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Bob Hartmann

SCOUTER OF THE YEAR DINNER

WASHINGTON, D. C.

DECEMBER 2, 1974

THEY SAY "ONCE SCOUT, ALWAYS A SCOUT" -- AND I CAN TELL
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YOU FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE, THAT'S TRUE. AFTER ALL THESE

YEARS, I STILL LOVE THE OUTDOORS. I STILL KNOW HOW TO COOK

FOR MYSELF -- AT LEAST BREAKFAST. AND AS ANYONE WHO SAW

THOSE PICTURES OF ME IN JAPAN WILL KNOW -- ON OCCASION,

I STILL GO AROUND IN SHORT PANTS!

I AM PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR INVITATION TO BE
HERE TONIGHT FOR A VERY PERSONAL REASON. IT HAS RECENTLY
BEEN SAID THAT I AM TOO MUCH OF A BOY SCOUT IN THE WAY I HAVE
CONDUCTED MYSELF AS PRESIDENT. AND SO, I REVIEWED THE
BOY SCOUT LAWS AND THE BOY SCOUT OATH. THEY SAY THAT A
SCOUT IS TRUSTWORTHY, LOYAL, HELPFUL, FRIENDLY, COURTEOUS,
KIND, OBEDIENT, CHEERFUL, THRIFTY, BRAVE, CLEAN AND REVERENT.

AND THE BOY SCOUT OATH IS: ON MY HONOR I WILL DO MY BEST
TO DO MY DUTY TO GOD AND MY COUNTRY, TO OBEY THE SCOUT LAWS,
TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES, TO KEEP MYSELF PHYSICALLY
STRONG, MENTALLY AWAKE AND MORALLY STRAIGHT.

WELL, IF THESE ARE NOT GOALS THE PEOPLE OF THE

UNITED STATES WANT THEIR PRESIDENT TO LIVE UP TO -- THEN I

MUST DRAW THIS CONCLUSION: EITHER YOU HAVE THE WRONG MAN --

OR I HAVE THE WRONG COUNTRY AND I DON'T BELIEVE EITHER

IS SO.

I TRULY BELIEVE THAT THE IDEALS AND ASPIRATIONS OF ALL AMERICANS AND ALL BOY SCOUTS ARE AS ONE. AND I WILL CONTINUE TO USE THESE IDEALS AS A GUIDE AND AS A COMPASS IN ALL OF MY OFFICIAL DUTIES. I THINK OUR GOAL SHOULD BE -- MORE BOY SCOUTS IN GOVERNMENT, NOT LESS.

COMING HERE THIS EVENING TO RECEIVE THIS COVETED AWARD

TAKES ME BACK A LOT OF YEARS TO ONE OF THE PROUDEST MOMENTS OF

MY YOUTH -- THE DAY I WAS AWARDED THE EAGLE SCOUT BADGE MORE

THAN FORTY YEARS AGO. I REMEMBER THE PRIDE I FELT THEN,

IN THE COURT OF HONOR, AND THE PLEDGE I MADE TO MYSELF NEVER

TO DISHONOR THAT BADGE. I STILL HAVE THAT BADGE, BY THE WAY.

IT IS A VERY TREASURED POSSESSION AND, OVER THE YEARS, IT HAS

ALSO BEEN A GOOD REMINDER TO ME. IT IS A REMINDER OF SOME OF

THE BASIC, GOOD THINGS ABOUT OUR COUNTRY, AND A REMINDER OF

SOME OF THE SIMPLE BUT VITAL VALUES THAT CAN MAKE LIFE PRODUCTIVE

AND REWARDING.

A VERY GREAT AMERICAN, DWIGHT EISENHOWER, ONCE SAID
THAT HIS FAITH IN OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WAS AS UNBOUNDED AS HIS
FAITH IN AMERICA. I SHARE THAT FAITH. I BELIEVE THAT
YOUTH AND AMERICA GO HAND IN HAND.

FOR IT IS AMERICA'S YOUTHFUL SPIRIT, STRENGTH AND
IDEALISM THAT ARE THE KEYS TO OUR GREATNESS.

EVEN TODAY, AS WE APPROACH OUR 200th ANNIVERSARY
AS A NATION, WE ARE STILL A YOUNG COUNTRY, A YOUNG PEOPLE,
COMPARED TO MOST OTHER NATIONS ON THIS EARTH.

THE EARLY EXPLORERS UNDERSTOOD BETTER THAN THEY
REALIZED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CALLING THE AMERICAN CONTINENT
THE "NEW WORLD." FOR IT WAS HERE ON THESE SHORES THAT
MILLIONS OF PEOPLE FROM EVERY BRANCH OF THE HUMAN FAMILY WERE
TO COME AND MAKE A NEW BEGINNING, WERE TO LAUNCH ONE OF THE
GREATEST, NOBLEST ADVENTURES IN HUMAN HISTORY.

FROM THE START, EVEN THE HUMBLEST OF THOSE EARLY

SETTLERS SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND. AS THEY LANDED IN THIS

NEW WORLD THEY KNEW THAT THEY, TOO, WERE BEGINNING A NEW

LIFE, LEAVING BEHIND THE OPPRESSIONS AND THE INJUSTICES THAT

HAD DARKENED OLD COUNTRIES AND OLD CIVILIZATIONS.

OF COURSE THIS NEW PROMISED LAND WAS NOT DELIVERED
UP TO THEM ON A SILVER PLATTER. EACH NEW WAVE OF PIONEER
AND IMMIGRANTS HAD TO BUILD A PLACE FOR THEMSELVES AND ADD
THEIR INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEW LIFE.

IT WAS HARD WORK. IT WAS LONG WORK. AND IT
NEVER ENDED. IT STILL GOES ON TODAY AS WE TACKLE NEW
PROBLEMS AND NEW CHALLENGES.

THIS IS WHERE SCOUTING COMES IN. THE TEAMWORK,
THE SELF DISCIPLINE AND -- JUST AS IMPORTANT -- THE SENSE
OF ADVENTURE THAT GROW OUT OF THE SCOUTING EXPERIENCE ARE THE
VERY THINGS WE NEED TODAY TO BUILD A BETTER AMERICA.

SO OFTEN, THE DEEPEST, MOST PROFOUND EMOTIONS AND
IDEAS ARE BEST EXPRESSED IN SHORT, SIMPLE WORDS. TODAY,
WHEN SOME PEOPLE ARE CASTING ABOUT FOR NEW VALUES, NEW ANSWERS
AND NEW OUTLOOKS ON LIFE, THE KEY TO MANY OF OUR PROBLEMS
LIES IN THE BASIC VALUES OF THE SCOUT LAWS -- IN TRUST,
IN LOYALTY, COURTESY, THRIFT, BRAVERY AND REVERENCE.

ONE OF THE WISEST JUDGES OUR COUNTRY EVER PRODUCED

WAS SUPREME COURT JUSTICE LOUIS D. BRANDEIS. LIKE ALL

GREAT JURISTS HE UNDERSTOOD MORE THAN JUST THE LAW. HE KNEW

THE HUMAN MIND AND THE HUMAN HEART AND HE SAW A GREAT DEAL

OF THEM IN HIS MANY YEARS ON THE BENCH -- BOTH THEIR GOOD

SIDES AND THEIR BAD.

IN WAS AN EXPERIENCE THAT MIGHT HAVE MADE A CYNIC

OF HIM, BUT IT DID NOT. THE MORE JUSTICE BRANDEIS SAW

OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, THE MORE HE BECAME CONVINCED OF THEIR

BASIC GOODNESS.

IN MOST AMERICANS, HE ONCE SAID, THERE IS A SPARK

OF IDEALISM WHICH CAN BE FANNED INTO A FLAME.

SCOUTING IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT KEEPS THAT SPARK
OF IDEALISM ALIVE -- THAT PLANTS IT IN THE HEARTS OF YOUNG
AMERICANS WHILE PREPARING THEM FOR MANHOOD AND CITIZENSHIP.

AND THAT IS WHY, AS AN OLD SCOUT WHO STILL TRIES TO
LIVE BY THE SCOUT LAWS AND THE SCOUT OATH, I AM PROUD AND
HONORED TO ACCEPT THIS AWARD TONIGHT.

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH.

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