that’s the First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. on the State Floor at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks on the National Economy in Kernersville, North Carolina

December 5, 2005

Thanks for having me. Thanks for letting me come by to John Deere-Hitachi. I’m here to talk about our economy. No better place to talk about our economy, in a place where people are working hard and where they’re productive, where they’re making a product people want. The economy of the United