

funds as they have received in any previous year to support local victim assistance programs. And the Antiterrorism Act has guaranteed restitution to victims of Federal crimes and mass violence; it has already provided substantial assistance to victims of the Oklahoma City bombing.

This year, we can take one more historic step to ensure that victims throughout our country are guaranteed the fundamental rights to be present at proceedings, to be informed of significant developments in their cases and of their rights, and to be heard at sentencing and other appropriate times throughout the criminal justice process. The Congress should pass a Victims' Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution that will, when ratified by the States, ensure that crime victims are at the center of the criminal justice process, not on the outside looking in.

We must stand united in caring for and assisting crime victims throughout our country.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 13 through April 19, 1997, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week. I urge all Americans to follow in the example of victim advocates and reaffirm our common purpose to protect and comfort one another in times of hardship—not only during this special week but also throughout the year.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 16, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 17.

### **Statement on the Fire in Mina, Saudi Arabia**

*April 15, 1997*

I was deeply saddened to learn today of the tragic loss of life in Saudi Arabia among the pilgrims performing the Hajj. I have sent condolences to King Fahd on behalf of the American people and extend our deepest sympathy to the families of those who were killed or injured in the fire.

### **Exchange With Reporters During a Meeting With the Family of Jackie Robinson in Queens, New York**

*April 15, 1997*

**The President.** Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio], did you give out any autographs today over at the school?

**Q.** Thank you, sir, that was very kind of you.

**The President.** It's a great school, isn't it? Very impressive.

You all know this is the design for the Jackie Robinson coin. And Mrs. Robinson and her family consulted on it—do you want to just tell them?

**Rachel Robinson.** Yes. The gold coin represents the total man, and we wanted that because we have been trying to impress people with Jack's life in its totality. And we think that's going to be a very rare piece. We're very excited about it. We love the design, and we love the concept, and we're very happy to have it. The silver coin will represent the baseball period and that, of course, he's had an illustrious career. So of course we're proud of that. But we wanted to commemorate both aspects of him—or total aspects of him. And we will sell out. [Laughter] We are already marketing and—

**The President.** We're hawking the coin. Anybody in our press corps would like to buy one, we can make one available. [Laughter]

**Q.** What denomination is it? How much money is it worth? What is the face value of it?

**The President.** What's the sale price?

**Mrs. Robinson.** The final price hasn't been determined. It's around \$250 on the gold and about \$35 on the silver. And the

Jackie Robinson Foundation will receive surcharges from the coins, which we will invest in our permanent endowment fund.

### **1996 Campaign Financing**

**Q.** Mr. President, what do you think of all the attacks on your Attorney General? What do you think of all the attacks on your Attorney General for the decision she made yesterday on the independent counsel? Newt Gingrich said today he likened that position to something that John Mitchell would do.

**The President.** That cries out for an answer, I guess. Let me say, I think that—I don't have anything to add to what I've already said. She had to make a legal decision on a legal question. And as I understand it, she consulted her career staff people there and made a decision. And that's all I know. So I don't have any other comment about it. It should not be a political matter; it should be a legal matter. And that's the way everybody ought to leave it.

**Q.** Thank you.

**Mrs. Robinson.** On behalf of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, we would like to present you with our anniversary cap, since we know that you wear caps——

**The President.** I do.

**Mrs. Robinson.** ——we hope to see this on your head. [Laughter]

**The President.** I hope you see me running and playing golf.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 6:40 p.m. at Shea Stadium. Rachel Robinson is the widow of Jackie Robinson. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

### **Interview With Chris Berman of ESPN**

April 15, 1997

[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]

**The President.** And if he hadn't done what he did and Branch Rickey hadn't done what he did, PeeWee Reese hadn't run the team like he did, it would have been a very different world. But Jackie Robinson—you know, someone—maybe fate has a way of doing that in history, but he was—he had

the unique blend of talent and character to do what he did. And it's made a real difference.

It made a real difference to the way people thought about race. I think that's more important than the fact that he was a great baseball player because baseball really was our national pastime then, too, and there was no competition from highly televised pro basketball or pro football or anything else. It was the thing. And so it was—as important as it was and 3 years later basketball was integrated and other things happened, this was a huge deal. Most Americans now can't even imagine how big a deal it was.

This was the year before President Truman signed the order to integrate the Army. This was a huge deal.

**Mr. Berman.** It was really 15 years plus before marches in the sixties. I mean, it was so far ahead of its time——

**The President.** Almost a decade before Rosa Parks. And this was—and it was baseball, so it was a statement about America. Anything you said about baseball in the forties and the early fifties, it was a statement about America.

**Mr. Berman.** By the way, Olerud is at first base with a single, one out. But Bernard Gilkey is up.

**The President.** He's doing better in New York, isn't he, although——

**Mr. Berman.** Well, he's in another——

**The President.** But he's hitting well again, and it's good. It's been a good move for him.

**Mr. Berman.** It kind of got a little stale for him in Toronto.

**Mr. President.** Yes. It's good for him.

**Mr. Berman.** Did you ever get up to see Jackie Robinson play? I don't know how many Cardinal games you went to. Arkansas was a good drive from there.

**The President.** Only one time when I was a child. My father took me on a train to St. Louis to watch a game, but they weren't playing the Dodgers. But we didn't get a television until 1956, but it was right after the '55 season, right after the Boys of Summer. So for 2 years I sat transfixed in front of my television set. And tonight we had a contest in the place where I'm sitting to see how many people could remember the names of people on the '55 team—how many names