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SEPTEMBER 11, 1974

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Pinehurst, North Carolina)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
OPENING OF THE WORLD GOLF HALL OF FAME

AT 3:28 P.M. EDT

Honored inductees, Governor Holshouser,
Lieutenant Governor Hunt, ladies and gentlemen.

Back in late July of this year, I participated in the introduction ceremonies for four or five professional football players in Canton, Ohio, at their Hall of Fame.

It was a little more logical for me to participate in that event though I was never good enough on the gridiron to play professional football, but I did play at the University of Michigan and coached at Yale, and it was a very important part of my life for a substantial part of my youth.

Shortly after that, I got a letter of invitation while I was still the first instant Vice President to come and participate in these ceremonies. Well, I think my record is clear. I have no background that would justify my professional appearance here, but I thought maybe by coming, it would be helpful to me to get a little rub-off from some of the people who are inductees and others who are participating.

I can only say, regardless of which sport, I think, whether it is golf, professional or college football, or any one of the other wonderful athletic areas of competition, so much is added to America's society by the things that you learn and the things that you do.

So I am always a willing participant in anything that involves athletics. I think it is great and wholesome, not only for the United States, but the world.

And, naturally, I wish to compliment and congratulate Don and Bill and those who had the vision and foresight. I am sure you realize what a thrill it is for a weekend golfer like myself to walk the same fairways today with Byron Nelson, Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus Gary Player, Patty Berg.

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(OVER)



I also have idols in athletics, and I don't apologize for it now. These are the kind of idols that I think are good and wholesome for America.

And then, of course, there are the immortals who are not here today. They are here in spirit: Walter Hagen, Harry Vardon, Francis Ouimet, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, and that great statesman of golf, of course, Bobby Jones.

I think it is fair to say that there is another great golfer who I know is actually watching us here today. He wasn't a professional, but his love for golf was profound, and I think he did as much as any man in this century to make golf one of the world's number one participant sports. And I, of course, on this occasion refer to Ike Eisenhower.

Ike would be deeply honored that some of his golfing gear is to be included in the World Golf Hall of Fame here in Pinehurst.

As President Eisenhower knew so very well, golf is a very special game, and it is not hard to understand its popularity. Fortunately, golf is a game that crosses all borders and is played in virtually every country in the world.

Today we are dedicating the World Golf Hall of Fame and I think the word "world" is rightly important.

This is an international event and participating with my good friend, Jim Holshouser, who has proclaimed the "Grand Week of Golf" are, of course, athletes from all over the world. The list is long and I won't read it at the present time.

I think Americans sometimes lose sight of the fact that many things we value most have been bequeathed to us by other nations. Golf, for instance, has a centuries-old history and is just as popular in scores of other countries throughout the world. And I think that is why history's most spectacular chip shot struck such a responsive chord among people in so many nations. No one will ever forget that moment when Alan Shephard, swinging his homemade six iron, lofted a ball off the surface of the moon.

That was a great chip shot for all mankind.

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And in conclusion, let me say, we made it to the moon because of the technology built upon the knowledge and the discoveries by all the nations of the earth. We made it to the moon because of the shared experiences of the human race.

And that chip shot symbolized all that in one of the most national languages shared by all -- the language of golf.

Congratulations to the inductees and thank you all for being here.

END

(3:35 P.M. EDT)

