

**FLOTUS STATEMENTS & SPEECHES**

12/2/93-4/26/94

**Office of the First Lady  
Press Office  
Files of Lissa Muscatine**

**Contents: FLOTUS Statements and Speeches**

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12/2/93  
Zero to three

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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December 2-5, 1993

ZERO TO THREE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CLINICAL INFANT PROGRAMS  
THE EIGHTH BIENNIAL NATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you all so much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you all. Thank you for making me feel so much at home again. The work that all of you do every day, and the commitment you have to our children and their families is something that I very much appreciate and admire.

I have been able in the years past to spend time with many of the groups represented here, visit many of the facilities of the kinds that you work in, worry over, the national attitude toward early childhood, and try in my own way with many of you and thousands of others like you around our country, to make some changes that we know are good for children, good for families, and good for America. So it gives me a very special pleasure to be able to come here today.

It is a remarkable congruence of events that I would be asked to present an award named for Dolly Madison to a woman whom I learned to respect and care about so much. You know, Dolly Madison is someone who for too long, I think, has been forgotten in history.

I was always amused during the campaign when people would ask me, well, what are you going to do when you get to the White House? And I would say, well, I'm going to try to be a voice for children, and I'm going to try to do some of the things that I believe in that I think need to be done. And more often than not the person would say, well, that's going to be an entirely new role for the First Lady, and I said, well, gee, I suppose that is if you don't know anything about all the women who have been there before. (Laughter.)

In our instant information age, you know, history is what happened a minute and a half ago. And I would find myself often, you know, talking about many of the people who

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have lived in the house where I now live, and particularly the women, and I began to read everything I could get my hands on.

Dolly Madison was way ahead of her time. She not only did so much to bring the needs of children to the awareness of our very young nation, but she, as some of you I know remember, was there in the White House when the British were advancing on Washington during the War of 1812.

And taking time to cut out the Gilbert Stuart painting of Washington and fold it up, and to flee with other of the treasures that she thought should be preserved, leaving the food on the table that was supposed to feed her husband when he came back from the field where he was leading the American troops, but instead was eaten later by the British who came and actually occupied the White House -- ate the food, and tried to burn it. And I've often told people that I doubt there were many other acts of such sheer physical heroism as Dolly Madison going around the house trying to make sure the treasures were gotten out safely when you could hear the guns of the advancing British soldiers.

She also started the egg roll, because she wanted children to have something to do that was fun as well as trying to take care of their needs. And she integrated an oyster house in Washington that had been men only.

And she also used to take women to the Capitol (Applause.), where she would have them sit in the galleries and listen to the debates, and watch their husbands and others to determine whether or not they did the right thing. So this was a woman definitely ahead of her time and well worthy of the distinction you give her by naming this award for her.

I am so pleased to be here, too, with people whom I admire, like Barry Brazelton. You couldn't hear when Cathy introduced me and said that she had seen him sitting next to me. He said to me, "well, actually you were sitting next to me (Laughter.)," which I think is a much better and more accurate description of what went on.

But he has brought to our national consciousness such an awareness of the needs of children -- in a way that conveys love and caring, and the kind of genuine compassion that comes through in everything that he does. He indeed is

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a leader for all of us.

And I'm also delighted to be here with Al Solnet (phonetic) because, as Barry started to tell you, I got this rather odd idea when I was at the Yale Law School: that I wanted to know more about children's development. I went to several of my professors at the law school and said, you know, I'd really like to immerse myself in what happens with children, particularly in their early years, and to really find out what I can about how their needs are met or not met, and particularly what role the legal system plays in a both positive and negative way in helping children and families.

And I was very lucky that the two professors I spoke to, Joe Goldstein (phonetic) and Jay Katz (phonetic), had worked with Solnet and the Yale Child Study Center and said, "well, yeah, it's a little bit of an odd idea. But why don't you go over and talk with Dr. Solnet and see whether something can be worked out?" And I will be forever grateful that something was worked out.

So for a wonderful year I sat in on discussions of cases. I observed Sally Province doing the work that she was doing. I was able to go to the Yale-New Haven Hospital and work in emerging areas that nobody had paid much attention to up until then, like child abuse. It was just an extraordinary time, and I am so delighted that it was part of my education. Watching her, as Barry described, there was something magical. I remember standing behind those one-way mirrors and watching her with an infant who for some reason had been referred to be evaluated, some kind of, maybe, failure to thrive, some other kind of problem that nobody could quite get their hands around.

And watching anxious mothers, and sometimes fathers, not knowing what to expect or what they would hear. And watching the way Sally handled both the child and the family, a kind of down-to-earth, common-sense, loving approach to the issues at hand.

I will never forget how she put into context so much of what had, as Barry said, been kept separate, how we had these categories about the treatment of children and what was expected of them, and how we further and further began to eliminate from our academic knowledge the day-to-day experience of the people who knew the best, oftentimes the parents and others who had day-to-day interaction.

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It was one of the great contributions that Sally and Al, and Barry, and others who were the leaders in early childhood have made, is that they began to integrate, integrate the family experience, the community experience, take those lessons and then move that into our academic understanding about development. And we owe such a debt of gratitude to her.

We also, though, owe all of you in Zero to Three a continuing debt for not having given up on the needs of children being placed at the forefront of the national agenda. It's a kind of good news/bad news story, I think. I mean, certainly some of the issues that we had to worry about and be concerned over 20 or 30, or 40 years ago, have matured and receded, but we face a whole new battery of challenges when it comes to our children.

We only have to look around us to see how many of our children are deprived of the chance to have what you call a heart start. There are many factors that affect our failure to deliver to all of our children what we know, not only what you know as professionals, but what we know as human beings, as mothers and fathers, and sisters, and brothers -- what we know children need.

Those factors are social and cultural, and economic, and moral, and ethical, and political, and psychological. But finally, I think, we're beginning to face up to what we have to do if we are going to try to be true to what we know is needed for all children to develop healthily and morally, and educationally.

I hope that in the next year we will build on what we have accomplished this past year. I hope that we will understand that economics does have something to do with how well and attentive a parent can be. It is not determinative, but it does play a role.

When we were able in this last budget to say to working families that they will no longer be penalized for working but instead rewarded for it with something called the earned income tax credit -- that may sound like a very dry term. But at bottom it was for me the most important victory of that whole long messy budget fight, because for the first time we married rhetoric and reality.

We said, we are going to try to help support

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families instead of continually throw obstacles in their way. And for all those millions and millions of families with working parents who get up every day and have to be at the factory gate at 5:00 a.m., or have to be at the restaurant at 6:00 a.m., or have to come in to change the sheets in this hotel at 7:00 a.m., they are going to be given the respect and support they deserve to have so they can be the kind of parents we expect them to be. (Applause.)

And when we finally had a President who would sign the Family and Medical Leave Act, that sent a signal about what our real priorities in America should be. (Applause.) The rebuilding of our families and the valuing of our children will not be easily accomplished overnight. There is much too much work to be done.

But when we finally had a President who signed the Brady Bill, we at least sent a signal we were not going to give in anymore. (Applause.) And now -- and now we have major pieces of legislation that will be pending in the congress this next year that will directly affect what kinds of lives millions of children will have.

We're going to continue to build on what we have begun with the Brady Bill, to try to return safety and sanity to our neighborhoods and communities with all kinds of approaches that we think will make a difference. We are going to do what we can to continue the push that Secretary Reilly (phonetic) has made to give our educational system the kind of support and direction and goals that they need to know what our objectives are.

And we are going to make a beginning on how we can take our welfare system and begin to turn it around to give back dignity and independence, and real support, to families that can then in turn take care of their own children more effectively. (Applause.) And we're going to have one big fight over health care.

And I'll tell you what: we are going to eventually, when all the dust clears, have in place a system that guarantees universal coverage for every American. That includes (Applause.) a set of comprehensive benefits for all, with a particular emphasis on primary and preventive care.

Some of these -- some of the benefit for primary and preventive care are so important to this President that

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we're going to provide some of them free in a way that will entice more people to take advantage of them. We want every woman to have adequate prenatal care. We want every baby to have well-child care. We want every child immunized. We want every child seeing a physician not only when -- during their childhood, but during their adolescence, when we lose so many of them because there isn't anybody there to talk with them or to deal with their problems.

We want a health care system that works for all Americans, but particularly one that works for our children. It is our children and our adolescents (Applause.) -- you know, it is our children and our adolescents who have been left out the most, and that is what, above all else, motivates me every day to do what I can to make sure we do get this health care reform.

But we will need your help. We will need you to speak out on behalf of the needs of children and pregnant women, and we will need you when all of the rhetoric starts about how we don't need to provide this to everyone, and all of this should be left to the individual to take care of on his or her own.

We will need you to provide some real life experience to those who will be making the decisions about what it is that stands in the way now and will continue to stand in the way if we treat health care as a luxury. If we only provide health care in a way that meets some of the needs of our people but does not provide the basic solid foundation for healthy beginnings, for the kind of heart start that goes hand in hand with emotional development and attention, and the right kind of discipline -- so that our children will have what they deserve to have, a life that enables them to live up to their own God-given potential.

And I know during the campaign, during some of the most difficult days of that campaign, something that made a big difference to me was a letter from Sally Province, an expert on human development who saw inside the hearts and souls of probably everyone she met, but certainly everyone I ever saw her meet. And she wrote me a letter that was filled with encouragement and support, telling me that I was doing what I needed to be doing, and that my husband was saying what needed to be said, and that we should persevere, and that she was proud of our efforts.

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That meant more to me than many of the accolades that I have gotten since then. And so it is with that kind of debt that I owe to her, and that gratitude for the kind of example she was, that I now have the privilege of awarding the Dolly Madison Award for outstanding life-long contribution to the development and well-being of very young children and their families to Sally Province, M.D., born in 1919, in that little state of Texas, and who left us physically in 1993.

Sally Province was just who it is that human beings are intended to be. Her intelligence and humanity were luminous, the integration of her personhood and professionalism complete.

She combined singular clinical acumen, scholarly discipline, and a commitment to champion the cause of children, especially babies, whom she adored. She conveyed a sense of what could be a vision for the whole field of preventive intervention with infants, young children, and their families.

A pioneer in the field of child development, Sally Province was a clinician, teacher, and research. She directed the internationally renowned child development unit of the Yale Child Study Center from 1951 until her retirement in 1986. She continued to serve as a research -- senior research scientist at the center. She was a founding member and president of Zero to Three, National Center for Clinical Infant Programs, and the first editor of its bulletin, Zero to Three.

Sally Province had a special unassuming charm. She was direct, genuine, and totally without pretension. Her dislikes were as clear as her passions. She despised presumption, bureaucratic hypocrisy and oversimplification. Yet in her aggressive battle against the mediocre and the merely convenient, she used acceptance, warmth, openness, availability, and a deep, abiding faith in the nurturing and healing effects of relationships.

Sally Province's writings, insightful observations of young children, and her wise, empathetic words of counsel to parents, care-givers, clinicians and policy-makers will guide our field for many years to come. Her voice will echo in the minds and hearts of those fortunate enough to have shared her powerful emotional presence.

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We strive to honor her memory by accepting her passions as a legacy. Children can't wait. Each loves best in his or her own way. Embrace complexity. Don't just do something, stand there and pay attention, the child is trying to tell you something. That indeed is a rich and wonderful legacy.

I would like, then, on behalf of Zero to Three, to present to Dr. Al Solnet and Tim Province this award.

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