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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
CHICAGO YACHT CLUB

9:25 P.M. CDT

Mayor Daley, let me express my very deep gratitude and appreciation of the invitation to join you and your many friends in Chicago on this occasion when you, and all of us, are paying tribute to the Star Class group, not only from the United States, but internationally.

I am most appreciative of the opportunity to meet this group of outstanding sailors and all that goes with being a good sailor, and I thank you very, very much for the opportunity.

Before I begin, I would like to ask an important question. I would most respectfully like to know if there is any correlation between the fact that sailing is one sport that needs a great deal of wind and your invitation for me to speak here tonight. (Laughter)

As an old Navy man, it is a great pleasure to be rubbing shoulders with so many fine skippers and their fine crews, and I am deeply grateful to you, Mr. Mayor, and the City of Chicago for making this evening possible.

While Mayor Daley and I don't always see eye to eye on politics -- he tends to favor the port tack and I tend to favor the starboard tack -- I am delighted we have always been able to join together for wonderful evenings like this tonight.

Let me extend very forcefully my best to all of the participants and the officials of the 1975 World's Championship of the International Star Class Yacht Racing Association. In particular, I would welcome the skippers and the crews that have come from Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, the Bahamas, Canada and Brazil that are competing in the races this week.

I hope -- and I say this most sincerely -- that you will enjoy your visit to the United States and take with you many happy memories of your visit to Chicago and to the United States as a whole.

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Let me also congratulate the members of the Chicago Yacht Club on your centennial celebration. I hope your next 100 years will be as rewarding and as memorable as this.

There are so many great champions, and so many great celebrities in the yachting world here this evening, and I have been talking to Bill Parks about all of you who are great experts and great dignitaries in this area.

But, I have to admit that one skipper and crew in particular has caught my eye. I would like to ask them to stand up and take a bow -- the skipper of Star Number 5607, Dean Schumacher, and his very talented and capable crew -- Jerry Ford. (Laughter)

Jerry, all I can say is I have been crew and now I am a skipper, and believe me, being a part of the crew is easier. (Laughter)

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Everyone I have talked to, both before and during the dinner, is already aware of the fact that I am not an expert on sailing, but I have done some of this over in Michigan's wonderful inland lakes, and a bit on Lake Michigan over on the other side of this lake.

I was a crew member, but never qualified as a skipper. Then when I got into the Navy, I served all my sea duty in World War Two on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific -- the U.S.S. Monterey -- but if you will pardon a little pride and nostalgia, of course, in the South Pacific the Monterey, according to the crew, was also a star.

• Since then, the only sailing I have done has been on occasional cruises up and down the Potomac. And so it is a new world, as far as I am concerned, what you have told me tonight through Bill Parks and others about star racing, I like and admire.

For instance, I understand there will be six races in this championship, and the rules permit each skipper to throw out his worst race.

Mayor Daley, I know a lot of politicians. (Laughter) I know a lot of politicians who would like to have those same rules in the game. (Laughter)

But the aspect of star racing that I admire most is the emphasis on personal skill and instinct. What really counts, as all of you know very well, is the skipper and the crew and how they measure up against every other skipper and the crew. Equipment and design are not the determining factors. Experience, knowhow and guts really are the criteria.

Tonight, Mr. Mayor, I am extremely grateful to you and to all of you for allowing me to share some of the flavor, the stories and some of the excitement of star sailing. Bill Parks has done a wonderful job in giving me the history and the experiences he has had and all of you have had in this great competition.

In tomorrow's races and those that follow, I wish you all could win. But in just being part of this very special sport, I know that you feel it has been a great and rewarding experience.

Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor, and good night.

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(AT 9:32 P.M. CDT)