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Subject: Remarks by the President and First Lady at Arts and Humanities Dinner

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 20, 2000

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
AND THE FIRST LADY  
AT NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES DINNER

Pavilion

9:15 P.M. EST

MRS. CLINTON: Please be seated and welcome once again to the White House. We are so honored and delighted to have you join us for this dinner in celebration and recognition and absolute delight in the honorees that were recognized this morning, who represent not only the best of the arts and humanities, but truly the best that America has to offer and the best that comes from within the human spirit.

This is a wonderful evening for Bill and for Chelsea and me, because we also have here so many of our friends and people who have supported the work and goals and aspirations of the President and this administration for eight years. (Applause.)

And so it is a night of celebration in many, many ways, and one which we are so pleased you can share with us. We are, as we have said this morning and on public occasions in the past weeks, marking each day with memories and extraordinary opportunities like this to think back and reflect on what has occurred and how grateful we are to have been the temporary occupants of the White House over these years.

And the work that has been done on behalf of the arts and humanities is something that we feel so personally committed to and grateful for. And none of it would have been possible

without a President who came to the White House already as a devotee and lover of the arts and of all that the humanities had to offer. And it has continued thus for these years.

So please join me in welcoming the President of the United States. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I will be brief. I said what I had to say this afternoon. I loved it. I hope all of you did. I can hardly believe this is the eighth and last event like this that I will have a chance to preside over. But I want all of you to know, it has been a great honor.

And one of the things that I have prized most about being President is the opportunity to highlight the good that others do -- many times famous and powerful people, many times people who would otherwise have been completely unknown. But I have a special feeling about the arts and humanities because in politics, we are always concerned with the moment, and trying to win the moment for the American people. But in the end, those things that are timeless matter more. And that is what all of you have given us.

I want to thank those who sponsored these events today and made them possible. I want to thank the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, Bill Ferris and Bill Ivey and all those who work with them. Since we're celebrating the arts tonight, I want to thank the magnificent musicians of the United States Marine Corps, who have made my life so wonderful these last eight years. (Applause.) And Maestro Slatkin and our hometown symphony here, who will be playing later. And my friend Thomas Hampson, thank you all very much.

I would like to ask all of you just to begin this evening by joining me in a toast to our honorees. They are an amazing assemblage of creative people, each unique, sharing the common fact that they have given us more than we ever could have imagined. Please join me in a toast to the 2000 honorees to the National Medal of the Arts and the National Medal of the Humanities.

(A toast was offered.)

Enjoy the evening, thank you. (Applause.)

END

9:21 P.M. EST

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