

and Congress over the NEH and the NEA. It's important to recognize we've got some good supporters there, too.

Let me invite you to enjoy the Marine Orchestra, to enjoy each other, to enjoy this beautiful day and the rich gifts our honorees have given us.

Thank you very much for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lois Capps, wife of Representative Walter Capps.

Message on the Observance of National Arts and Humanities Month, October 1997

September 29, 1997

America celebrates October as National Arts and Humanities Month to recognize the unique role that the arts and humanities play in the lives of our families, our communities, and our country.

For more than 200 years, the arts and humanities have distinguished us as individuals and united us as a nation. The arts empower us to express ourselves and to understand and appreciate the expressions of others. Through the study of literature, history, and philosophy, we learn to build on the riches of our past to create a firm foundation for a better future. Together, the arts and humanities teach us to celebrate the cultural diversity unique to America, while transcending differences in race, ethnicity, age, or creed.

Each day our world evolves further from our notion of the familiar, and we must adapt to its changing nature. In this challenging time, we look to our artists and scholars to inform our decisions and our actions. Musicians, actors, philosophers, playwrights, painters, writers, sculptors, dancers, and historians share with us their talent and training, inspiring our finest achievements and giving voice to our deepest aspirations.

Because we discover our greatest possibilities through the exploration of the human spirit, we must encourage our young people to build on this cultural legacy and seek their highest potential in the arts and humanities. Children inspired by their own creative

achievements excel in other areas of learning, developing the skills and the confidence to create better lives and brighter futures.

As we observe National Arts and Humanities Month this year, let us reflect on the role of these vital pursuits in our individual lives and in the life of our democracy. Today, on the threshold of a new millennium, they are more essential than ever to the endurance of our values of tolerance, pluralism, and freedom; to our understanding of where we are and where we need to go. Let us remember that the arts and humanities are a necessity, not a luxury, and that every American deserves to have access to them. And let us resolve to sustain America's national commitment to the arts and humanities so that we may preserve for the generations to come the great artistic and intellectual life of our nation.

Bill Clinton

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 29.

Remarks on the Income and Poverty Report and an Exchange With Reporters

September 29, 1997

The President. I don't know if I can go on. [Laughter]

Good morning. This Friday will mark the sixth anniversary of the day I announced my intention to run for President of the United States. On that day, I challenged America to embrace an urgent mission for the 21st century, to preserve the American dream, restore the hopes of the forgotten middle class, and reclaim the future for our children.

As President, I have worked hard to set America on that track, to fulfill that mission, putting in place a bold strategy to shrink the deficit, invest in our people, and expand the sales of America's products and services abroad. I am pleased to announce today that we have more evidence that our economic strategy is succeeding.

This morning, the Census Bureau released its annual Survey of Income and Poverty in America. It shows that last year the typical family benefited from a significant increase