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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
GRADUATES OF THE
CAPITOL PAGE SCHOOL

12:45 P.M. EDT

Thank you very much, Mr. Hoffman, members of the graduating class.

First, let me apologize for having to schedule this get-together today at 12:30. I was reliably informed that through the years each of us so looked forward to the opportunity to get together -- the graduates and the President -- that for old times sake you wanted this ceremony to begin at 6:10 in the morning. (Laughter)

But let me, in all sincerity, congratulate you, perhaps even envy you, for the good fortune in attending, I think, one of the finest schools in this country. I never attended classes there -- I probably could not qualify -- but I do know something about the quality of the teachers, the quality of the opportunity, and I am sure that you will benefit immeasurably from this experience, even though you don't have a football team. (Laughter)

While I was the Minority Leader in the House, and for the short time that I was Vice President, I had the privilege of working with many of you, and it was a privilege that I enjoyed and a privilege that I appreciated because I saw the quality of all of you and the work that you did, the efforts that you made, and the results that you produced.

I know, as Minority Leader and as Vice President, you did a good job, and for that I thank you on behalf of all of us who served with you while you were in the Congress or in the Supreme Court. I know you have run a good many miles back and forth from the House Office Buildings to the House Chamber or from the Senate to the Senate Office Buildings.

On the other hand, I think the memories that you have of being associated with some fine, fine individuals in public life will compensate you for the many hours and the hard work and the difficulties that you experienced.

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I am also certain of this; that having spent one or more years here as a page, and going through the educational opportunities, you can go back to your respective homes or on to college or in society otherwise, and have a far greater appreciation of how our system works, why it is the finest system in all of the world for the protection of individuals, the enlargement of benefits for all, and you can really be a person to sell America to Americans and to sell our government to our people.

Unfortunately, far too few of our fellow citizens understand how the Government works, whether it is in the Supreme Court or in the Congress. You can do a superb job in making your fellow citizens understand the merits and the benefits and the pluses of America so that all Americans can have the same zeal and zest that you have for our country.

You have had a unique educational opportunity, not only in school but in your exposure to how your government actually operates, and with that unique opportunity you can be leaders in your communities, in your professions, and in that way you can repay your sponsors for the opportunity to have participated in the Capitol Page School, which, as I said at the outset, is an outstanding educational experience.

Good luck and God bless you.

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(AT 12:55 P.M. EDT)