The original documents are located in Box 5, folder “1/18/75 - Bob Georgine Testimonial Dinner” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SKEWED

BOB GEORGINE TESTIMONIAL DINNER

SATURDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18, 1975
I AM DELIGHTED TO JOIN WITH THE OFFICERS OF

SEVENTEEN INTERNATIONAL UNIONS REPRESENTING THREE AND

ONE HALF MILLION WORKERS, WITH THE LEADERS OF INDUSTRY,

WITH DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS AND WITH

OTHERS GATHERED HERE TONIGHT TO HONOR BOB GEORGINE (GEORGE-EEN).
THERE IS A VERY ENCOURAGING SYMBOLISM IN THE FACT THAT JUST AS LABOR, INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT ARE JOINED TOGETHER HERE TONIGHT, SO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE COMING TOGETHER TO TAKE CHARGE OF OUR OWN FATE.
BOB IS TAKING ON A GREAT CHALLENGE AS PRESIDENT OF THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES DEPARTMENT OF THE AFL-CIO. CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE AMONG THOSE/americANS FEELING THE HEAVIEST IMPACT OF inflation, recession AND THE ENERGY CRISIS. BOB HAS AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY -- AND I WISH HIM WELL AND OFFER TO HIM EVERY COOPERATION THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CAN ACCORD.
I particularly want to thank President George Meany for the statesmanship, energy, and vision he has demonstrated in helping to develop solutions to our national difficulties. I commend George for his forthright and constructive involvement.
GEORGE AND BOB AND OTHER PROBLEM-SOLVERS OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT KNOW HOW TO NEGOTIATE AROUND A TABLE IN THE GREAT SPIRIT AND TRADITION OF AMERICAN LABOR.

AS WE MOVE TO SOLVE THE COMMON PROBLEMS FACING US, LET US NOT GET HUNG UP ON DIFFERENCES OVER DETAILS OF THE PROGRAM NOW BEFORE THE CONGRESS. THE PROBLEM IS TOO PRESSING. TOO MANY AMERICANS ARE OUT OF WORK.
Let us join together in starting the process, in maintaining forward momentum, in getting the congressional committees meeting and getting down to cases.

To put it another way, let us start the train in the right direction and then reconcile concerns over the fare and the speed -- and even over rebates on the tickets. But let's get started.
TONIGHT, I WANT TO ISSUE A SPECIAL INVITATION TO
GEORGE MEANY AND BOB GEORGINE AND ALL THE GREAT LEADERS OF
LABOR. THE WHITE HOUSE DOOR IS OPEN TO YOU. I NEED YOUR
HELP. BUT MORE IMPORTANT, THE COUNTRY NEEDS IT.
AND I SAY TO THE CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING TRADES TONIGHT:

LET US CONSTRUCT AND BUILD RATHER THAN DEBATE AND DENOUNCE.

[AND LET ME ADD THAT WE HAVE ALL BEEN GUILTY OF THIS IN THE PAST]

I ASK YOU TONIGHT TO JOIN WITH ME IN PRESSING

FOR ACTION TO GET OUR ECONOMY MOVING AGAIN, TO OPEN

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND NEW JOBS ACROSS AMERICA.
I ask you to put your efforts and your forces behind the drive for American energy independence. I call on you to volunteer -- as labor has always volunteered in times of national emergency -- to work in every community to install energy-saving home insulation with the materials we will make available free to poorer Americans.
I CONGRATULATE BOB GEORGINE ON HIS NEW LEADERSHIP ROLE.

I UNDERSTAND, INCIDENTALY, THAT BOB PLAYS GIN RUMMY. I WON'T SAY HOW WELL. LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY:

BOB GEORGINE HAS DONE FOR GIN RUMMY WHAT THE TITANIC DID FOR OCEAN TRAVEL.
AND SO, BOB, TO HELP YOU WITH THIS PROBLEM --

I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE GIFT. A COPY OF COHEN'S

COMPLETE BOOK OF GIN RUMMY.

IT SHOULD DO WONDERS FOR YOUR GAME. THE NEXT

TIME YOU PLAY GEORGE MEANY OR LANE KIRKLAND, YOU'LL BE

ABLE TO LOSE MUCH MORE CONVINCINGLY.
BUT WHETHER YOU WIN OR LOSE, BOB, YOU AND THE
OTHER GREAT LEADERS OF LABOR AND ALL AMERICANS ARE GOING
TO BE WINNERS IN THE STRUGGLE OVER THE REAL PROBLEMS THAT
FACE OUR NATION. FOR WHEN AMERICA WINS, LABOR WINS.
AND ALL AMERICANS ARE IN THIS TOGETHER. AND TOGETHER
WE WILL FORGE A NEW DIRECTION FOR AMERICA.
I AM HONORED TO ATTEND YOUR TESTIMONIAL, BOB,

AND TO MAKE THIS PRESENTATION.

I THANK YOU.

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