

**Speech by Janice Lachance, Director,  
Office of Personnel Management**

**2000 John N. Sturdivant National Partnership Awards Ceremony**

**November 15, 2000**

Good afternoon. I would like to welcome all of you here today. As Chair of the National Partnership Council, one of my most satisfying duties is to honor those who make government work better and more efficiently for America.

Today, my colleagues and I honor labor-management partnerships whose achievements merit special recognition.

It's always nice to gather with colleagues and friends. Ida [Castro, Chairwoman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission], Jay [Johnson, Director of the U.S. Mint] and Morley [Winograd, Senior Policy Advisor to the Vice President and Director of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government], it's good to see you here today.

This is the Council's sixth annual awards presentation. The men and women we recognize today strengthen our conviction that labor-management partnership is a powerful tool for improving the performance of government.

Before we move on to the formal presentation of awards, I'd like to take a few moments to talk about how labor-management relations have changed over the past several years.

When President Clinton signed Executive Order 12871 in 1993, the Federal Government began to move away from a long and often painful history of labor-management conflict and toward collaboration and partnership.

With this Order, the operating assumptions of labor and management began to change. Agencies and unions were challenged to look beyond the hostility and conflicts of the past. They were asked to forge genuine partnerships aimed at improving the performance of Government.

Much has been achieved since President Clinton signed the Executive Order. In 1998, the Council found that 67% of unionized Federal employees were represented by partnership councils.

Partnerships between labor and management have helped cut costs, enhance productivity, and improve customer service at agencies across Government. Yet much remains to be done. In some places partnerships have stalled while in others they've yet to be established. The President recognized that more was needed to promote the growth of partnership.

Last October, the President issued a memorandum in which he reaffirmed his "strong commitment to partnership" and called on Federal agencies to "redouble" their efforts to create partnerships with their unions.

He instructed agencies and unions to develop joint labor-management strategic plans designed to help the Government and its employees deliver "the highest quality service to the American people."

Agencies were also directed to report on their progress toward achieving the goals of both his Executive Order and the reaffirmation memorandum. OPM has completed its analysis of the agency reports and is preparing a report for the President.

Not surprisingly, among agencies and unions we found widespread agreement that the most successful partnerships have well-organized and active partnership councils.

They report that crucial aspects of the Executive Order, such as training and pre-decisional involvement, work best through a partnership council, and that labor-management councils are often the exclusive vehicles for the successful implementation of partnership initiatives.

Like our award winners, many agencies extolled the benefits of pre-decisional involvement. They reported that workplace changes are more effectively managed—and earn greater employee support—when agencies work closely with the union before changes are planned and decisions are made.

We also saw the importance of training in building strong partnerships.

Training in interest-based negotiations and alternative-dispute resolution helps improve partnership council effectiveness and enhance problem solving at early stages of disputes. The result is more efficient contract negotiations and far fewer third-party disputes.

Another defining characteristic of successful partnerships is the willingness to incorporate the principles of partnership into the day-to-day operations of the agency.

Partnership works best when it's supported by management and embedded in daily business practices and strategies. When this happens, the union becomes a genuine partner in customer service initiatives, systems modernization efforts, and other aspects of agency business.

We know from experience how difficult it can be to get a partnership started without strong and visible commitment from the upper echelons of both labor and management.

Top leadership support is necessary to send the signal that labor and management are serious about doing business in new and more productive ways.

But we found that top-level commitment is not enough to sustain a partnership over the long haul. Successful long-term partnerships garner support from all levels of the organization, especially from career mid-level managers and front-line union representatives.

It is these employees who work the nuts and bolts of partnership on a day-to-day basis. With their support, partnership can develop the strong foundation it needs to weather the ups and downs one finds in any labor-management relationship.

Perhaps the most important lesson we learned from examining these agency reports is that partnership is not easy. It is a constant challenge to find the right mix of leadership, commitment, trust, desire to change, and honest communications that make partnership work.

And partnership means change. It means new approaches, new roles, and new behaviors for both labor and management.

Despite all the challenges we continue to face, I believe the Federal Government's labor-management relations are on the right track.

I see a strong, consistent desire on both sides of the table to continue promoting and developing genuine partnerships and almost no interest in returning to the adversarial ways of the past.

I am convinced that labor-management relations in the government are better today than they were 10 years ago and considerably better than they were 15 years ago. And I believe a great deal of the credit for that progress can be traced to the rise and growth of partnership.

The partnerships that we honor today are those which best exemplify the founding principles of the National Partnership Council, and the ideals to which our dear friend and colleague, John Sturdivant, dedicated his life.

I know that I speak for all of us who knew John and admired his passionate commitment to partnership when I say that today's award winners certainly honor his spirit and are worthy of their recognition in his name. That in itself is a profound accomplishment.

Vice-President Gore said, "I promise you that we are going to follow through to make sure John Sturdivant gets the legacy he deserves".

These awards are an important part of the legacy John set out for all of us.

So in closing, I would encourage you to honor the winners here, but also to consider the future of partnership in your organizations.

How can we build on these successes to advance the goals of partnership? What must we do to ensure that partnership take root in the government?

Awards do not signify the completion of this difficult yet vital challenge. As long as labor and management exist, there will be a need for partnership. We must pledge here today that this need will never go unfulfilled.

We have come too far and enjoyed too much success to turn back now. Let that be the legacy of John N. Sturdivant and the National Partnership Awards that bear his name.

Thank you.

- END -

Speech by Janice Lachance, Director,  
Office of Personnel Management

**Senior Executive Service Symposium:  
Using Performance Management to Drive Results**

November 14, 2000

Good morning. I'm glad you could join us today for one of our many conversations with the senior executive community. Today, we focus on how to use performance management systems to promote a results-driven culture.

Two years ago, OPM began their conversations with executives and other stakeholders about reinventing the Senior Executive Service. We wanted to get everyone thinking and talking about whether the way we select, develop, and manage the SES is producing executives with the right leadership skills for the 21st century.

Many of the ideas outlined 2 years ago in OPM's SES Improvement Framework were controversial. But there is one thing that everyone agreed on – the SES performance management system needs improvement.

You and other stakeholders said we should strengthen the link between performance and pay.

You said that OPM's regulations focused on process, and that your agency's appraisal process was an irritating annual chore rather than a tool for driving results.

You said that SES performance management should reinforce strategic planning efforts and establish executive accountability.

Agencies asked us to give them more flexibility to tailor their systems to their unique organizational structures and culture – more flexibility to design systems which emphasize accountability and support personnel decisions.

We heard you. And, I'm happy to say that we've made progress, and will continue to make more progress.

In 1999, we revised the criteria used to evaluate residential Rank Award nominees. The revised criteria use the themes of the Executive Core Qualifications to focus on leadership results.

We've also rallied Administration support for two legislative initiatives: One would abolish recertification; and the other would raise aggregate pay for senior level employees.

And, on October 13<sup>th</sup>, we issued the new SES performance management regulations.

Stakeholders urged us to push these statutory and regulatory changes. But, they said that this couldn't fix everything.

There must be a cultural change as well—a cultural change that fosters an appreciation for the importance of managing performance and a focus on results rather than process. For this, we need leadership support and involvement.

In 1999, OPM and the Senior Executives Association surveyed SES members. The SES survey, and an employee survey conducted with the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, reinforced the need to overhaul the SES performance management system.

Respondents to the surveys believe that agencies must do much better at communicating what good performance means, what performance expectations are, and at taking corrective action when employees don't meet those performance standards.

I can tell you that OPM heard our customers and we revised the SES performance management regulations to address the issues raised in these surveys and in our conversations with you.

The new regulations allow agencies to streamline their performance management systems. They emphasize results over process and strengthen the links with strategic planning.

The regulations also require agencies to use “balanced measures” to evaluate executive performance. We don't dictate how to address the balanced measures. But all agencies must consider organizational results, customer satisfaction, and employee perspectives in evaluating their executives.

Some executives seem anxious about this new requirement. But, I believe that by institutionalizing the use of balanced measures, the government is acknowledging what its best executives have always known: leading people building coalitions and attaining measurable results are the foundation of organizational success.

In addition to stressing executive accountability, the regulations also challenge the executives' bosses. In order to fulfil the spirit of the regulations, agency leaders must clearly communicate performance expectations to senior executives and take action on performance assessments.

The regulations are not an end in themselves, but a tool to reinforce executive excellence and accountability. The regulations are a blueprint, and agency leaders and senior executives are the architects and the construction crew.

Managing performance is not an “HR” thing. Managing performance is a critical and integral part of our ongoing management responsibility.

Your presence here today says that you care about performance management—that you want to be part of the culture change envisioned in the new SES regulations.

I hope that what you learn today — both in the formal sessions and in discussions with your colleagues will stimulate your thinking. And that you will take your thoughts and energy back to your agency and use them to help build a better SES performance management system.

Thank you.

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**Senior Executive Service Symposium:  
Using Performance Management to Drive Results  
Closing Remarks**

Today, we've taken another big step toward the creation of a results-driven government. It was a pleasure to be with you this morning to discuss current issues in performance management.

And, it gives me even more pleasure to be back to recognize those agencies and individuals whose innovations and hard work are helping to promote government excellence and accountability.

But, before I recognize these innovators, I want to thank the people who participated in the workshops and the OPM staff who pulled it all together. In less than a month, they booked all of the speakers and took care of all the administrative details that made this day a success.

Joe Riddle led the effort.

Karen English and Virginia Buettner coordinated the details.

Carol Harvey did a great job as our Emcee.

And Joyce Edwards applied her vision and leadership to putting together this informative day.

Last month, OPM issued regulations that overhaul the way government evaluates its senior executives. The new regulations focus on results over process and require agencies to balance organizational results, customer satisfaction, and employee perspectives when evaluating executive performance.

By the beginning of the next SES appraisal cycle, all agencies must adopt the new requirements.

But, the four agencies we are recognizing today are already there!

They have already designed and implemented results-based performance management systems.

I know you all have your programs in front of you, but I want to personally recognize each agency for their outstanding accomplishments: The Internal Revenue Service, The Patent and Trademark Office, The Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In the spirit of "balanced measures," I also want to acknowledge the contributions of our employees and our key customer, the Senior Executives Association. OPM and SEA don't agree on everything, but we do agree that the government must do a better job of managing SES performance.

And, I thank the Association and its President Carol Bonosaro for their wise counsel as we developed the SES performance management regulations.

Anne Kirby represents the dozens of employees at OPM and the agencies who contributed to development of the regulations package in record time.

Without their hard work, we wouldn't be where we are today.

Finally, I want to thank you for being here today. Your presence says that you care about performance management—and are willing to go the extra mile to foster the culture change that will reinforce the use of SES performance management systems that promote excellence and drive the results the American people care about.

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**Speech by Janice Lachance, Director,  
Office of Personnel Management**

**OPM Director's Award Ceremony for  
Outstanding Work/Life Programs**

**November 14, 2000**

Thank you EB for that kind introduction and all your good work at OPM.

I would like to apologize in advance, because due to an unavoidable conflict, I will be unable to stay for the remainder of the program.

I am very pleased to be here today to recognize you for all of your hard work.

We are here to honor those agencies which have taken remarkable steps to establish Work/Life and Wellness Programs that are comprehensive and inclusive.

The hallmarks of today's winners are programs that are fundamental, but critical. First, they have become part of their organization's culture; second, they are continually being evaluated; third, they are supported by management; fourth, they retain strong participation; and fifth they were formed and are operated with labor-management partnerships.

The idea that the workplace must adopt new ideas for recruiting, retaining, and supporting their workforce is not new.

We know that young potential employees seek quality of life options that will allow them to successfully balance their personal and professional lives.

And older employees, who find themselves as part of the sandwich generation, try to cope with responsibilities for children and elder parents. They can't do it all and be productive at work, without some viable flexibilities.

Let me discuss some current initiatives with you:

Federal families are more challenged than ever before to meet the expenses of childcare.

The Office of Personnel Management issued regulations authorizing the use of Federal agency appropriated funds for childcare tuition assistance for lower income Federal employees.

The regulations apply to employees who enroll their children in licensed and/or

regulated center-based child care or family childcare homes.

This law gives lower income Federal families sorely needed financial relief and the peace of mind of knowing their children are in a safe and healthy environment.

Telework is becoming increasingly important as a tool to help balance work and personal life.

In addition to allowing the time flexibility to balance work and personal life, telework helps decrease traffic congestion and motor vehicle generated air pollution.

In September of this year, GSA Administrator Barram and I signed a joint memorandum to heads of agencies asking them to report any problems experienced by their agencies in implementing and operating telework programs.

We want to help agencies increase employee participation by uncovering any barriers to this program.

We have formed a Telework Working Group to advise us on how to increase participation.

We have a newly established life events website which employees can use for different stages in their lives such as marriage, or having a child. This website informs employees of work/life programs designed to help them as these events happen.

And in order to continue our national campaign for Work/Life and Wellness Program Awareness, we will hold a national conference on these issues next fall.

The time has passed for asking "will we offer work/life options?" And instead the question has become, "how and which work/life and wellness options will we offer and how can they affect the bottom line?"

Over time, employers have discovered that offering and promoting work/life and wellness options is a business necessity and one that makes them a competitive employer.

The agencies honored here today have clearly stepped up to that challenge.

And before we move on to the next part of our program, let me just say two words to each one of you here today; thank you. Whether you are attending as an award-winner, honoree, HR professional, or interested citizen—you are here because you care about these issues and, through your efforts, you are making a positive difference in the lives of tens of thousands of federal families.

Thank you for being here today.

I would now like to introduce today's guest speaker.

Colonel John "JB" H. Bonapart, Jr., is the Commander of the 10th Air Base Wing, United States Air Force Academy, Colorado.

He commands 2,028 military and civilian personnel who conduct all base-level support activities, which support more than 4,000 cadets, and a total military community of approximately 20,000 personnel. These functions have an annual operating budget of \$95 million.

He is also the Battle Staff Director during U.S. Air Force Academy contingency operations. Colonel Bonapart has served in the Air Force since 1975 and has an impressive list of achievements and decorations.

Colonel Bonapart.

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Speech by Janice Lachance, Director,  
Office of Personnel Management  
OPM Guardian Awards

November 13, 2000

Thank you Rich [Ferris] for that kind introduction, and thanks to your staff for doing the hard work required to host a terrific event like this.

I can't believe a year has gone by since we were last together for this ceremony. But it has, and a lot of exciting things have happened over the course of the last year, which you will hear about today during your plenary and workshop sessions.

Almost all of you are OPM customers, and I know there will be something for you to like. For those of you who are not OPM customers, I hope one of our initiatives will either give you an idea on how to improve your own practices or even make you an OPM customer.

We at OPM have worked very hard to make your professional lives a little easier. By implementing electronic fingerprint technology, working to create web-based investigative forms, and establishing a central security clearance database, we have demonstrated that it is possible to ride the technology wave in a way that will make your jobs easier and maintain the quality of the final product, or make it even better.

This year has seen a tremendous increase in our workload because of our commitment to help out the Department of Defense with its security investigation backlog, as I'm sure you are all aware of.

OPM received a request for assistance from the Secretary of Defense, and agreed to provide help if...and this is an important if...there was no disruption in the quality and timeliness OPM provides its regular, long-term customers. While we understand the important National Security implications of the DoD backlog, we also felt obligated not to abandon our loyal customers.

I am very proud to say, we have been able to maintain that balance between helping out DoD and providing the high quality service to our other customers that they have come to expect.

It is because of this commitment that you continued to rate OPM's services very highly in last year's customer satisfaction survey.

I thank you for that, not only is it good to know that you are satisfied with the work we are doing, it gives us a benchmark to improve upon.

And speaking of improvements and success, I think it's time to recognize an operation that has shown the ability to lead the way in finding cost-effective and innovative solutions to today's personnel security challenges.

We introduced the nominees a few minutes ago, and now it's time to present the OPM Guardian Award.

And now -- this is the best part -- may I have the envelope, please?

- END -

**Speech by Janice Lachance, Director,  
Office of Personnel Management**

**Department of Justice commemorative program for  
National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

**November 2, 2000**

Hello, and thank you James [Santelle] for that wonderful introduction.

I want to thank Attorney General Janet Reno and everyone at the Department of Justice who work so hard each and every day to fight discrimination against people with disabilities. I know that enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act has been a priority for the Justice Department, and I thank you. That's why I am so pleased to be here with you to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

As a nation, we cannot allow the enormous potential of people with disabilities to remain untapped. And one way to do this is to bring more qualified candidates with disabilities into the Federal workforce.

We, as a nation, are very fortunate. We are in the midst of the greatest economic expansion in American history, with record low levels of unemployment. "Help wanted" signs are up everywhere, the classified sections of our newspapers are bulging. Yet, more than three-quarters of individuals with severe disabilities in our nation remain unemployed.

Clearly, everyone should be benefiting from these strong economic times, and the economy needs the skills of all Americans. But, as I just mentioned, many people with disabilities are left out. You and I know these individuals have so much to offer our society. This exclusion is not acceptable. It cannot be justified, and it is simply wrong.

These individuals are employable, and they have much to offer. As you all know, the Federal government already recruits widely to find qualified applicants--often using nontraditional methods to reach candidates who, while qualified, might not otherwise apply because of social, economic, or other conditions.

The Clinton/Gore Administration remains committed to leading by example and using the visibility of the Federal workforce to show the country the benefits of recruiting and developing a workforce that reflects the full and rich diversity of our nation.

As a member of the President's Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities, and the Director of the US Office of Personnel Management I am very familiar with the barriers to employment confronting people with disabilities. And, I see first hand that those with disabilities do make significant contributions.

I know first hand that everyone must be given the opportunity to succeed, and that more often than not, people go above and beyond the call of duty.

And especially since today's information technologies provide an unprecedented opportunity those with disabilities to expand the scope of their contributions.

So, I am proud that our Federal Government has committed itself to promoting the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of people with disabilities.

This past July, on the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, President Clinton signed an Executive Order to increase the opportunities for individuals with disabilities to be employed at all levels and occupations of the Federal Government.

These aren't just idle words, they are a pledge by this Administration to bring 100,000 new individuals with disabilities into the Federal family over the next 5 years.

I saw first hand what can happen when you give someone with a disability a chance to succeed. I am especially proud of this executive order because Mark Moore, a severely disabled law student from the University of Texas helped draft it while interning at OPM this past summer. I was thrilled that Mark was on stage when the President made this important announcement and that he could make such a contribution to this country.

I would also like to thank the Justice Department for your help in putting together the executive order and ensuring that all its provisions will stand the test of time.

All federal agencies have started working on their hiring and recruitment plans. And, I am proud to say today that we fully expect to meet the 100,000 pledge.

We are going to achieve this goal because we already have the tools in place to help Federal agencies with their recruitment efforts.

Last fall, the President released the first-ever Plan and its Companion Guide to provide agencies with the tools to hire qualified candidates with disabilities and to enhance the advancement opportunities for current federal employees with disabilities. It is our roadmap to help level the playing field for those who have been overlooked, or just not given a chance to succeed.

One major obstacle for people with disabilities is finding information about jobs in the Federal government. OPM is fixing that problem. This summer we created a Disability web site: [www.opm.gov/disability](http://www.opm.gov/disability).

This site contains all of OPM's information about the employment of people with disabilities, and it is in one location. The web site meets all ADA criteria and is "Bobby" approved.

For those of you who may not know, the Bobby is the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" for accessible web sites.

Why is this web site important? Because it creates a "one-stop shop" for people with disabilities who are interested in careers in the Federal service. The new web site contains wonderful information about everything from how to get a Federal job to the benefits you will receive if you work for the Government. Please check it out if you haven't done so yet. And if you have, check it out again!

As you may remember, at the first-ever White House Conference on Mental Health last year, the President announced an important new initiative -- the Executive Order on Expanding Hiring Opportunities for People with Psychiatric Disabilities.

This Executive Order created a new and much-needed excepted service hiring authority to provide unprecedented employment opportunities to persons with psychiatric disabilities, and allow them to be non-competitively converted to the competitive service after two years of satisfactory performance.

This appointing authority mirrors existing authorities that allow appointment of persons with severe physical disabilities and those with mental retardation. And, it's an important new hiring tool to add to the Federal arsenal.

While we've been busy at OPM working on disability issues, I know that you've been just as busy here at the Department of Justice. I know that increasing opportunities for people with disabilities has been a priority for Attorney General Reno.

From the establishing of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee on Employees with Disabilities to launching initiatives on recruiting and promoting of people with disabilities, to establishing a department-wide policy on reasonable accommodation, Justice has been a leader in this fight for employment equality for people with disabilities.

And, the comprehensive section 508 report the Attorney General sent to the President this past April on *Information Technology and People with Disabilities* will serve as a guide for years to come for federal agencies employers as they strive to improve accessibility of their electronic and information technology systems for employees and the public.

As I have said before, we will continue to insist that people be judged according to their ability--not their disability--to do the very important business of the American people. Anything less simply will not do.

Working together, we must ALL rededicate ourselves to making this policy more than something special or unusual, but rather something expected, commonplace, and a routine part of doing business in the Federal government.

We can't stop now. Momentum is with us, and we have the chance to help people with disabilities demonstrate their full potential.

If we are to succeed as a nation in the global economy of the new century, we must tap into the potential of *all* the members of our American society. I know I can count on your commitment and hard work to make this happen.

I look forward to working with you to help make our federal government the model for inclusion and empowerment, not only throughout the nation, but around the world.

I thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

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**Speech by Janice Lachance, Director,  
Office of Personnel Management  
Signing Ceremony/Partnership Between  
OPM and American University**

**October 31, 2000**

Hello, and welcome to this very special event.

Today's signing ceremony celebrates a new partnership between the Office of Personnel Management and American University of Washington, D.C.

Before we get started, let me introduce you to some key people who made today's event possible.

From American University, we have the Provost, [Cornelius M.] Neil Kerwin and Walter D. Broadnax, Dean of the School of Public Affairs.

From OPM, we have Barbara Garvin-Kester, Director of the Office of Executive and Management Development, and Barbara Smith, Acting Director of the Eastern Management development Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, and Joe Wienand, Director of the Western Management Development Center in Denver, Colorado.

The substance of OPM's new partnership with AU is this—The School of Public Affairs at American University will recognize courses offered by our two Management Development Centers for credit toward the requirements of their Master of Public Administration degree, a degree that is highly valued and important in today's marketplace.

For Federal employees, it means a top-quality degree from a great institution at a savings of some 30 percent.

For almost 40 years, OPM's Management Development Centers have been developing "great leaders for a great government."

Our two Centers--the Eastern Management Development Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, and our Western Management Development Center in Denver, Colorado--offer one and two week residential programs to over 5000 federal managers and executives each year to enhance their leadership and management skills.

The Management Development Center programs are accredited by the American Council on Education (ACE) for academic credit at either the undergraduate or graduate level, depending on the program.

And American University will use this ACE accreditation as the starting point for their crediting process by which MDC courses are accepted toward the completion of the requirements for their Master of Public Administration degree.

The programs that are covered by this partnership agreement with AU are in Public Policy, Management and Leadership, Team Building and Organizational Improvement, and Individual Assessment.

Now, let me tell you a little about our new partner. Founded in 1934, the American University School of Public Affairs is the second oldest school of its type in the United States. Only the Maxwell School at Syracuse, New York, is older.

The School of Public Affairs at American University has 1500 students; 1000 in the undergraduate program and 500 in the graduate program.

Because of this proud history, I am extremely pleased that OPM and American University will be partners in the development of future leaders.

Now I'd like to introduce Neal Kerwin, Provost of American University, who will give you some more information about OPM's partnership with AU.

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**Speech by Janice Lachance, Director,  
Office of Personnel Management**

**Robeson Middle School  
Kansas City, MO**

**October 24, 2000**

Thank you very much, for that kind introduction, David [Smith]. It has been a pleasure to work with you and your staff. Thanks as well to Superintendent [Richard] Demps for arranging the involvement of your school in today's dedication. I am also delighted to be joined by Lance Lasker.

I understand that Lance's older brother Terrence is an Olympic Fencer from Ohio State University. It's wonderful to see where a well-rounded education can take you!

On behalf of President Clinton and Vice President Gore, I am here today to support their vision and their efforts for improving education here in Missouri and across the country.

The Clinton/Gore Administration has made the largest investment in America's education system since John F. Kennedy was President.

Over these last seven and a half years, the President and Vice President have established an impressive record of accomplishments—they have put our nation's economic house in order while targeting federal funds and resources to working families, expanding critical investments in the future and continuing American leadership around the world.

And nothing is more fundamentally important to the President and the Vice President of the United States than the future of our children.

Last week, the President and Vice President called on Congress to complete its work and send the President a fiscally responsible budget that invests in America's key priorities—especially the education of our children.

To date, Congress has not enacted the following Clinton-Gore initiatives: a school renovation initiative to help communities modernize crumbling schools; adequate funding for after-school programs; and reduced class sizes in the early grades.

This Administration wants to give all Americans, especially our children, the tools and resources they need to realize their full potential.

We are here today to help provide you with one of those very important resources—computers.

Under Vice President Gore's leadership, the Administration has made increasing access to technology a top priority.

To help make access to computers and the Internet as universal as the telephone, Vice President Gore wants to bridge the digital divide and create new opportunity for all Americans.

This year over 95 percent of public schools are connected to the Internet -- up from 35 percent in 1994. And this year over 65 percent of all public school classrooms are connected to the Internet -- up from just 3 percent in 1994.

This is significant progress toward our goal of connecting every classroom to the Internet.

The President and Vice President have helped make this possible by creating the E-rate program, which secures low-cost connections to the Internet for schools, libraries, rural health clinics and hospitals.

This program benefits more than 80 percent of America's public schools, currently providing Internet access for over 30 million children.

I am here today to tell you that President Clinton, Vice President Gore, my fellow Cabinet Secretaries and their staffs, and the entire Federal workforce, are all committed to giving all our children the best possible education.

We have very selfish reasons for this. Our children are the future leaders of our nation and of our Federal Government.

So, for me, as the Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the Federal Government's human resources agency and our nation's single largest employer—one with 1.8 million employees—it means I have a vested interest in having a highly educated, technologically-savvy pool of candidates for Federal jobs.

Today we are presenting 10 computers to Robeson Middle School as the first shipment of a total of 50 computers we are donating to the Kansas City, Missouri School District.

We are presenting them because the Clinton/Gore administration believes every student should be computer literate, and modern computers and learning devices should be available to every student.

Every classroom should be connected to one another--and to the outside world.

And educational software should be an integral part of the curriculum -- so all children can discover that such software is just as engaging as the best video game.

I know that Superintendent Demps, Principal Mahone and the teachers who work with these children—future leaders of our nation—will use these donated computers to help fulfill the promise and potential of every child in this classroom today, and in this school and school system.

Thank you very much.

I would now like to turn things over to Superintendent [Richard] Demps.

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