

only did they set goals about being the best on the basketball court, they set goals of becoming all-academic stars, and they were. They set goals of understanding the Golden Rule and living by it.

These are good people. And I'm sure your teammates are, as well. But they set the kind of example that America needs. And all of us who have got positions of responsibility, all of us, whether we're a President or a coach or a player or a president of a university, must understand that with that responsibility comes the necessity to set the right signal all throughout America that there's a difference between right and wrong, that we can be compassionate, and that we can love a neighbor like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

So it's my huge honor to welcome good teams and good people to the White House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Muffet McGraw, head women's basketball coach, and player Ruth Riley, University of Notre Dame; and Mike Krzyzewski, head men's basketball coach, and player Shane Battier, Duke University.

### Remarks on National Parks Week and National Volunteer Week and an Exchange With Reporters

April 23, 2001

**The President.** It's my honor for me to welcome and to be in the presence of one of my finest Ambassadors. The White House, I often say, doesn't belong to Laura and me; it belongs to the American people. And William Toth is a volunteer who works hard every day to ensure that every American feels right at home in the White House.

Mr. Toth has lived a life of service. In World War II, he served with distinction in General George Patton's army. He later became a professor at New York University. He worked hard to put his own daughters through college, and when the youngest graduated, he retired. But he refused to rest.

For the last 9 years, Mr. Toth has been bringing smiles to visitors' faces as they arrive at the White House. Whether handing out gold coins to visiting children or passing out

stories to adults, William makes sure that everyone leaves the White House with a memory.

America owes a great debt to William Toth. But like millions of volunteers across America, he will never ask us to repay it. And that's what makes his service, and the service of so many other volunteers, so unique.

The National Park Service has some of the best volunteers in the Nation. Whether it's here at the White House, at other sites around the Nation's Capital, or at the national parks around the country, National Park Service volunteers perform their duties with the simple goal of helping Americans enjoy our national treasures. They keep us connected to our history and help preserve America's natural beauty for future generations to enjoy.

That's why it's particularly fitting this week that we recognize both America's volunteers and America's national parks, for they both bring great joy to countless Americans.

At 77, William Toth continues to win over everyone he sees. In a letter she sent me last month, his daughter, Dawn, wrote, "I just want to let you know who you have in your corner. In some ways, he's America's most important diplomat. And he'll make you look darn good."

I know that can sometimes be a difficult task, and I appreciate all the help I can get, William. [*Laughter*] The truth is, Mr. Toth, you make America look darn good. I want to thank you for your tireless dedication, for working here at the White House. I want to thank the volunteers at the National Park Service, and the American people thank you from the bottom of their heart.

God bless.

### Arms Sales to Taiwan

**Q.** Mr. President, will Taiwan get the Aegis radar system this time?

**Q.** —sale to Taiwan?

**The President.** You'll find out when we make the—I make my decision clear.

**Q.** Have you made your decision, sir?

**The President.** Yes. I haven't made it clear yet, though. We'll let you know soon.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to Dawn Foreman, Tracy Toth, and Melissa Eckert, daughters of Mr. Toth.

### Remarks on Presenting the National Teacher of the Year Award

April 23, 2001

**The President.** Thank you all very much. Welcome to the Rose Garden. I was wondering if it was ever going to get warm in Washington. [Laughter] It does.

Mr. Secretary, thank you, and thanks for your kind introduction and thanks for your service to the children of our country. I don't know if you know this or not, but just last week in Monticello, Mississippi, there was a school named in Rod's honor. It's the school he attended as a young man.

What makes the story interesting is that students of his generation were segregated by race. No more in this great land called America. The Rod Paige Middle School will know loud and clear that education breaks down any barrier to success. Mr. Secretary, you're a role model for students across America, and for a couple of adults, as well.

**Education Secretary Roderick R. Paige.** Well, thank you. Thank you.

**The President.** And I'm proud to have you on my team.

**Secretary Paige.** Thank you.

**The President.** I'd like to thank the Council of Chief State School Officers, Scholastic, Inc., and the National Selection Committee for organizing this event. You've done a splendid job.

And I want to welcome to the White House, Peter McWalters, president of the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Gordon Ambach, its executive director. And I also want to welcome and congratulate 56 teachers of the year, from all across America.

You know, I used to say as the Governor of Texas, you can never thank a good teacher enough. Well, I'm going to try to do it as President: Thank you all, from the bottom of our hearts.

I especially want to congratulate the finalists: Christa Compton and Tonya Perry, Derek Minakami and Michele Forman, the National Teacher of the Year. I'll have a few

things more to say about Michele in a moment.

For a half century, the White House has hosted a ceremony honoring the National Teacher of the Year and the State Teachers of the Year. Every American President, since Harry Truman, has presented this award, and that's as it should be. What we honor tells the world what we value, and we value America's teachers.

"A teacher affects eternity," Henry Adams once wrote. He meant that their influence is unending. Teachers play a vital role in the intellectual and moral education of children. They teach children how to read and write, and they teach children right from wrong. They teach students to love knowledge and to disdain ignorance. Teachers inspire students, fire imaginations, nurture their natural abilities, and encourage them to explore the possibilities of life. They prepare good students to be good citizens. They also know better than anyone else they can't do it alone.

It's so important for the moms and dads of America to hear this message: Be a good parent; love your children; teach your children to read early in life; and support the teachers who are spending time with your most precious, precious part of your family.

One of my predecessors as Governor of Texas was a guy named Sam Houston. Sam Houston was a United States Senator, the Governor of two States, Texas and Tennessee. He was even a President—the President of the Republic of Texas. And yet, with all these impressive accomplishments, he wrote that being a teacher in Maryville, Tennessee, gave him a higher feeling of dignity and satisfaction than any other office or honor he ever held.

Well, this year's National Teacher of the Year, Michele Forman, demonstrates the dignity and satisfaction of teaching. Mrs. Forman teaches social studies at Middlebury Union High, in Middlebury, Vermont. She says this: "I think I have the best job in the world. Every day is something new."

Mrs. Forman arrives at school every day at 6:30 a.m., a full 2 hours before the students arrive. Three mornings a week she teaches Arabic, which she's been doing for the past 4 years. Students earn no credit by