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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE ANNUAL CONVENTION  
OF THE FUTURE HOMEMAKERS OF AMERICA

CHARLOTTE CIVIC CENTER

11:09 A.M. EST

Governor Jim Holshouser, Congressman Jim Martin, Dr. Tripp, and especially you, Ann Cooper, and all of the wonderful Future Homemakers of America, ladies and gentlemen:

It is really a great privilege and a very high honor to have the opportunity to address this great Convention of the North Carolina Association of Future Homemakers of America and, Ann, I wish to thank you for that very beautiful rose that you have just given me as your symbol. As I understand it, the rose represents the search of future homemakers for beauty in everyday living, and you certainly started out by making my day today more beautiful and I thank you very much.

I intend to take this rose, with all that it represents, back to the White House with me later today. But I am a little concerned about what will happen when I get there. I am afraid that my daughter, Susan, will want to take a picture of the rose and that my 24-year-old son, Jack, and 18-year-old son, Steve, will try to get it from me so they can give it to one of their girlfriends. (Laughter)

But to solve the problem without any difficulties I will give it to the most appropriate person I know, the finest homemaker I know -- my wife Betty, and she will really appreciate it. Betty makes the White House, as far as we are concerned, a real home. Her homemaking for 27-1/2 years is fully consistent with your ideas of preserving the great tradition of the American family.

Betty started her career as a professional dancer with a fine group that you are familiar with. When we were married she added another dimension to her career -- that of homemaker. Betty has since told me that she found the homemaking career equally as rewarding as appearing on the stage. She made homemaking for the Ford family a profession. She served simultaneously as a mother, cook, interior decorator, chauffeur, telephone operator, nurse, psychologist and political advisor, and, I might add parenthetically, always a helpful critic with always some very good ideas of her own. For that, I am very grateful.

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But now that our children are grown, Betty has expanded her horizon as First Lady.

This morning I happened to see some of your Conference material. I noticed that you are being encouraged to discuss such topics as getting along with sisters and brothers and getting along with parents. I don't know where you stand with your sisters and your brothers and your parents but there is one thing I have learned this morning and I appreciate it, too, no end -- you certainly know how to get along with Presidents.

I commend very forcefully the work that you and your teachers are doing to strengthen our homes as well as our families. They are essential to a strong and healthy America.

You, as future homemakers, are just as important to our Nation as the men and women who serve in our military forces. To make America a land of happy homes and happy families is patriotic in the best sense of the word. This Nation could not live and survive without you.

I regret that some people in this country have disparaged and demeaned the role of the homemaker. I say -- and say it with emphasis and conviction -- that homemaking is good for America. I say that homemaking is not out of date and I reject strongly such accusations. Every American who chooses to be a homemaker can take pride in a fine, fine vocation. You should never be embarrassed to say anywhere on the face of this earth "I am an American homemaker and I am proud of it."

Then, if you add for emphasis that you are a Tarheel homemaker, you can be doubly proud.

When we think of the Bicentennial and the heroes of some 200 years ago, we think of the Minutemen and George Washington and other men who struggled to win liberty for America. But we seldom hear of Minutewomen and Martha Washington and other women whose contributions to the cause of independence was just as essential. These were the women who maintained a home, nursed the sick, tilled the fields, fought the fires, prepared the food, repaired the clothes and even defended the home itself.

Modern homemaking grew from a model that must not be forgotten in this Bicentennial year. And you come from that heritage. I look to the future and see a very family-oriented society in America. I see people becoming more mature, especially in how men and women understand themselves and achieve their fullest human potential. I see freedom without anarchy and with no exploitation of one person by another. I see love and respect nurtured by the family and generated by individual self-confidence.

Yes, there will be different styles of living in the new age. But the mainstream will be exemplified by the kind of homes you will make and the families that you will raise. By building the American home you are building America.

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All the power of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines will not deter our enemies if they suspect that the American home and the American family have disintegrated, that our communities no longer function, that every individual cares only about himself or herself.

By joining in such groups as FHA Hero you serve America. I thank you, and I congratulate you.

You build for tomorrow's dreams. There are new perceptions of life and new discoveries that have transformed homemaking. But, one thing has not changed. It still takes a lot of living to make a home. The old values of caring and sharing have not gone out of date.

I share your strong belief that every individual counts and that we are all involved in each other's lives. When you discourage the use of drugs and alcohol you help yourselves and influence others by your outstanding example. You make it possible for babies to be born healthy into a wholesome climate.

Through your knowledge of nutrition and consumer education, you can separate real food from junk food. You can also separate real and enduring values from phony and temporary fads. Your generation -- and we are so lucky -- is the most honest, the most open, the most aware in the 200 years of our nation's history.

As the Governor said, with people like you and organizations such as this, we have nothing but optimistic futures for all Americans.

You think in terms of possibilities rather than limitations. You are the generation who will live the longest with America's rewards, or exist longest with America's burdens. Your fate is in your hands, and I am convinced beyond any doubt whatsoever that your fate is in good hands.

Last week I attended the anniversary observance of the famous battle of Guilford Court House. It was a great occasion, paying tribute to some heroic people on a plot of historic ground in North Carolina. It was there that North Carolinians fought so courageously in the Revolutionary War.

Today, the common sense and moderation of North Carolina symbolizes the new realism of the entire United States. I congratulate you, not only for your State's historic courage, but for the modern North Carolina life-style.

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You combine the best of the present with the finest values of the past, and you have some great values that you should retain in your heritage in North Carolina. You do this with genuine humility, and I can say with conviction that I greatly admire the North Carolina approach.

I am convinced that the decisions affecting your home and your family life should be made right here in North Carolina and not by some distant Federal Government or anyone else. We must restore the principle of local control by local people.

That is what the American Revolution was all about, Government by the consent of the governed, and that is why Americans 200 years ago said, "No taxation without representation," and threw tea into the Boston Harbor.

If the Bicentennial is to have any meaning, any real meaning, we must give you -- America's future home-makers -- a real voice in your own destiny. You live in a State which has been a showcase of progress. Students from many, many places are attracted to North Carolina by your excellent institutions of higher learning.

It is hard to believe that two generations of the Ford family have come here to North Carolina to study. I went to law school one summer at the University of North Carolina and lived in Carr Dormitory -- some may know about it -- and then during World War II I served in the Navy at the Navy Pre-flight School in Chapel Hill.

My oldest son, Mike, and his wife, my daughter-in-law, both graduated from Wake Forest, and they think it is a pretty good school. I think so, too.

But, the point is that the Ford family shares an affinity with you for the enlightened spirit of your State. The patriotism, the dedication and the willpower of the 13 original States still burn brightly throughout the Old North State. The Tarheels must be doing something right. I think so, and I congratulate you.

Our challenge, yours and mine, is to foster a new appreciation of the American home, new cohesion in the American family, new moderation in the relationship of Government to the governed and new American strength throughout the world. Together we welcome our nation's third century, a century which I hope will emphasize freedom of the individual.

Together, the American people will rise up to the calling of your inspiring motto, "A Path To Honor, a Future To Mold." Together all of us, 215 million Americans in 50 States, will work together to build a better America for everybody.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 11:22 A.M. EST)