

Members of Congress. Gerald Ford rose to become a leader of his party, and he earned the respect and good will of all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Gerald Ford always believed in the importance of answering the call to duty, and he was there for the Nation when we needed him most. In December 1973, he accepted the responsibilities of the Vice Presidency. And the following August, he became President of the United States without ever seeking the office. Providence gave us Gerald Ford's steady hand and calm leadership during a time of great division and turmoil. He guided America through a crisis of confidence and helped our Nation mend its wounds by restoring faith in our system of government.

In his 2½ years as President, Gerald Ford distinguished himself as a man of integrity and selfless dedication. He always put the needs of his country before his own and did what he thought was right, even when those decisions were unpopular. Only years later would Americans come to fully appreciate the foresight and wisdom of this good man.

In recent years, Americans have honored Gerald Ford with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Congressional Gold Medal, and the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award.

Through it all, Gerald Ford stayed true to the values that first led him to a life of public service, and he helped share that spirit with a future generation of leaders. He served as a mentor for Vice President Dick Cheney, former Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan, and many others. He brought out the best in those around him and in our whole Nation.

To the end, Gerald Ford never lost the spirit that Americans grew to admire so much. This spring, I visited President and Mrs. Ford at their home in Rancho Mirage, California. At age 92 and battling health problems, he was still telling jokes and displaying the optimism that helped guide our Nation through some of its darkest hours.

Now America will stand with the members of the Ford family in the difficult hours and days ahead. Across the country, there has been an outpouring of grief and affection for

President Ford. I've ordered flags to fly at halfstaff for 30 days in his honor. This weekend, his body will lie in state at the United States Capitol. And on Tuesday, Laura and I will join former Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Carter at a funeral service at the National Cathedral as part of a National Day of Mourning.

Gerald Ford's life spanned nine decades and took him from the football fields of his boyhood in Michigan to the halls of power in Washington, DC. At every stage of his journey, he displayed a decency, patriotism, and courage that Americans will always admire. As we say goodbye to the year 2006, we bid farewell to one of the finest public servants America has ever known. We give thanks for the gift of his remarkable life, for the caring man who touched so many lives, and the wise President who helped heal our Nation.

May God bless Gerald R. Ford. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on December 29 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 29 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## **Message on the Observance of New Year's Day, 2007**

*December 31, 2006*

Over the past year, we have reached important goals and confronted new challenges. At the start of this New Year, we move forward with trust in the power of the American spirit, confidence in our purpose, and faith in a loving God who created us to be free.

In 2006, the number of jobs steadily increased, wages grew, the unemployment rate dropped, and we achieved our goal of cutting the deficit in half three years ahead of schedule. Thanks to the hard work and innovation of the American people, our economy has been growing faster than any other major developed nation. Significant tax relief has helped our citizens keep more of what they earn and fuel an economy that is vigorous

and healthy. My Administration will continue to work to help create more jobs, reduce the deficit, and spread prosperity to all our citizens.

Last year, America continued its mission to fight and win the war on terror and promote liberty as an alternative to tyranny and despair. In the New Year, we will remain on the offensive against the enemies of freedom, advance the security of our country, and work toward a free and unified Iraq. Defeating terrorists and extremists is the challenge of our time, and we will answer history's call with confidence and fight for liberty without waver-

ing. Our Nation depends on the fine men and women in uniform who serve our country with valor and distinction, and we remain mindful of their dedication and sacrifice. America's troops and their families exemplify the great character of our country, and they have earned the respect and admiration of a grateful Nation.

As we celebrate the New Year, we look with hope to the year ahead and the opportunities it will bring.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a happy New Year. May God bless you, may God bless our troops and their families, and may God bless America.

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

### **Eulogy at the National Funeral Service for Former President Gerald R. Ford**

*January 2, 2007*

Mrs. Ford; the Ford family; distinguished guests, including our Presidents and First Ladies; and our fellow citizens:

We are here today to say goodbye to a great man. Gerald Ford was born and reared in the American heartland. He belonged to a generation that measured men by their honesty and their courage. He grew to manhood under the roof of a loving mother and father. And when times were tough, he took part-time jobs to help them out. In President Ford, the world saw the best of America, and

America found a man whose character and leadership would bring calm and healing to one of the most divisive moments in our Nation's history.

Long before he was known in Washington, Gerald Ford showed his character and his leadership. As a star football player for the University of Michigan, he came face to face with racial prejudice when Georgia Tech came to Ann Arbor for a football game. One of Michigan's best players was an African American student named Willis Ward. Georgia Tech said they would not take the field if a black man were allowed to play. Gerald Ford was furious at Georgia Tech for making the demand and for the University of Michigan for caving in. He agreed to play only after Willis Ward personally asked him to. The stand Gerald Ford took that day was never forgotten by his friend. And Gerald Ford never forgot that day either—and three decades later, he proudly supported the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act in the United States Congress.

Gerald Ford showed his character in the devotion to his family. On the day he became President, he told the Nation, "I am indebted to no man and only to one woman—to my dear wife." By then Betty Ford had a pretty good idea of what marriage to Gerald Ford involved. After all, their wedding had taken place less than 3 weeks before his first election to the United States Congress, and his idea of a honeymoon was driving to Ann Arbor with his bride so they could attend a brunch before the Michigan-Northwestern game the next day. [Laughter] And that was the beginning of a great marriage. The Fords would have four fine children. And Steve, Jack, Mike, and Susan know that, as proud as their dad was of being President, Gerald Ford was even prouder of the other titles he held: father and grandfather and great-grandfather.

Gerald Ford showed his character in the uniform of our country. When Pearl Harbor was attacked in December 1941, Gerald Ford was an attorney fresh out of Yale Law School, but when his Nation called, he did not hesitate. In early 1942 he volunteered for the Navy and, after receiving his commission, worked hard to get assigned to a ship headed into combat. Eventually his wish was