

**The original documents are located in Box 3, folder “12/1/74 - Salute to Lee Elder” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO JOIN THIS SALUTE TO LEE ELDER.

ACTUALLY, I WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED THIS FOR THE WORLD!

I JUST HAD TO BE PART OF THIS GREAT TRIBUTE TO LEE. AFTER SO

MANY YEARS OF STRUGGLE AND HARDSHIPS AND PUT-DOWNS AND

FIGHTING FOR HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE WORLD OF GOLF --

AT THIS VERY MOMENT, LEE ELDER MUST FEEL LIKE SOMEONE WHO

OWNS FIVE POUNDS OF SUGAR OUTRIGHT . . . . HOW SWEET IT IS!

I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING ABOUT LEE ELDER.

THIS MAN REALLY KNOWS. I PLAYED GOLF WITH LEE A FEW WEEKS  
AGO AND HE GAVE ME SO MUCH GOOD ADVICE -- HENRY KISSINGER  
IS GETTING WORRIED.

LEE AND I HAVE A LOT IN COMMON BESIDES OUR OUTSTANDING  
GOLF GAMES. WE BOTH HAVE JOBS A LOT OF PEOPLE SEEM TO  
WANT. WE BOTH ARE GETTING PAID FOR DOING WHAT WE ENJOY.  
AND WE BOTH GET AMPLE ADVICE WHEN WE GOOF.

BUT LEE, I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND YOU MORE AMERICANS  
READ THE SPORTS PAGES THAN ANY OTHER SECTION OF THE PAPER --  
SO YOUR MISTAKES PROBABLY GET MORE ATTENTION THAN MINE.

THERE ARE NOT MANY JOBS I LIKE BETTER THAN MINE.

BUT NEXT APRIL, WHEN LEE ELDER STANDS ON THE FIRST TEE AT THE

AUGUSTA NATIONAL, I WOULD BE HAPPY TO SWAP PLACES WITH HIM.

AS A WEEKEND GOLFER, I KNOW HOW EXCITING THAT MOMENT WILL BE.

TONIGHT, I SHARE THE PRIDE OF LEE ELDER'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS

IN HIS HARD WORK AND ACHIEVEMENT ON THE ROAD TO THE MASTERS.

LEE EARNED THE RIGHT TO PLAY AT THE MASTERS BECAUSE OF  
HIS ABILITY ON THE GOLF COURSE. AS THE FIRST BLACK TO  
COMPETE IN THAT TOURNAMENT, HE IS RECEIVING THE ATTENTION DUE  
THOSE WHO BREAK DOWN OLD BARRIERS. AND THE BARRIERS  
ARE COMING DOWN. SOON THE SUCCESS OF BLACK MEN AND  
WOMEN IN SPORTS, IN POLITICS, IN BUSINESS -- IN EVERY ACTIVITY  
OF AMERICAN LIFE -- WILL NO LONGER BE HEADLINE NEWS. AND THAT  
WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT NEWS OF ALL.

BY HONORING LEE WITH THIS SCHOLARSHIP FUND, YOU ARE  
ALL WORKING FOR THAT DAY WHEN AN ACHIEVEMENT SUCH AS HIS WILL  
BE REMEMBERED ONLY BECAUSE OF HIS ABILITY. THAT TIME HAS  
ALREADY COME IN MANY AREAS. HANK AARON IS A HOME-RUN  
KING BECAUSE HE CAN HIT. AND ON ANY FALL FOOTBALL AFTERNOON,  
PLAYERS ACROSS AMERICA ARE IDENTIFIED BY THEIR NAMES IN THE  
PROGRAMS AND THE NUMBERS ON THEIR BACKS -- NO OTHER WAY.  
THE ONLY COLORS THAT COUNT ARE THE COLORS OF THE PLAYERS' JERSEYS.  
AND THAT IS THE WAY IT SHOULD BE IN EVERY ACTIVITY OF LIFE IN  
THIS COUNTRY.

I THINK YOUR DECISION AND LEE'S TO ESTABLISH THIS FUND  
WAS A GOOD ONE -- BECAUSE, BY REACHING OUT TO HELP THOSE WHO  
NEED HELP, WE INSURE THEIR FUTURE AS WELL AS THIS NATION'S FUTURE.

THE DOORS TO SUCCESS MUST BE KEPT OPEN TO EVERYONE.

MUCH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED IN THE PAST TWO DECADES IN MAKING SURE  
THESE DOORS ARE OPENED. BUT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE.

I SHARE YOUR CONCERN AND COMMITMENT IN THIS EFFORT.



EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT IN MAKING SURE THAT ALL AMERICANS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE, TO ACHIEVE, TO EXCEL. THIS FUND WILL MAKE AN INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THAT GOAL.

I BELIEVE VERY DEEPLY IN THE VALUE OF EDUCATION. IT HAS BEEN THE MEANS TO ACHIEVEMENT FOR AMERICANS OF ALL RACES. AND I ALSO BELIEVE IN THE VALUE OF SPORTS IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE.

IN GOLF, A MAN PLAYS AGAINST THE COURSE AND HIS OWN  
ABILITY. IN FOOTBALL, TEAMWORK COMBINES WITH PHYSICAL SKILL.  
BUT IN WHATEVER SPORT, COMPETITION IS AN ARENA FOR PERSONAL  
ACHIEVEMENT. THE PRIDE WE ALL SHARE IN THE SUCCESS OF  
ATHLETES LIKE LEE ELDER IS IMPORTANT. EQUALLY IMPORTANT  
IS THE FACT THAT THE INSPIRATION HE AND OTHERS PROVIDE US IS  
COLOR BLIND. A WINNING PUTT, A TOUCHDOWN DRIVE,  
A HOME RUN -- THESE HAVE NO COLOR OR CREED.

IN WASHINGTON, IT SOMETIMES SEEMS LIKE THE BIGGEST SPORT IS POLITICS. BUT I THINK WE POLITICIANS CAN LEARN FROM THE REAL PLAYERS. NO ATHLETE EVER TALKED HIS WAY TO VICTORY. NO ATHLETE EVER WON WITHOUT TEAMWORK EITHER ON OR OFF THE FIELD. AND RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, I AM REASONABLY CONVINCED THAT MORE AMERICAN YOUNGSTERS WOULD RATHER GROW UP TO BE WINNERS IN SPORTING EVENTS THAN IN POLITICS.

I AM PROUD OF OUR POLITICAL TRADITION -- AND I'M GLAD  
TO BE HERE TONIGHT TO JOIN IN THIS SALUTE TO LEE ELDER.

IN FACT, I AM SURE THAT YEARS FROM NOW, MOST OF YOU HERE  
WILL LOOK BACK ON 1975 -- NOT AS THE YEAR GERALD FORD WAS  
PRESIDENT -- BUT AS THE YEAR LEE ELDER WON THE MASTERS.

AND THAT'S NOT BAD AT ALL.

AND SO, I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN WITH ALL THE FRIENDS  
AND SUPPORTERS OF LEE ELDER AND PROPOSE THIS TOAST FOR HIM  
AT THE MASTERS: LEE SHALL OVERCOME -- AND LEE SHALL UNDER PAR!

THANK YOU. . . . AND GOOD LUCK, LEE.

END OF TEXT