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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE

MICHIGAN BROADCASTER'S ASSOCIATION

THE MADISON HOTEL

7:27 P.M. EDT

Ken MacDonald and Tony Gaston and all of the members of the Michigan Broadcaster's Association and guests:

It is first a great privilege and pleasure to be able to come back to one of these meetings that I have attended a good many times -- I think every time since the group has met here -- but I also wish to thank all of you on behalf of Betty and myself for the beautiful gift that will be deeply cherished by both of us as we move ahead, and I can assure you that the mere fact that you have selected me for this first award on behalf of the Michigan Broadcaster's Association is a -- I just won't forget it, and I thank you very, very much.

You know, talking to Ken and talking to Tony brought back some memories and those memories go back to about 1945, 1946 and 1947. I had just come back from military service, and I was practicing law, and I wanted some activities involving athletics. So, I did some color broadcasts or athletic broadcasts in a very minor way -- probably not very competently (Laughter) -- for some of the football games, and Ken did it down there at WPAG and Tony, at that time, did it at WJEF, so you know the three of us had a beginning and now we are Presidents. (Laughter)

I am sorry Betty is not here, because I am sure she would have been able to appreciate the beautiful gift that has been given, but Betty is out in California. Ever since I saw that Detroit News poll which showed she got 70 percent and I got 50 percent, (Laughter) I decided I ought to ask her to go around the country so that she could get my votes up to her polls.

But Betty and I will express to all of you, as I have, our appreciation for this very thoughtful gift and this very fine award.

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I was reminiscing just before coming over here about some of the things that have happened, transpired, in the intervals between one visit that you all made to Washington and the next one, and they come on a yearly basis. My memory is not that good that I can go back 20 some years ago and recapitulate or refresh my memory, but there are two years that certainly are fresh in my memory.

Two years ago I had just been made Vice President or had been Vice President for a relatively short period of time when I joined you on an occasion like this. Of course, in the interval between that meeting and this meeting that we had last year, there had been a very difficult time, difficult for me, extremely difficult for the country as a whole, but it did bring about, I believe, in that period of time a restoration of confidence, openness, candor and faith in the White House.

We tried to do it then, as we had tried to do it for 25 years in the Congress, of being frank and candid, forthright, not always agreeing with everybody but everybody had their day in court and everyone felt when they left that their point of view had been expressed, and I would do my very best to maintain an objective point of view.

So, that first 12 months between Vice President and President was a tough time, but I believe we came through that with progress, with headway. Then last year, you know, we met over at Tayloe House. The country was in pretty bad shape. If you recollect, as I have on occasion, we were at the depths of a recession, the worst recession in 40 years in this country.

We had many serious problems. The rate of inflation was still too high. Unemployment in your own State of Michigan had plummeted. The automobile industry was in serious condition. There was great despair in many parts of the country, and Michigan was more heavily hit than most States.

But, it is nice to be here with all of you this year, where I keep reading about how things have changed in Michigan. The automobile industry is having one of its top years, either third or fourth in the history of the industry, with every week or every reporting time the production schedules of the automobile industry going up, with a resurgence of public confidence, so it is a much better atmosphere in which I am your guest tonight than it was a year ago.

Let me say without any hesitation or qualification, as good as we think it is, it is not good enough. When you come down here a year from now, I expect to be able to invite you to the White House and we can have the 21st or 22nd reunion in the East Room or the Red Room or the Blue Room or the State Dining Room, but I think it would be a great place to have a wonderful reunion and an opportunity for us to let you make the presentation to your second honoree, whom I will be glad to honor with best wishes from the President of the United States for the next four years.

Thank you.