THE
CARTER
PRESIDENTIAL
CENTER



REMARKS BY

WARREN CHRISTOPHER

Chairman, O'Melveny and Myers

CARTER PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

DEDICATION

OCTOBER 1, 1986

ONE COPENHILL • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30307 • (404) 331-3900 • TELEX 543236

OCTOBER 1, 1986

PRESIDENT AND MRS. REAGAN; PRESIDENT AND MRS. CARTER; LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I.

THE CARTER PRESIDENTIAL CENTER WHICH WE DEDICATE TODAY IS AN ELOQUENT EXPRESSION OF THE MAN FOR WHOM IT IS NAMED.

HE SPARKED THE CONCEPT OF A CENTER THAT IS TO BE BOTH AN INVALUABLE REPOSITORY OF PRESIDENTIAL PAPERS AND A DYNAMIC CENTER OF ACTION.

HE FOSTERED A DESIGN WHICH IS ELEGANT BUT NOT OSTENTATIOUS, ON A SITE BEAUTIFUL AND SERENE BUT ALSO ACCESSIBLE TO THIS VIBRANT CITY AND STATE.

HE CHAMPIONED THE CONCEPT OF AN EXHIBITION HALL TO INFORM VISITORS ABOUT HIS PREDECESSORS AND ABOUT THE PRESIDENCY AS WELL AS ABOUT HIMSELF.

HE CREATED AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE SCHOLARS CAN PURSUE THEIR STUDIES AND WHERE HE CAN PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TOWARD THE GOALS HE HAS ALWAYS ESPOUSED.

AND HE STIRRED THE GENEROSITY AND DREAMS OF SO MANY IN THIS AUDIENCE WHO MADE THIS CENTER POSSIBLE.

IN ALL THESE ACTIVITIES AND INSIGHTS, PRESIDENT CARTER HAS BEEN JOINED AND INSPIRED BY ROSALYNN. IF TODAY I SOMETIMES USE THE MASCULINE SINGULAR, IT IS ALWAYS MEANT TO ENCOMPASS HIS EXEMPLARY PARTNERSHIP WITH THAT EXCEPTIONAL WOMAN. (PAUSE).

MAY I ALSO SAY THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN AND MRS. REAGAN GREATLY HONOR THIS EVENT BY THEIR PRESENCE. IT IS A POWERFUL STATEMENT ABOUT OUR COUNTRY THAT IN THE MIDST OF A POLITICAL SEASON, THE PRESIDENT HAS TAKEN TIME TO JOIN HIS FORMER OPPONENT IN THIS DEDICATION. AMONG PRESIDENT REAGAN'S MANY WISE DECISIONS IS HIS FORESIGHT IN LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR HIS OWN LIBRARY LONG BEFORE LEAVING OFFICE--TO BE LOCATED ON A HANDSOME SITE AT STANFORD.

II.

TO HELP UNDERSTAND THE TRUE IMPORTANCE OF THE CARTER PRESIDENTIAL CENTER, I PROPOSE TO RUMINATE BRIEFLY ON THE NATURE OF THE PRESIDENCY AND THE POST-PRESIDENTIAL PERIOD. YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT I DO SO WITH MUCH TREPIDATION IN THE PRESENCE OF TWO PRESIDENTS. FOR THE FIRST TRUTH ABOUT THE PRESIDENCY IS THAT NO ONE WHO HAS NOT HELD IT CAN FULLY COMPREHEND IT.

THE PRESIDENCY IS UNIQUE. CHOSEN BY ALL THE PEOPLE, THE PRESIDENT BEARS ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NATION'S AFFAIRS. DESTINY HAS ALSO MADE HIM THE LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD.

DESPITE THRONGS OF ADVISORS, IT IS AN OFFICE HELD IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT. A PRESIDENT FACES MONUMENTAL DUTIES WITH A SENSE OF POWER AND POWERLESSNESS, EXHILARATION AND FRUSTRATION, SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE BUT INEVITABLY LONELY.

IT REQUIRES EXTRAORDINARY POWERS OF SERIAL CONCENTRATION. WHEN A CRISIS MEETING ENDS, A PRESIDENT HAS TO BLOCK IT OUT AND MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ENGAGEMENT WHERE HE WILL BE EXPECTED TO BE AT HIS BEST -- CONFIDENT, DECISIVE, UNRUFFLED AND CHARMING. ALL THE WHILE THE PRESIDENT MUST CARRY WITH HIM THE NATION'S DEEPEST SECRETS, AND THE HAUNTING KNOWLEDGE THAT HIS SIMPLE ORDER COULD PULVERIZE MUCH OF THE PLANET.

EVEN IN TIMES OF CALM, THE PRESIDENT MUST BALANCE COMPETING AND INSATIABLE DEMANDS FOR RESOURCES AND HIS ATTENTION. HE MUST RECONCILE THE APPEARANCE OF VAST POWER WITH THE REALITY OF VAST CONSTRAINTS. THE PRESIDENT IS BOUND BY THE LAW AND THE COURTS . . . TESTED BY FACILE MINDS AND FRACTIOUS SPIRITS ON CAPITOL HILL . . . SCRUTINIZED BY A VIGILAND AND SOMETIMES MERCILESS PRESS . . . AND ULTIMATELY ANSWERABLE TO THE UNFORGIVING JUDGMENT OF HISTORY.

THERE ARE OTHER HARD JOBS, TO BE SURE. BUT NONE IS SO COMPREHENSIVELY, RELENTLESSLY HARD AS THE PRESIDENCY. IT IS PRESIDENT REAGAN'S SPECIAL GIFT THAT SOMETIMES HE ALMOST MAKES THIS IMPOSSIBLE JOB LOOK EASY.

THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN PRESIDENT REPRESENT SOMETHING RARE IN OUR SOCIETY -- AND NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY ARE FEW IN NUMBER. IF EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER, THEY CONSTITUTE OUR MOST THOROUGHLY EDUCATED CLASS. THEY HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY HISTORY AND POSSESS A WISDOM WE URGENTLY NEED.

IT IS ALSO A WISDOM WHICH THEY WOULD READILY GIVE. MOST PRESIDENTS LEAVE OFFICE WITH AN OLYMPIAN PATRIOTISM -- THE RARIFIED LOVE OF COUNTRY THAT IS POSSIBLE WHEN AMBITION HAS LOST ITS OBJECT AND PARTISANSHIP ITS EDGE.

III.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD REVEALS A LONG-STANDING AMBIVALENCE ABOUT FORMER PRESIDENTS.

OF THE 38 PRESIDENTS THROUGH PRESIDENT CARTER, 31 SURVIVED THEIR TENURES; FOUR WERE ASSASSINATED; FOUR OTHERS DIED IN OFFICE. THE YOUNGEST TO DIE AFTER LEAVING OFFICE WAS POLK AT 53; THE OLDEST, JOHN ADAMS, ALMOST 91. THOSE WHO SURVIVED THE PRESIDENCY LIVED ON FOR AN AVERAGE OF ALMOST NINE YEARS.

THE FORMER PRESIDENTS AND INDEED THE NATION HAVE GROPED UNCERTAINLY FOR A PROPER ROLE.

EX-PRESIDENT GEORGE WASHINGTON WAS APPOINTED LT. GENERAL AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, BUT HAD NO REAL DUTIES. HE VENTURED BACK TO THE CAPITOL ONLY ONCE MORE.

JACKSON MOVED BACK TO CENTRAL TENNESSEE WHERE HIS LAST YEARS WERE TORMENTED BY THE DEBTS OF HIS NE'ER-DO-WELL ADOPTED SON.

TYLER BECAME CHANCELLOR OF WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE, HELD CONFEDERATE OFFICE AND FATHERED SEVEN MORE CHILDREN -- THE LAST BORN WHEN HE WAS 70.

TWENTY-SIX OF OUR PRESIDENTS HAD BEEN LAWYERS, BUT ONLY A HANDFUL RETURNED TO PRACTICE AFTER LEAVING OFFICE, BENJAMIN HARRISON AND TAFT BEING NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS.

SEVERAL EX-PRESIDENTS, MORE THAN ONE LIKES TO REMEMBER, FROM JEFFERSON TO COOLIDGE, FELL ON HARD TIMES AND BECAME THE SUBJECT OF PRIVATE AND SOMETIMES PUBLIC CHARITY.

JAMES MONROE WAS SO IMPOVERISHED THAT HE HAD TO ASK CONGRESS TO REIMBURSE HIM FOR HIS EXPENSES IN PUBLIC SERVICE. CONGRESS APPROPRIATED $30,000.

GRANT FOUNDED A BROKERAGE FIRM AND WAS LEFT PENNILESS THROUGH THE FRAUD OF HIS PARTNERS. AT THE END, HE WAS DESPERATELY TRYING TO FINISH HIS MEMOIRS AND PROVIDE A LEGACY FOR HIS FAMILY BEFORE SUCCUMBING TO THROAT CANCER.

EX-PRESIDENTS GOING BACK TO JOHN ADAMS HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES TO WRITING, NOT ONLY TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS BUT TO PAY THEIR BILLS. NONE OF THE

EFFORTS TO PUT PEN TO PAPER WAS MORE INTERESTING THAN THE POST-PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN TWO FORMERLY BITTER OPPONENTS, JOHN ADAMS AND JEFFERSON, WHICH CONTINUED ALMOST UP TO THE TIME WHEN THEY BOTH DIED WITHIN HOURS OF ONE ANOTHER ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1826.

ONE COMES AWAY FROM EVEN A CURSORY REVIEW OF THE LIVES OF EX-PRESIDENTS WITH A CHILLING SENSE OF A WASTED RESOURCE. ON THE WHOLE, THEIR EXPERIENCE WAS UNDERVALUED AND THEIR ADVICE TOO LITTLE SOUGHT.

AN IMPORTANT REASON FOR THIS OMISSION, HISTORY REVEALS, IS PARTISAN ZEAL. NEW ADMINISTRATIONS OF BOTH PARTIES HAVE SOUGHT TO DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES FROM THEIR PREDECESSORS ON EACH AND EVERY FRONT. THIS INSURES A DISCONTINUITY WHICH BAFFLES OUR ALLIES AND PRODUCES GALLOPING INEFFICIENCIES IN OUR SYSTEM. THE IRONY IS THAT LIKE A SON ABOUT HIS FATHER, A NEW ADMINISTRATION OFTEN DECIDES IN ITS WANING YEARS THAT THE OLD MAN WAS NOT SO DUMB AFTER ALL.

IV.

NEVERTHELESS, AT LEAST FIVE FORMER PRESIDENTS HAD ILLUSTRIOUS CAREERS FROM WHICH LESSONS MAY BE DRAWN.

JEFFERSON PRESIDED AS THE SAGE OF MONTICELLO AND WAS CONSULTED EXTENSIVELY BY MADISON AND MONROE. AMONG HIS CATHOLIC INTERESTS, HIS GREATEST CONTRIBUTIONS WERE

IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, NOTABLY HIS INTENSE EFFORTS TO FOUND THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA AND TO INSPIRE ITS CURRICULUM AND ARCHITECTURE. HIS FINANCIAL DISTRESS TURNED TO THE NATION'S ADVANTAGE WHEN HE SOLD HIS PERSONAL LIBRARY TO REPLACE THE BOOKS DESTROYED BY THE BRITISH WHEN THEY BURNED THE CAPITAL IN 1814 -- A COLLECTION WHICH IS THE GENESIS OF TODAY'S LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS SERVED SEVENTEEN YEARS IN THE HOUSE, LED THE FIGHT TO ESTABLISH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, ARGUED BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT, BECAME AN OUTSPOKEN OPPONENT OF SLAVERY, AND PUBLISHED A VOLUME OF POETRY BESIDES.

TAFT TAUGHT LAW AT YALE, WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASOCIATION, PUBLISHED LECTURES ON THE PRESIDENCY, SERVED IN WOODROW WILSON'S ADMINISTRATION, AND LATER BECAME CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT.

TEDDY ROOSEVELT EXPLORED MUCH OF THE WORLD WRITING ABOUT WILDLIFE. HE RAN FOR PRESIDENT TWICE MORE, WROTE INFLUENTIAL BOOKS AND ESSAYS, AND SOUGHT AUTHORITY TO RAISE A VOLUNTEER DIVISION FOR WORLD WAR I. PRESIDENT WILSON DECLINED THE OFFER.

HERBERT HOOVER WAS REDISCOVERED AFTER HIS ARCH-RIVAL FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT LEFT THE SCENE. HE COORDINATED POST-WAR RELIEF FOR PRESIDENT TRUMAN, AND

CHAIRED TWO COMMISIONS -- ONE APPOINTED BY TRUMAN AND ONE BY EISENHOWER -- THE ILLUSTRIOUS HOOVER COMMISSIONS ON STREAMLINING THE GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO PROVIDED STRONG LEADERSHIP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESTIGIOUS HOOVER INSTITUTION ON WAR, REVOLUTION, AND PEACE AT STANFORD.

THESE EXEMPLARY "POST-PRESIDENCIES" HAVE SEVERAL IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN COMMON. IN EACH CASE, THE EFFORTS WERE DEVOTED TO A BROAD PUBLIC PURPOSE, AMPLIFYING AN INTEREST DERIVED FROM THE PRESIDENCY. THEY FACED TOWARD THE FUTURE,..ADDRESSING PROFOUND INTERESTS OF POSTERITY, NOT ANTIQUITY. THERE WAS ALSO DEEP PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT. THESE FIVE EX-PRESIDENTS DID MORE THAN LEND THEIR NAMES TO THE CAUSE; THEY GAVE THEMSELVES.

V.

ALL OF THOSE QUALITIES ARE REFLECTED IN THE CARTER PRESIDENTIAL CENTER. ITS FOUR COMPLEMENTARY ENTITIES REFLECT PRESIDENT CARTER'S EXPERIENCE, HIS PERSONAL COMMITMENT, HIS VALUES, AND HIS HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

-- THE LIBRARY WILL ENABLE BOTH SCHOLARS AND CITIZENS TO VIEW HISTORY, ECONOMICS, DIPLOMACY, AND OTHER DISCIPLINES THROUGH A PRESIDENTIAL EYE, NOT JUST PRESIDENT CARTER'S EYE BUT HIS PREDECESSOR'S AS WELL.

-- THE CARTER CENTER OF EMORY UNIVERSITY DRAWS UPON HIS ABILITY TO RALLY RESOURCES AND COMMAND ATTENTION AS

ONLY A FORMER PRESIDENT CAN. ASSEMBLING WORLD CLASS SCHOLARS AND INTERNATIONAL LEADERS, IT HAS ALREADY SPONSORED HIGH-LEVEL NONPARTISAN CONSULTATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, ARMS CONTROL, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, THE LATIN AMERICAN DEBT CRISIS, AND GLOBAL HEALTH. PRESIDENT CARTER'S PERSONAL LEADERSHIP IN THESE CONSULTATIONS STANDS AS A REMINDER OF HIS MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AT CAMP DAVID. AT THE SAME TIME, THE LINK HE HAS FORGED WITH ONE OF AMERICA'S MAJOR PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES INSURES THAT THESE ENDEAVORS WILL CONTINUE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

-- GLOBAL 2000 LOOKS FURTHER AHEAD, TO REMIND US ALL THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO AMICABLE SETTLEMENT OF THE GLOBAL TENSION BETWEEN SCARCE RESOURCES AND EXPLODING POPULATIONS. IT ALSO SPONSORS PROGRAMS TO AMELIORATE THAT STRUGGLE, OPERATING ALREADY IN THREE TROUBLED AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

-- FINALLY, THE CARTER-MENIL HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION RENEWS A FUNDAMENTAL COMMITMENT TO HUMANITY. HISTORY MAY LONGEST REMEMBER PRESIDENT CARTER AS A GLOBAL CHAMPION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THROUGH THIS CENTER, HE REMAINS AT THE SIDE OF ALL WHO ARE MADE TO SUFFER FOR THEIR STATION, COLOR, OR BELIEF.

EVERY PRESIDENT, JUST BY HAVING SERVED, HAS GIVEN TO THE NATION BEYOND HIS DUE. WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO

EXPECT MORE. YET WE ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE A FURTHER GIFT, ONE OF RARE QUALITY, REPRESENTING HIS UNFLAGGING DEVOTION TO PUBLIC SERVICE.

THIS CENTER IS DEVOTED NOT TO PAST STATUS, BUT PRESENT WORKS. ITS PURPOSE IS NOT TO AGGRANDIZE OR JUSTIFY, BUT TO CONTRIBUTE. IT HAS NO OBJECT BUT THE PUBLIC GOOD.

IN RECENT YEARS MANY OF US HAVE NOTICE PRESIDENT CARTER'S QUIET ACTIVITIES AFFIRMING THAT HE LOVES HIS FELLOW MAN..

THIS CENTER IS A LARGER BUT SIMILAR DEMONSTRATION THAT HE ALSO LOVES HIS COUNTRY.