

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

98TH ANNUAL DINNER
THE GRIDIRON CLUB

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 1983
CAPITOL HILTON HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

(FOLLOWING PRESIDENT'S REAGAN SONG "MANANA"):

THE NUMBER TO CALL IN NEW JERSEY IS MURRAY HILL 8-5000.

ALL DURING THE PRESIDENT'S SONG, CHARLIE MCDOWELL KEPT SAYING, "YOU CAN NEVER FIND A GONG WHEN YOU NEED ONE".

AFTER LISTENING TO THE PRESIDENT SING, I CAN ONLY SAY...
THE EPA IS NOT HIS ONLY PROBLEM.

THE PRESIDENT WANTS THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO KNOW THAT HE'S WILLING TO APPEAR AT THE SALT TALKS....BUT ONLY IF HE CAN SING THE CLOSING NUMBER.

WILL SOMEONE PLEASE TELL CLAUDE PEPPER HE CAN TURN HIS HEARING AID BACK ON.

THE GRIDIRON IS ALWAYS PACKED. IT'S A SHAME THAT HARD-WORKING EVERYDAY PEOPLE COULDN'T GET IN TONIGHT....THAT'S WHY JERRY BROWN'S WAITING OUT IN THE PARKING LOT. THERE'S ONLY ONE THING MORE DIFFICULT THAN GETTING INTO THIS DINNER....FINDING RITA LAVELLE.

HERE I AM, WITH NO PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRATIONS....(LONG PAUSE)....
TONIGHT....OUTRANKED BY MY OWN WIFE, AND FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENT
WHO THINKS THAT DIFFERENT STROKES IS A MEDICAL SHOW.

IN ANY EVENT, I WANT TO EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO PRESIDENT
AND MRS. REAGAN -- THE SECOND MOST POWERFUL COUPLE IN WASHINGTON.

JOHN GLENN GAVE A BIG SIGH OF RELIEF WHEN HE SAT DOWN....
SO DID THE REST OF US.

IT TOOK THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE TO PUT JOHN INTO SPACE....
IT TOOK FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY TO GET HIM UP HERE TONIGHT.

I TOLD JOHN IT WASN'T FAIR FOR HIM TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS
HERO STATUS AS AN ASTRONAUT. I MENTIONED THIS TO HIM AT THE
UNVEILING OF THE PORTRAIT....SHOWING ME INVADING ITALY.

I ASKED JOHN HOW HE WOULD RATE TONIGHT'S AUDIENCE ON A SCALE
OF ONE TO TEN. JOHN SAID....TEN...NINE...EIGHT...SEVEN...

WE ALL CAME HERE TONIGHT WONDERING IF JOHN HAD A SENSE OF
HUMOR....WE'RE ALL LEAVING THE SAME WAY.

WELL, LET ME SAY THE SKITS WERE GREAT....WELL...AT LEAST...
NINE OF THEM.

THE SKIT ABOUT ELIZABETH AND ME WAS A LITTLE ROUGH....OBVIOUSLY
WRITTEN BY THREE BANKERS AND FRITZ MONDALE.

NOT THAT I AM UNPOPULAR WITH BANKERS, BUT JUST BEFORE I LEFT
HOME TONIGHT, MINE CAME BY AND PICKED UP HIS TOASTER AND SET OF
DISHES. HE THEN ASKED ME TO MOVE MY IRA ACCOUNT TO AN INSURANCE COMPANY.

I REALLY WISH FRITZ WAS HERE TONIGHT....I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM
SINCE THE '76 DEBATE. I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT DEBATE....AND DON'T
THINK I HAVEN'T TRIED. I WON'T SAY HOW WE DID, BUT HALFWAY THROUGH,
THREE EMPTY CHAIRS GOT UP AND WALKED OUT. I WENT IN FOR A BRAIN
SCAN AFTERWARDS, AND THE DOCTOR GAVE ME MY MONEY BACK.

THIS YEAR WHEN FRITZ ANNOUNCED HIS CANDIDACY FOR PRESIDENT...
HE SOLEMNLY TOLD THE MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE..."I KNOW MY COUNTRY.
AND I KNOW MYSELF...BUT I DECIDED TO RUN ANYWAY".

WELL, THERE ARE A LOT OF FUN PEOPLE HERE TONIGHT...I WAS SEATED
NEXT TO GEORGE SHULTZ ...I ASKED HIM WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE
CARIBBEAN BASIN...HE SAID "IT'S OKAY...BUT PERSONALLY, I LIKE A
SHOWER BETTER".

THERE'S JIM WATT...JUST INVITED BY THE SIERRA CLUB TO GO MOUNTAIN CLIMBING....THEY PROMISED TO BRING THE ROPE.

I OVERHEARD A REPORTER ASK JIM HOW LONG IT HAD BEEN SINCE HE OFFENDED ANYONE...AND HE RESPONDED, "WHAT TIME IS IT?".

OH WELL, WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT A MAN WHOSE DREAM IS TO HAVE A PARKING LOT NAMED IN HIS HONOR?

TIP O'NEILL COULDN'T BE HERE TONIGHT....HE'S HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE....HE'S FINALLY ADMITTED HE'S TOOTSIE'S FATHER.

MY GOOD FRIEND JIM WRIGHT IS HERE.....THE MAN WHO TAUGHT LEONID BREZHNEV HOW TO BLOW-DRY HIS EYEBROWS.

THE PRESIDENT'S COUSIN, DAN RATHER, IS HERE. DAN IS DEPRESSED TONIGHT...BECAUSE IT WAS SO COLD YESTERDAY HE HAD TO JUMP-START HIS SWEATER. DAN, YOU MAKE JOAN RIVERS SEEM LIKE MOTHER THERESA.

IT'S ESPECIALLY GOOD TO SEE BOB NOVAK. AS ONE WHO FOR MANY YEARS ENJOYED EDGAR BERGEN, IT'S REASSURING TO KNOW THAT BERGEN'S ART DID NOT DIE WITH HIM.

THE PLACE IS OVERRUN WITH POLITICIANS, WHICH CALLS TO MIND THE TIDE OF CYNICISM IN OUR COUNTRY. IT IS BEST EXPRESSED BY THE TWO GUYS SITTING IN A PENITENTIARY CELL IN ANOTHER STATE....ONE TURNED TO THE OTHER AND SAID, "THE FOOD WAS BETTER HERE WHEN YOU WERE GOVERNOR".

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ABOUT THE ONLY WASHINGTON NOTABLES NOT HERE ARE LING-LING AND HSING-HSING, WHO AFTER A LOT OF HARD WORK BY ZOO OFFICIALS HAVE FINALLY MATED. IF THEY WERE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, THEY WOULD HAVE MADE IT MONTHS AGO.

GRIDIRON RECORDS WILL SHOW NEARLY EVERY PRESIDENT HAS ATTENDED, WHICH REMINDS ME THAT HISTORY BUFFS PROBABLY NOTED THE REUNION AT A WASHINGTON PARTY A FEW WEEKS AGO OF THREE EX-PRESIDENTS: CARTER, FORD AND NIXON -- SEE NO EVIL...HEAR NO EVIL...AND EVIL. FORD DIDN'T KNOW CARTER AND NIXON WERE GOING TO BE THERE...JUST BUMPED INTO THEM.

MENTIONING NIXON REMINDS ME THAT BILL RUCKELSHAUS WAS ONE OF THE FEW NIXON-ERA OFFICIALS TO ESCAPE WATERGATE UNSCATHED.... PRESIDENT REAGAN BELIEVES IN GIVING EVERYONE A SECOND CHANCE.

RUCKELSHAUS IS A FORMER ENVIRONMENTALIST WHO SWITCHED OVER TO REPRESENT A GIANT LUMBER COMPANY. NOW ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND INDUSTRIALISTS...BOTH EXPECTING TO GET HOSED...ARE REFERRING TO EPA AS "THE BEST LITTLE RUCKELSHAUS IN WASHINGTON".

YOU GOTTA FEEL SORRY FOR ANN GORSUCH-BURFORD...A NICE LADY... WHO MADE HER BIGGEST MISTAKE IN THE MIDST OF THE HOUSE HEARINGS WHEN SHE REFERRED TO THE DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FROM MICHIGAN AS A DINGELLING.

THE EPA PROBLEMS CALL TO MIND AGAIN THE DIFFICULTY PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS FIRING PEOPLE. HAD HE BEEN PRESIDENT DURING THE '50'S, DOUGLAS MACARTHUR WOULD STILL BE LIVING IN JAPAN.

BY THE WAY, IF YOU DISAGREED WITH NIXON'S ACTION AGAINST JOHN LENNON...I HAVE WORSE NEWS...PRESIDENT REAGAN'S TRYING TO DEPORT LAWRENCE WELK.

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO DISCUSS THE 7 ANNOUNCED DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES, BUT MY FAVORITE...STILL WAITING IN THE WINGS...IS BOB STRAUSS....WELL-KNOWN, WELL-RESPECTED, AND WELL-BACK IN THE POLLS.

COMPARED TO BOB STRAUSS, RUBIN ASKEW AND DALE BUMPERS ARE FRONT-RUNNERS. HE IS A MAN WHO CAN TALK TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.... WHETHER THEY UNDERSTAND HIM OR NOT. OF COURSE, HE IS NOT AN ASTRONAUT. IN FACT, THE CLOSEST HE EVER CAME TO OUTER SPACE WAS THE TIME HE TALKED TO BILLY CARTER.

BUT MY REAL PURPOSE HERE TONIGHT IS TO ENDORSE PRESIDENT REAGAN'S RE-ELECTION....NOT BECAUSE OF HIS RECORD...OR HIS SINGING... BUT BECAUSE OF THE ALTERNATIVES.

I JUST CAN'T PICTURE HOWARD BAKER IN THE WHITE HOUSE. I DON'T WANT TO SAY HOWARD IS SHORT, BUT LAST WEEK I SAW HIM PLAYING HANDBALL AGAINST THE CURB.

AND MY GOOD FRIEND GEORGE BUSH CAN'T WIN....HE'S THE ONLY ONE HERE TONIGHT WHO WILL HAVE TO SHOW AN I.D. CARD TO GET OUT.

YES, THERE'S JACK KEMP....EVEN AS A KID, JACK WANTED TO PLAY QUARTERBACK....BECAUSE HE'S THE ONLY ONE ON THE FIELD WHO GETS TO TALK ALL THE TIME.

AND JESSE HELMS IS READY ON THE RIGHT....HE'LL RUN ON HIS NEW SOCIAL SECURITY PLAN: NO BENEFITS, BUT GENEROUS BURIAL ALLOWANCES.

AND I CAN SAY IF THE PRESIDENT RUNS....DOLE WILL NOT BE A CANDIDATE. (MRS. DOLE STANDS UP...."SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, SWEETHEART").

THIS EVENING IS ONE OF LAUGHTER, THE BEST KNOWN ANTIDOTE TO SELF-IMPORTANCE AND THE SHORTSIGHTEDNESS THAT THRIVES IN THIS CITY OF HEADLINES AND DEADLINES. IT IS GOOD THAT WE LAUGH AT OURSELVES OR MILLIONS OF OTHERS WILL DO IT FOR US. A DOSE OF HUMILITY IS WELCOME MEDICINE. IT SUGGESTS WE HAVEN'T ABANDONED OUR SENSE OF PROPORTION, EVEN HERE, WHERE THE ONLY THING TALLER THAN THE WASHINGTON

MONUMENT ARE POLITICAL EGOS.

I HAVE BEEN COMING TO THESE DINNERS FOR A GENERATION NOW AND DURING THAT TIME I HAVE SEEN A TURBULENT ERA OF RAISED EXPECTATIONS AND DASHED HOPES. I HAVE GRIEVED FOR A STRING OF TRUNCATED PRESIDENCIES. AND I HAVE DONE MY SHARE OF POSTURING AND FINGER-POINTING. IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, I HAVE WITNESSED THE REDEFINITION OF CONSERVATISM, WHICH USED TO BE KNOWN AS A POLICY OF MAKE NO CHANGE, AND WHEN IN DOUBT, CONSULT YOUR GRANDMOTHER.

TODAY, WE HAVE ALL BROKEN WITH THE PAST -- AND YET HERE AT THE GRIDIRON, BOTH PAST AND PRESENT ENJOY A COMFORTABLE -- IF SIZZLING -- RELATIONSHIP. HERE, MEMORY PAYS TRIBUTE TO OTHERS WHO MADE US LAUGH AND SOMETIMES MOVED US TO TEARS. AND HERE WE ARE REMINDED THAT THIS CITY, LIKE THE COUNTRY SHE GOVERNS, IS A COAT OF MANY COLORS, A MIRROR HELD UP TO REFLECT THE DIVERSITY THAT IS AMERICA'S GREATEST STRENGTH. WE COME HERE FROM MANY POINTS ON THE COMPASS. WE REMAIN AWHILE, TO INTRODUCE OUR BILLS,

ISSUE OUR PRESS RELEASES, FILE OUR STORIES, COMPOSE OUR COLUMNS.
HISTORY SIFTS OUT THE BEST WITHIN US, AND DRAWS A CHARITABLE
CURTAIN OVER THE REST.

JUSTICE HOLMES PUT IT BEST HALF A CENTURY AGO. "WE ARE THE
LEADERS OF THE WHOLE STREAM OF LIFE," HE SAID. "WE LEAD IT IN THE
SAME SENSE THAT SMALL BOYS LEAD A CIRCUS PARADE WHEN THEY MARCH
AHEAD OF IT. BUT IF THEY TURN DOWN A SIDESTREET, THE PARADE GOES
ON."

MR. PRESIDENT, YOU HAVE LED US WELL, YOU HAVE AVOIDED THE
SIDESTREETS. AND I TAKE HEART FROM THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WHATEVER
YOU OR I OR ANYONE OF US MAY DO, THE AMERICAN PARADE WILL GO ON,
PROPELLED BY A VISION TWO CENTURIES OLD -- THE DREAM OF AN INCLUSIVE
SOCIETY, WHERE INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS ARE WEDDED TO SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES,
AND FREEDOM TO CHOOSE MEANS OBLIGATION TO SERVE.