

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 22, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON BEING PRESENTED THE MASONIC MEDALLION
FROM THE GRAND LODGE
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE ROSE GARDEN

12:24 P.M. EST

Let me say Worshipful Layton, distinguished officers of the Grand Lodge and honorable past Grand Masters, that this is a wonderful, wonderful thought on your part and I am most grateful for being included with the father of our country on this silver medallion.

I, of course, have a very special allegiance to the Lodge here in the District of Columbia because although I started back in Grand Rapids, because I was in Congress it was not possible for me to participate, and as a result the brothers here in the District of Columbia were very helpful and I actually got my degrees here in Washington, D. C. So I thank those that participated and I am highly honored to have the opportunity here in the District of Columbia.

You noted that I am the fourteenth President that belonged to the Masonic Fraternity. I also note that some 19 Vice Presidents also belonged to the Masonic Fraternity plus innumerable hundreds and maybe thousands of Members of Congress over the years have likewise been a part of our Fraternity. I can't, of course, tell you how many judges and other high public officials have already been a part of what we hold so dear.

It was also significant, I thought, that some of the original or some of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Paul Revere and, of course, George Washington, and perhaps others -- I don't recall any of the others -- were signers of the Declaration of Independence which is, of course, a very basic document in the establishment of our concepts, the establishment of our Government.

MORE

I know Masonry has contributed over the years, the length and the breadth of this country, a great moral spirit that has helped significantly in the building of America. They have done it for two centuries. I am told there were only about 3,000 Masons at the time this country was formed, 3,000 out of some 3 million who were in the thirteen colonies that made America.

Well, Masonry has contributed in the 200 years. I am confident it will do likewise in the third century and longer than that. So I thank you for the honor, Worshipful Layton, and I thank all of the members, and particularly those who are here today for their coming to the White House to participate in this ceremony.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 12:30 P.M. EST)