

May God bless your talents, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:38 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor James A. Garner of Hempstead, NY; President Mireya Elisa Moscoso, Foreign Minister Harmodio Arias, and Ambassador to the United States Roberto Alfaro of Panama; writer and jazz critic Stanley Crouch; jazz musician Loren Schoenberg; and the Harlem Jazz Museum Artists musical group.

Proclamation 7687—Black Music Month, 2003

June 24, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For centuries, black artists have created or inspired distinctively American musical styles. During Black Music Month, we celebrate the ways that African-American music has helped shape American society and reflect the character of our Nation, and we recognize the pioneers who spearheaded these important musical forms.

Throughout history, African-American music has shown the social climate of the time. From the days of slavery and discrimination, through the progress of the Civil Rights movement, to today, black music has told the story of the African-American experience. In addition to giving voice to black struggles, faith, and joys, African-American music has helped also to bring people together. Before our Nation's strides toward equal justice, music such as jazz and blues provided a venue in which people of all races could be judged by their talent, and not the color of their skin.

The people who sang the earliest African-American music knew the worst of human cruelty and earthly injustice. In spirituals, work songs, and shouts, we hear the pain of separation and the bitterness of oppression. We also hear courage, and the comfort and strength of a faith that trusts God to right every wrong and wipe away every tear. These songs were used to share stories, spread

ideas, preserve history, and establish community.

Early work songs and spirituals laid the creative foundation for the development of gospel, blues, and jazz. In black churches throughout the south, gospel offered a medium to share the good news. The beauty of both gospel and the blues lies in their power to express emotions that can be felt as well as heard. The blues were first popularized in America by W.C. Handy. A classically trained musician, this "Father of the Blues" helped to compose and distribute blues music throughout the country. His music continues to touch people today.

In the early 20th century, the progression to jazz took place all over the country, from the deep south of New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta to northern cities such as Chicago and New York. Black artists migrated to Harlem, New York in large numbers, creating a culturally diverse hub for black art, writing, and music known as the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem became a place of energy and magic, and timeless music emerged from this period. The heart of the Harlem Renaissance is reflected in the original and authentic music of such influential figures as Bessie Smith, Count Basie, and Fletcher Henderson.

African Americans continued to influence popular music through the 1940s and 50s, with the emergence of rhythm and blues and rock and roll. These revolutionary styles built upon various forms of African-American music, fusing elements of jazz, blues, and gospel.

African-American music continues to influence the American music scene today with styles such as rap and hip-hop. As we celebrate the many creative and inspiring African-American artists whose efforts have enhanced our Nation, we recognize their enduring legacy and look to a future of continued musical achievement.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, 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 June 2003 as Black Music Month. I encourage Americans of all backgrounds to learn more about the heritage of black musicians, and to celebrate

the remarkable role they have played in our history and culture.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., June 25, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 26.

Statement on the Death of Bob Stump

June 24, 2003

Congressman Bob Stump lived a distinguished life of service as a World War II veteran, an Arizona State legislator, and a United States Congressman. He was a gifted leader who remained true to his principles and made an indelible mark on those who were fortunate enough to know him. As one of the few Members of Congress who served as chairman of both the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Armed Services Committee, he was admired for his tireless efforts on behalf of the men and women in uniform. Laura joins me in sending our thoughts and prayers to Nancy and the entire Stump family during this difficult time.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Homeland Security Legislation

June 24, 2003

I commend the House of Representatives for acting quickly to approve funds for our continued effort to strengthen homeland security and protect the American people. I'm particularly pleased that the House bill supports my request to help train, equip, and prepare first-responders across our Nation. The bill also supports important core functions of the newly created Department of Homeland Security, including border secu-

urity, infrastructure protection, and information analysis.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders

June 25, 2003

Medicare Reform Legislation

The President. Thank you all for coming. I'll take some questions at the end of the EU Summit. I'm so honored that members of both political parties from the House of Representatives have come to discuss our mutual desire to get a Medicare reform package passed. Members of both parties have made up their minds that we can do a good job on behalf of seniors by making sure that Medicare is a modern system.

We are making great progress on this issue. We have an historic opportunity to seize the moment and get a good bill done. There's good momentum on the side of those of us who believe that we have an obligation to serve something greater than ourselves or our political parties. And I want to thank, again, members of both parties who are working hard to reach a consensus on behalf of our country's seniors.

We've got Nancy Johnson and Congressman Israel here, who are very competent spokesmen for what is necessary to achieve a common objective. And I want to thank the Members. I look forward to working with you. Whatever amount of energy and effort is required from the White House, we will provide it, to get a bill done this summer, one that I can sign, and then we can all go back to our districts—in my case, tour the country—and say we have accomplished a major objective. Together—we work together.

Thank you all for coming. Now you're supposed to yell a question so I know what you're going to ask later on. [Laughter]

Q. What are you going to tell the undecided Republicans this afternoon?

The President. Wrong question. [Laughter]

Q. The economy?

The President. The economy? Okay, good. We know about that. That's good. [Laughter]