THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

REMARKS AT MARTHA GRAHAM MEDAL OF FREEDOM AWARD

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1976
IN THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR, EACH OF US HAS

CELEBRATED THE SPIRIT AND VITALITY OF AMERICA. THE PERSON WE ARE HONORING TONIGHT HAS BEEN DOING THAT FOR AS LONG AS MOST OF US CAN REMEMBER.

WHEN MARTHA GRAHAM BEGAN HER CAREER IN MODERN DANCE, SHE NOT ONLY RAISED PEOPLE'S EYEBROWS, SHE RAISED THEIR SIGHTS. A TRUE PIONEER, SHE CONTINUALLY BROKE NEW GROUND AND CHALLENGED OLD ASSUMPTIONS.
HER INNOVATIONS WERE SO ORIGINAL THAT ONE STARTLED

TRADITIONALIST WAS REPORTED TO HAVE ASKED HER, "HOW LONG

DO YOU INTEND TO KEEP THIS UP?" TODAY AMERICA IS

THANKFUL THAT SHE IS STILL KEEPING IT UP.

MARTHA GRAHAM NOT ONLY EXPANDED THE HORIZONS

OF MODERN DANCE, SHE ALSO MOVED INWARD TO CONVEY THE

deepest types of emotion. IN DOING SO, SHE CREATED

what one critic labelled "an original way of communication." Long before the phrase "body language" entered

our vocabulary, MARTHA GRAHAM WAS USING THE HUMAN FORM

TO EXPRESS HUMAN FEELINGS.
MARTHA GRAHAM'S NAME HAS BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH MODERN DANCE. IN ADDITION TO HER WORK AS A PERFORMER AND CHOREOGRAPHER, SHE HAS PROVIDED INSPIRATION AND COUNSELING TO GENERATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE, INCLUDING MISS BETTY BLOOMER FROM GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN.

HER PUPILS LEARNED THAT SELF-DISCIPLINE IS NOT AN OBSTACLE TO CREATIVITY, BUT A VEHICLE -- THAT HARD WORK DOES NOT DETRACT FROM INSPIRATION, BUT RATHER ALLOWS IT TO REACH ITS FULLEST POTENTIAL. MOST OF ALL, THEY LEARNED TO MEET ANY SITUATION WITH COURAGE AND COMPLETE HONESTY.
OVER THE YEARS, AS A GREAT DANCER, MARTHA GRAHAM HAS RECEIVED MANY, MANY AWARDS. TONIGHT, SHE RECEIVES AN AWARD AS A GREAT AMERICAN.

HER VISITS AROUND THE WORLD HAVE GIVEN A NEW MEANING TO THE WORD "AMBASSADOR."

SHE HAS SHOWN VERY CLEARLY TO ALL THE WORLD WHAT IS POSSIBLE WHEN PERSONAL GENIUS IS ALLOWED TO FLOURISH UNDER ARTISTIC AND POLITICAL FREEDOM. IN AMERICA, THE ARTS HAVE BLOSSOMED AND WE ARE JUSTLY PROUD OF THE GREAT STRIDES WE HAVE MADE. LAST YEAR, IN THE AREA OF DANCE ALONE, THERE WERE MORE THAN FOUR TIMES AS MANY PROFESSIONAL DANCE COMPANIES AS THERE WERE IN 1965.
BUT THE CONTINUED SURVIVAL AND GROWTH OF THE ARTS IN AMERICA REQUIRES MORE THAN JUST THE GENIUS OF THE ARTISTS. IT ALSO REQUIRES THE FORESIGHT AND GENEROSITY OF BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES OF SUPPORT.

TONIGHT, I TAKE PLEASURE IN ANNOUNCING THAT I INTEND TO SEEK FULL FUNDING FOR THE CULTURAL CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS. THIS WILL PROVIDE 12 MILLION DOLLARS IN NEW FEDERAL MONEYS FOR THE ARTS NEXT YEAR AND APPROXIMATELY 50 MILLION DOLLARS OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

BECAUSE THESE GRANTS WILL BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF ONE FEDERAL DOLLAR FOR EVERY THREE RAISED FROM OTHER SOURCES, IT CAN SERVE TO GENERATE 200 MILLION DOLLARS IN NEW SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS.
MANY PEOPLE HERE TONIGHT WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN PROVIDING THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT THAT ENABLED THE MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE TROUPE TO INSPIRE AMERICA AND THE WORLD.

LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT WE IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ARE GOING TO DO OUR PART TO ENCOURAGE THE MARTHA GRAHAMS OF THE FUTURE.

TONIGHT, HOWEVER, THERE IS ONLY ONE MARTHA GRAHAM, AND ALL OF AMERICA IS VERY PROUD OF HER.

AND NOW, MARTHA GRAHAM, WOULD YOU PLEASE JOIN ME.

(wait for her to join you and then say---)
IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO PRESENT YOU WITH ONE OF OUR NATION'S HIGHEST HONORS, THE MEDAL OF FREEDOM.

LET ME READ FROM THE CITATION:

"DANCER, TEACHER AND CHOREOGRAPHER, MARTHA GRAHAM HAS CAPTIVATED THE WORLD WITH HER MAGIC AND HAS LEFT A LEGACY OF IMAGINATION WITH ALL WHO HAVE WITNESSED HER TALENT. HER ENERGY, CREATIVITY AND DARING HAVE OPENED NEW DOORS OF EXPRESSION IN DANCE. HER FOLLOWERS AND FRIENDS ADORE HER, AND HER COUNTRY, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, IS PROUD TO PROCLAIM HER A BRILLIANT STAR AND A NATIONAL TREASURE."

(PRESENT AWARD)

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MARTHA GRAHAM.

(RETURN TO YOUR SEAT FOR TOAST)
TOAST

LET ME CONCLUDE BY PROPOSING A TOAST TO OUR

HONORED GUEST WHO HAS PERSONIFIED THE SPIRIT OF OUR

COUNTRY WITH HER IMAGINATION, HER ENORMOUS TALENT,

AND HER QUIET DETERMINATION -- A GREAT ARTIST AND A

COURAGEOUS AMERICAN -- MARTHA GRAHAM.

END OF TEXT