

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Miami Beach, Florida)

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND

BOB HOPE

AND

MRS. CLAUDE PEPPER

AT A

BENEFIT FOR PARKINSON'S DISEASE

THE FONTAINEBLEAU HOTEL

10:30 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Bob, Congressman Pepper, his wonderful wife Mildred, and all of the other outstanding people who have participated in this program tonight. I just thought I would drop in to indicate in person my total support for the major national effort that is being made in Parkinson's disease.

I am, of course, familiar with what your organization has done. I know this is the 17th annual get-together that shows the dedication and the complete, total effort that is being made.

I was extremely honored a month or so ago at the urging of my good friend Claude Pepper to issue a national proclamation pointing out to our fellow Americans the need for action, the need for understanding in the area of Parkinson's disease. I did it not only because of Claude's insistence but because I knew good people like you were really behind the effort that is needed and necessary to solve the problem, and I thank you very, very much.

It is a real thrill for me to meet Mrs. Levey Jeanne, she says, Mrs. Jeanne Levey -- who I know has done so much for so many years in this very important area.

I just can't thank you enough for the warm welcome, Mildred. Where is old Claude? (Laughter)

MRS. PEPPER: Mr. President, he is not that old. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I have to kid him a little bit, Mildred, you know. He is a great friend of mine and I appreciate what he and you and Mrs. Levey, or Jeanne -- what is your name -- (Laughter) -- I owe him a couple of putts on the golf course and I am going to get that money back the next time we play, if he gives me enough strokes. (Laughter)

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MR. HOPE: Well, can I have this one second and tell you that you are the best finale we ever had. (Laughter) You are. We have a couple of wonderful people here and you have done a tremendous job toward this great cause.

MRS. PEPPER: And, Mr. President, women, you know, they have to do a lot of talking.

Ladies and gentlemen, you know Claude and I are good Democrats but you know President Ford and Mrs. Ford, Betty -- we know her very affectionately as Betty -- she is in my international club, one of the loveliest ladies that I have ever known in my life and you know the President is a wonderful man. He deserves a better party. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: May I have the last word, please? (Laughter)

Last night I was in Florida and I called back to Washington to talk to Betty to let her know that everything had gone very well, that all the wonderful people in Florida had been very hospitable, and she said Mildred had called and said that she thought it would be a good idea if I came down here and saw Claude and her and Bob and Mrs. Levey and like a good husband, here I am. (Laughter)

END (AT 10:36 P.M. EST)