

year a Vietnamese-American achieved a mathematical breakthrough that will make it easier to conduct high-quality videoconferencing. And all America took notice when Hoang Nhu Tran graduated number one in his class at the United States Air Force Academy.

Vietnamese-Americans have flourished not just because of their unique abilities and their good values but also because they have had the opportunity to make the most of their abilities and their values. As your opportunities grow, to live, to learn, to express your creativity, there will be no stopping the people of Vietnam. And you will find, I am certain, that the American people will be by your side. For in this interdependent world, we truly do have a stake in your success.

Almost 200 years ago, at the beginning of the relations between the United States and Vietnam, our two nations made many attempts to negotiate a treaty of commerce, sort of like the trade agreement that we signed today. But 200 years ago, they all failed, and no treaty was concluded. Listen to what one historian said about what happened 200 years ago, and think how many times it could have been said in the two centuries since. He said, "These efforts failed because two distant cultures were talking past each other, and the importance of each to the other was insufficient to overcome these barriers."

Let the days when we talk past each other be gone for good. Let us acknowledge our importance to one another. Let us continue to help each other heal the wounds of war, not by forgetting the bravery shown and the tragedy suffered by all sides but by embracing the spirit of reconciliation and the courage to build better tomorrows for our children.

May our children learn from us that good people, through respectful dialog, can discover and rediscover their common humanity and that a painful, painful past can be redeemed in a peaceful and prosperous future.

Thank you for welcoming me and my family and our American delegation to Vietnam. Thank you for your faith in the future. *Chuc cac ban suc khoe va thanh cong.*<sup>2</sup>

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. in the auditorium of the university. In his remarks, he referred to Hieu Ngan Tran, Vietnamese Olympic silver medalist in tae kwon do; Vietnamese national soccer team members Le Huynh Duc and Nguyen Hong Son; and Lt. Gen. Le Kha Phieu, secretary general, Vietnam Communist Party. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary included the English translation of the Vietnamese phrases. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Statement on Signing Legislation To Establish National Birmingham Pledge Week**

*November 17, 2000*

Recently I signed into law House Joint Resolution 102, designating National Birmingham Pledge Week. This resolution recognizes that the Birmingham Pledge is making a significant contribution in fostering racial harmony and reconciliation in the United States and around the world. By signing the pledge, signatories state their belief in the worth of every individual, that every person is entitled to dignity and respect regardless of race or color, and that every act of racial prejudice is harmful to all. Those who sign pledge themselves to actively discourage racial prejudice in themselves and others. They recognize that in honoring this pledge, they are making the world a better place.

It is entirely fitting that this pledge began in the city of Birmingham, a place of some of our most painful racial strife. We remember in particular the September 15, 1963, bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and the death of four children there. We know that the conflicts of the past are not fully resolved today and that we have new challenges before us. The United States is now more diverse than ever in terms of race, ethnic groups, and religion. At the same time, our world is witness to a resurgence of society's oldest demon, the inability to love our neighbors as ourselves.

In my lifetime, our Nation has never had the chance we now have to build the future of our dreams for our children. To do it, we

<sup>2</sup> May you have health and success.

will have to embrace our common humanity with humility and gratitude.

Hillary and I were proud to sign the Birmingham Pledge in 1998. We applaud this effort to recognize its importance nationally. We urge all Americans to use National Birmingham Pledge Week as a powerful tool for helping to build the future of our dreams for all our children, a dream of one America.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 102, approved November 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-483.

### **Statement on the Death of Hosea Williams**

*November 17, 2000*

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of an American foot soldier for freedom and a driving force for the Voting Rights Act, Hosea Williams. From his bravery in the fields of battle in World War II to his leadership in the civil rights struggle at home, Hosea Williams was a profile in courage. One of the greatest honors of my Presidency was walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge with him on the 35th anniversary of the Selma march earlier this year. Hosea Williams dedicated his entire life to making sure we never take a detour on the road to freedom. He helped us all cross the bridge to a better and more just world. With his memory as a guide, we'll keep marching on. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

### **Statement on Signing Legislation To Establish a Memorial and Gardens in Honor of Frederick Douglass**

*November 17, 2000*

I recently signed into law H.R. 5331, a bill "To authorize the Frederick Douglass Gardens, Inc., to establish a memorial and gardens on Department of the Interior lands in the District of Columbia or its environs in honor and commemoration of Frederick Douglass."

It is appropriate that the memorial and gardens be located in Washington, DC, the Nation's Capital, as Mr. Douglass' life was a testament to the democratic principles

upon which the Nation was founded. Born into slavery, Frederick Douglass became a renowned international spokesman for liberty, the abolition of slavery, and social reform. Throughout his life, he was a noted publisher of several periodicals and papers in which he discussed the political and social disenfranchisement of Americans of African ancestry. As an American truly committed to the Nation's progress toward the attainment of liberty and justice for all, Frederick Douglass recruited African-Americans for the Union Army during the Civil War; two of his sons served in the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, which was solely comprised of African-Americans. Moreover, Frederick Douglass served as the president of the Freedmen's National Bank, the U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia, and in several diplomatic positions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Because of his unyielding faith in and his commitment to the fundamental democratic principles of our Nation, I am pleased to approve this legislation honoring one of the Nation's great citizens.

NOTE: H.R. 5331, approved November 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-479.

### **Remarks to the American Embassy Community in Hanoi**

*November 17, 2000*

*The President.* Thank you very much. I want to thank Senator Kerry for what he said and for what he's done all these years and for being a wonderful friend to Hillary and me in many, many ways. And I want to thank Sandy Berger and our whole team in the White House and State Department for supporting this trip from the beginning. And I want to associate myself with what Hillary said—now that she's going to be a Senator, I can just let her give the speeches, and I can say, "I completely agree." And that will save everyone from having to hear two speeches. [*Laughter*]

But I do want to say a couple of things, if I might. First, I, too, want to thank you for the endless hours you have put in in preparation for this trip and for the work you have