

The original documents are located in Box 36, “7/10/76 - Remarks Upon Greeting Members of the U.S. Olympic Team in Plattsburgh, NY” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

GREETING TO OLYMPIC TEAM, PLATTSBURG, NEW YORK

SATURDAY, JULY 10, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- THANK YOU VERY MUCH, MR. KRUMM
(Phillip Krumm is President of the U.S. Olympic Committee)
- CONGRESSMAN McEWEN
- COLONEL MILLER
(Don Miller is Executive Director, U.S. Olympic Committee)
- REV. ST. PIERRE
(Invoker and Mayor of Plattsburgh)
- MEMBERS AND COACHES OF THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC TEAM
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I AM PROUD TO JOIN WITH 215 MILLION AMERICANS

IN WISHING OUR OLYMPIC TEAM THE GREATEST OF SUCCESS IN THE

1976 SUMMER GAMES AT MONTREAL.

AND WHEN YOU PACK TO GO TO CANADA, LET ME OFFER YOU

ONE TRAVEL TIP: LEAVE SOME ROOM IN YOUR SUITCASES.

I HAVE A FEELING YOU'RE GOING TO NEED IT FOR A LOT OF GOLD,

SILVER AND BRONZE MEMENTOS OF YOUR TRIP.

YOU REPRESENT THE BEST OF WHAT THE OLYMPIC CREED TEACHES:

THE WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE, TO COMMIT YOURSELVES COMPLETELY

TO THE RIGOROUS TRAINING, CONCENTRATION AND DISCIPLINE

WHICH CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS DEMAND.

AS ONE WHO HAS ENJOYED AND PARTICIPATED IN SPORTS

MOST OF MY LIFE, I KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THE HUNDRED HOURS

OF MONOTONOUS PRACTICE THAT GO WITH EVERY MOMENT OF GLORY

ON THE FIELD.

I KNOW, TOO, JUST HOW GIFTED AND DEDICATED YOU HAVE
TO BE TO QUALIFY FOR THE U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM AND I KNOW
THAT THE 1976 TEAM IS AMONG THE BEST, AND AMONG THE YOUNGEST,
WE HAVE EVER FIELDED.

LAST YEAR, I APPOINTED A SPECIAL COMMISSION ON
OLYMPIC SPORTS TO EXPLORE THE PROBLEMS OF AMATEUR ATHLETICS
IN AMERICA AND TO PROPOSE SOLUTIONS ENSURING THAT AMERICA
WILL CONTINUE TO FIELD ITS BEST AMATEUR ATHLETES IN
INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION.

WHILE AWAITING THE FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THIS
COMMISSION, I HAVE ALREADY STRONGLY ENDORSED ONE OF ITS
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS, THAT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS
IN AMATEUR SPORTS BE SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED.

IN THIS WAY, WE CAN PROMOTE THE PHYSICAL FITNESS
OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS, WHETHER THEY MAKE IT TO THE
OLYMPIC GAMES OR NOT.

TWO OF MY GOOD FRIENDS WHO DID MAKE IT,

RALPH METCALFE AND BOB MATHIAS, LATER SERVED WITH ME

IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

I LEARNED FROM THEM HOW THRILLING IT IS TO REPRESENT THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE WORLD'S GREATEST ATHLETIC

COMPETITION, AND TO HEAR THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER PLAYED

IN YOUR HONOR.

THERE IS NO BETTER OR HAPPIER TIME TO REPRESENT AMERICA

THAN RIGHT NOW.

YOU HAVE REACHED THE PINNACLE OF SPORT IN A VERY

IMPORTANT AND HISTORIC YEAR. THE EYES OF THE WORLD HAVE BEEN

FIXED ON THE UNITED STATES DURING THE COURSE OF OUR BICENTENNIAL

YEAR, AND WE HAVE SHOWN OUR COUNTRY AT ITS BEST.

THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR HAS BROUGHT WITH IT A NEW AND
WELCOME SPIRIT OF HARMONY AND PEACE AND GOODWILL AMONG THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE.

SELDOM IN OUR HISTORY HAVE AMERICANS FELT SO GOOD
ABOUT THEMSELVES AND ABOUT THEIR COUNTRY.

AS WE BEGIN THE THIRD CENTURY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

~~THIS WEEK~~, THERE IS NO REASON WE CANNOT KEEP THIS SPIRIT ALIVE

LONG INTO THE FUTURE.

THIS GOOD FEELING CAN FIND ITS EXPRESSION IN A MULTITUDE

OF WAYS.

IT WAS UNMISTAKABLY PRESENT THIS PAST SUNDAY WHEN

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS PUT EVERYTHING ELSE ASIDE AND CELEBRATED

THEIR BICENTENNIAL WITH A PATRIOTIC ENTHUSIASM THAT ADDED

A SPECIAL JOY TO OUR CELEBRATION•

IT WAS PRESENT EARLIER THIS YEAR WHEN THE

U.S. WINTER OLYMPIC TEAM STIRRED OUR PRIDE AND WON OUR

HEARTS WITH THEIR COURAGE AND GRACE.

THIS GOOD FEELING GOES WITH YOU NOW TO MONTREAL, AND IT
WILL RETURN WITH YOU, WHETHER YOU COME BACK LADEN WITH GOLD
AND SILVER AND BRONZE, OR WITH THE SIMPLE SUBLIME SATISFACTION
THAT YOU WERE A PART OF THE MOST DEMANDING AND PRESTIGIOUS
ATHLETIC COMPETITION IN THE WORLD.

ANY COACH OR ATHLETE KNOWS THAT HOMETOWN FANS ARE
A VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN SUCCESS ON THE PLAYING FIELD.
IN FOOTBALL, THE HOMETOWN CROWD IS SOMETIMES CALLED
"THE TWELFTH MAN," PLAYING ITS VERY SPECIAL PART IN THE STANDS
WHILE THE OTHER ELEVEN DO THEIR JOBS ON THE FIELD.

WITH THE GROWING SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN AMERICA, YOU
HAVE THE SATISFACTION OF KNOWING THAT YOUR HOMETOWN CROWD
NUMBERS MORE THAN 215 MILLION PEOPLE. THAT'S A MIGHTY
IMPRESSIVE "TWELFTH MAN," AND IT IS A GREAT ADVANTAGE AS YOU
PREPARE FOR THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGE OF YOUR LIVES.

IF I MAY SPEAK FOR YOUR LOVED ONES, YOUR NEIGHBORS
AND FRIENDS, YOUR COACHES AND FOR ALL OF YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS
THROUGHOUT AMERICA, LET ME SAY THAT WE ARE ALL VERY PROUD
OF YOU.

WE KNOW THAT YOU WILL BRING TO THE OLYMPIC GAMES

THE SAME DIGNITY, THE SAME DEDICATION, THE SAME MAGIC BLEND

OF HOPE AND TALENT, HUMILITY AND PRIDE WHICH HAVE CHARACTERIZED

AMERICAN OLYMPIANS AND MADE THEM SO SUCCESSFUL AND RESPECTED

THROUGH THE YEARS.

MORE THAN THAT, YOU WILL BE REPRESENTING YOUR COUNTRY

IN ONE OF THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS AND RENOWNED STAGES OF

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

YOU WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND AMERICA'S

GOODWILL TO THE WHOLE WORLD. YOU WILL HAVE THE CHANCE TO

HELP CREATE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF AMERICA

AND OUR NEIGHBORS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, TO SERVE THE CAUSE

OF PEACE AND HOLD HIGH THE LAMP OF LIBERTY.

IN THESE GREAT ENDEAVORS, WE WISH YOU WELL.

AS THE OLYMPIC MOTTO SUGGESTS, MAY ALL OF YOU BE

"SWIFTER, HIGHER, STRONGER" IN THE COMPETITION THAT LIES

JUST AHEAD, AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

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