

12/8/93

Presidents Dinner

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

HRC ADDRESS AT PEACELINKS DINNER--12/8/93

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you Tipper and...Thank you for your support and your commitment on this and a lot of issues that are of great concern to many of us in this room. And your continuing leadership come January when you have even more opportunity to do work on behalf of the mentally ill, and particularly children and the homeless. This evening is especially gratifying for me because I have an opportunity to link together three women whom I admire greatly. One you have already heard from. Betty Bumpers is the kind of First Lady that Arkansas produces, so how can I do anything else but try to follow in her footsteps and to make as much commotion as possible about issues that are important to the world? (applause)

I guess it's a fact that for those of us from Arkansas this whole conversation about what is or is not the proper role of a first lady has been bewildering, to say the least, because we're used to people like Betty, and grateful for her, and the kind of leadership that she has shown not just with respect to Peacelinks, and the extraordinary contribution it has made, but with respect to immunization and other matters that affect the health of children. So for all of us in Arkansas, we are grateful that we have as our Senator, Dale Bumpers, and he has as his partner, both in the Governorship, and in the Senate, the most remarkable woman that I have ever met--Betty Bumpers. (Applause.)

And she is absolutely right, Dale used to break a sweat but he never said a word, about this whole effort, we were, we were real proud of him he'd sit there wringing his hands and say " oh Betty, oh Betty," but, we're all so pleased that we have leaders out of Arkansas, of the male gender, who are smart enough to know that a lot of these issues deserve to be pioneered, and spear-headed and stand behind them. And we're very grateful to you, Dale, for your leadership in Arkansas and this country, and we're so glad you're going to continue it, we need you very much. In addition to Betty Bumpers, I have the opportunity to present an award that is named for Eleanor Roosevelt, I can hardly think of a more wonderful opportunity than to have a chance in some way to honor that woman whose contributions to our country and our world continue to live, which is why the Eleanor Roosevelt living world award is so aptly named. And in fact, as I have gone through this journey over the past year, I have become quite a recipient of Eleanor Roosevelt-lore. And people have been sending me all kinds of information, and much to my delight, I learned that prior to her becoming First Lady, about three months before President Roosevelt was sworn in, she was editorialized against in the New York Times for speaking out with her opinions,

so the more times change, the less times change. Apparently . but she was not deterred, and the woman who receives this award in her name tonight, has also not been deterred. Rosyln Carter has been an exemplary leader in so many regards. What she has done by her quiet, persuasive, persistent leadership on a number of fronts, has lead the way for so many others, to also persist, to try to right wrongs, to try to solve problems. She came to the responsibilities of First Lady of this Country with an already well-developed sense of justice and rightness. And she did all that she could to try to translate that into action. This is the fourth time this award has been given. In the past it has been presented to the Prime Minister of Norway, to the first female cosmonaut, and peace activist, and to the (inaudible ) Director of the Peace Corps, for the last years. As you can see, Rosyln Carter is in very good company. because as a First Lady, as a citizen of the world, as a leader of this Nation, as a partner with her husband, as one of those who helped create and continues to motivate the Carter Center, she has been a force and a voice for Democratization, for human opportunity, and particularly for reaching out to help solve the real problems that prevent children all over this world from living and achieving what is their God-given potential.

She has been a long time advisor to Peacelinks, and she has, through the Carter Center, actually begun to implement many of the underlying principles that motivated the creation of Peacelinks in the first place. She has travelled to other countries to watch elections unfold and she has worked to bring people together across racial and cultural and ethnic divides, and how desperately we will need that kind of continuing work, in the years to come. She has been a driving force in trying to solve the problems presented to us, by, mental health. And throughout her career, she has worked always to bring people together. To have them sit at the same table, break bread together and talk through what seem at first to be insurmountable barriers, but after time, are clearly just the obstacles that all too often we put in the way of learning and working with one another. It is a real honor then, for me to be here tonight, on behalf of an organization that Betty Bumpers started, to present an award that is named for Eleanor Roosevelt, to one of the finest first ladies this country, or any country has ever had. Who is continuing to demonstrate what it means to be a real leader. Rosyln Carter. (applause).