

The original documents are located in Box 2, folder “4/1/76 - Fair Housing Month Ceremony” of the Carla A. Hills Speeches at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

FINAL

FAIR HOUSING MONTH CEREMONY

APRIL 2, 1976

IN THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR, THE THEME OF SO MANY PUBLIC PANORAMAS AND CELEBRATIONS IS CENTERED ON THE HISTORY OF OUR PAST.

THAT, CERTAINLY, IS FITTING AND PROPER. BUT, NOSTALGIA -- DIMMED BY SWIFT PASSAGE OF TIME -- IS A STATE OF MIND THAT, TOO OFTEN, LEADS US TO FORGET THE HARSH REALITIES OF THE DAY-BY-DAY STRUGGLES OF THE PAST 200 YEARS THAT BROUGHT US TO AMERICA-1976.

LET US, THEN, DEDICATE THIS FAIR HOUSING MONTH IN AMERICA'S BICENTENNIAL YEAR TO THE HISTORY OF OUR NATION THAT IS YET TO BE WRITTEN. LET US RE-DEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE DOCTRINE OF FAIRNESS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AMERICANS.

LET US SO CARRY OUT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR TRUST -- THAT OUR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN WILL SAY OF OUR BRIEF SEGMENT OF AMERICAN HISTORY: "1976 COMMENCED A FLOWERING OF REASON AND TOTAL AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO THE IDEALS OF INDEPENDENCE, FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY TO WHICH THIS NATION DEDICATED ITSELF AND ITS PEOPLE 200 YEARS EARLIER."



LET US MARK THIS EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONUMENTAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION THAT GAVE AMERICA THE FAIR HOUSING ACT AS PART OF OUR CIVIL RIGHTS ACT.

BUT LET US MARK IT IN OUR HEARTS AS AN HISTORIC EVENT THAT WAS 192 YEARS BEHIND THE TIMES.

AND, LET THAT SORRY KNOWLEDGE BE OUR CHALLENGE AND OUR SPUR TO A PROUD FUTURE AS WE MOVE FORWARD DETERMINEDLY TO MAKE UP FOR THAT TIME LOST -- OVER WHICH WE HAVE NO CONTROL AND CANNOT REPLACE IN ANY EVENT.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF HISTORY CAN GIVE US WISDOM, BUT WE CANNOT GO FORWARD BY FOREVER LOOKING BACKWARD. AND, WE HAVE OUR OWN WORK TO DO.

AS THE LATE WHITNEY YOUNG, LONG-TIME PRESIDENT OF THE URBAN LEAGUE STATED:

"ONLY THROUGH UNITY CAN WE CUT THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH OF MYTH AND MISUNDERSTANDING -- AND UNITE TO FORGE A NEW COALITION FOR A BETTER TOMORROW."

IN THAT SPIRIT OF UNITY AND WITH THE STRENGTH OF OUR COMBINED PURPOSE I DEDICATE THIS FAIR HOUSING MONTH AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRESENCE HERE THIS MORNING.