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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT A
RECEPTION FOR LEE ELDER

WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL

7:05 P.M. EST

Let me just make a few observations and comments. It is so nice for me personally to have an opportunity to be here with Lee and Rose and to pay tribute not only to Lee's great prowess and capability, skill, competitive spirit on the golf links, but also to pay tribute to a wonderful pair. Between Lee and Rose, I don't think, from my observations, you could find a nicer pair, and I compliment both of them.

I think most of you know that I am a sports buff, a has-been who really reads the sports page first every morning, because you at least get a 50-50 break on the sports page. But nevertheless, to be here and to participate in a small way in paying tribute to Lee and to Rose I consider a great privilege and a high honor.

I have watched Lee, of course, over the years. I do watch those tournaments. I have some work in my lap, and then I watch the drives and the putts and wish I could do as well, and I get about half the work done and the rest of the time I am envious of all the skill of Lee. I met Jim Colbert, Jim Weickers, and I met Jim Dent's wife. I don't know whether I met Jim or not. (Laughter)

Anyhow, I think sports, athletics are very important in our American society, and it was a great thrill for me a couple of weeks ago to play 18 with Lee and John Pohanka and Les Arends. Lee gave me a little advice, and that advice was very sound.

In fact, it was very good, and the newspapers printed it. It was so good that Henry Kissinger was getting a little worried. But anyhow, I think that Lee and I have a great deal in common. You won't think so at the outset. We both are in occupations where there is some spotlight. We are both in occupations where there is a lot of competition. We are both in occupations where the press kind of look at you and see whether you make a mistake or not.

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(OVER)

All I can say is that the goofs that we make really get publicized. The good part of it is that Lee doesn't make as many as I do. (Laughter)

But the thing that really impresses me about this turnout is the fact that all of you people are here, and many from all over the country, to pay tribute to a person who has achieved what we think in the sports world is a great accomplishment -- the right to compete in the Master's Tournament at Augusta.

I must watch that. I could never compete in it, but I admire and respect everybody who has accomplished that great objective. You know, next April when Lee is a participant, I am going to be watching on that television set, pulling for Lee to show them that the guy that makes it one year can also win the tournament.

The reason all of you are here is to contribute to a Lee Elder scholarship fund, a fund that is aimed at giving a better education to one or more young people. As we look around the world today, I think we have to recognize that better education is one way for not only us individually, but our country and the world, to do better in the future.

I thank all of you who have come here and have contributed because you are not only paying a tribute to Lee, but you are making a good investment in a better America.

One final comment. I don't think many people will remember 1975 as the year that Jerry Ford was President, but they will remember that 1975 was the year that Lee Elder won the Master's.

Good luck to you, Lee. It is nice to be here. You are a great American and a great tribute to golf.

I am going to see you at the Kemperer; I am going to see you at Doral; I have been to the Doral several times, and I am going to -- there is one other that I have committed -- Jackie Gleason in Inverness. I am Honorary Chairman of that.

It is nice to be here.

END (AT 7:10 P.M. EST)