

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 30, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
DEDICATION OF THE
J. EDGAR HOOVER FBI BUILDING

WASHINGTON, D.C.

11:18 A.M. EDT

Mr. Attorney General, distinguished Members of the House and Senate, my former colleagues, Al Cederberg, John Slack, Senators Eastland, Pastore and Hruska -- and I see in the audience some others -- it is wonderful to see you all here on this occasion, along with the distinguished Director of the FBI, the Administrator of the General Services Administration, ladies and gentlemen:

Obviously, I am tremendously pleased to join all of you in the dedication of this truly magnificent building. It symbolizes the role of the FBI as the bastion of Federal law enforcement under the Department of Justice. It honors the memory of a pioneering public servant who served as Bureau Director for nearly 48 years.

J. Edgar Hoover served under eight Presidents -- Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon. All had high praise for this man and his professional achievements, praise which I am pleased to join in here on this auspicious occasion.

In presenting the Medal of Merit to the FBI Director for his wartime services, President Truman commended him for his able leadership, which made the Bureau, in Mr. Truman's words, "a powerful instrument of law enforcement in both war and peace."

President Eisenhower awarded Mr. Hoover the National Security Medal, which carried a citation praising the Director in these terms -- "He has established the highest ideals of Federal law enforcement and directed them to realization."

J. Edgar Hoover earned such praise and such admiration from eight Presidents because under his direction, the FBI became the superior professional organization it is today -- and will continue to be under the able leadership of Clarence Kelley -- with the very best scientific crime detection facilities to serve the Federal Government and the American people.

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But it is more than leadership and technology that makes the FBI so successful. It is the spirit of the men and women who work for this unique American institution -- the Special Agents, legendary symbols of American justice for decades, the thousands upon thousands of professionals who back them up and, I add hurriedly, their understanding families.

Although history records the names of very few, it is the excellence of the many who make up the success story of the FBI.

In my 25 years in the Congress and subsequently as Vice President and as President, I have had the personal opportunity to work intimately with many of you here today and, as a result, I have developed a great admiration for your professional competence and your tireless dedication. These are the characteristics of the entire FBI team.

The Bureau is a success story because of the strength and spirit which you bring it. Your dedication, your discipline, your courage are all ingredients all Americans admire and respect. Your fellow citizens are proud of the FBI and we who are honored to serve with you in Government appreciate your efforts.

In dedicating this new FBI headquarters, I call for a renewed commitment to the rule of law in America and to the legal system that perpetuates freedom and justice. For without law, we have neither freedom nor justice.

Just before he died, J. Edgar Hoover had these prophetic words to say about the rule of law in America, and I quote: "The tests of time and challenge in our Nation's history have more than proven the majesty of the law."

Mr. Hoover was so right. The continued dedication of the men and women of the FBI to the preservation of the rule of law and the protection of citizens' rights will be a monument even more enduring than this imposing building.

In a very real sense, we are gathered here to dedicate not merely a structure of concrete and steel but to rededicate ourselves to the principles of equal justice and liberty under law which must motivate all the actions of the Federal Government.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 11:30 A.M. EDT)