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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT A  
GOP FUND-RAISER DINNER

THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

8:44 P.M. CST

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

What a wonderful group of people, what a wonderful occasion, and I thank Fran and all who have put it together. Obviously, I thank each and every one of you who have been here, contributed, participated. I am most grateful not only for what you contributed, but your warm welcome.

You know, it is kind of good to be back in Wisconsin again. I have a bit of nostalgia. In late 1965, after having been elected minority leader of the House of Representatives, I came here in this same facility to a tremendous Republican fund-raising affair, and it was an occasion, as Ody Fish and George Parker were telling me as we came in from the airport.

It was unbelievable, and those memories have been expanded and solidified by what I have heard and what I see here tonight.

But, you know, I have been around Wisconsin quite a bit for a Míchigander. (Laughter) If I miss a community, I apologize, but there have been so many. I have been to Madison, to Milwaukee, Oshkosh, to Jamesville, to Green Bay, to Wausau, Lacrosse, and I love every community and I love every good Badger. (Laughter)

You know, it is great to be here with Bill Messinger, your outstanding State Finance Chairman. I am told as a result of your efforts, your contributions, everything you have done, the Republican Party of Wisconsin for the first time--as Fran told me, in 40 years or thereabouts--the Republican Party in Wisconsin is going to be virtually debt free, and that is progress.

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I think we better get Bill and a few more Badgers to come down to Washington and help us out. (Laughter) When it comes to digging in, and taking hold, under the most difficult circumstances, I don't know of anyone who deserves more credit, more praise, than Bill Messinger. So, Bill, will you stand up and let us give you a great hand.

I am most regretful that I couldn't be here to attend your dinner. I was in a great State, California, last night, Los Angeles, and they had a fabulous fund-raising dinner, and then we had a superb luncheon in San Francisco and we left as quickly as we could to come to this great affair here tonight.

Your good cheer, your enthusiasm, I think is best exemplified by the person who is the chairman of this occasion, and I am deeply grateful for his overly kind and most generous introduction. But without Fran Furgeson, it wouldn't be done either, so Fran, won't you stand up.

Over the years, probably my closest friends in the Congress were those that I served with from the State of Wisconsin. I won't list their names. You know most of them. I wish my old buddy and golfing partner Mel Laird was here. (Laughter) I will let you in on a little secret.

The last time I played golf, Johnny Byrnes and Mel were the opponents of a good friend of mine and myself. We have a score to settle with them. (Laughter) We are going to catch up. We are way behind.

But anyhow, I am delighted to see that Mel is kept so darned busy at the Reader's Digest because the Reader's Digest and the Republicans have a great deal in common. The Reader's Digest takes things and cuts them down to size, and that is just what we are going to do with some Democrats in 1976. (Laughter)

I just wanted to stop and say hello and thank you all and share a few observations and comments. I am looking forward to getting together with you later for a few minutes, where I can have a word or two at some greater length when you and others move to the other hall.

Again, to Bill, to Fran, to all of you, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

END (AT 8:50 P.M. CST)