

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

President Clinton has announced that he will award the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, to eleven distinguished Americans. All have made important contributions to their communities and the nation. The President will bestow the medals at a White House ceremony on September 9, 1996. The honorees are:

JOSEPH CARDINAL BERNARDIN. One of the most popular priests in the country, Cardinal Bernardin has had a distinguished career in the Church. At age 38, he became the youngest bishop in the nation, consecrated in the Atlanta archdiocese. He was assigned to Chicago in 1982, was named cardinal within a year, and set about to strengthen the Chicago archdiocese. Cardinal Bernardin has championed such causes as racial equality and arms control, and has been a persistent voice for moderation.

JAMES BRADY. In just three months on the job, Brady had already become an effective and popular press secretary for President Reagan when he was shot by President Reagan's would-be assassin, John Hinckley, and left paralyzed. Mr. Brady and his wife, Sarah, went on to become courageous, outspoken leaders in the fight for responsible gun control, including the "Brady Bill," which bears his name.

MILLARD FULLER. Founder and president of Habitat for Humanity, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, Fuller has devoted himself to providing decent and affordable housing for low-income families. Habitat has already built over 50,000 homes in the United States and around the world and has become one of the nation's largest home builders. The organization is designed to provide a hand up, not a hand-out, and those who buy Habitat homes must invest not only their dollars but their own labor alongside Habitat volunteers.

DAVID HAMBURG. A psychiatrist who has devoted his life to fighting for the needs and rights of American children, Hamburg is retiring this year from the Presidency of the Carnegie Foundation. He has been a major influence on generations of policy makers and has lobbied strongly for measures such as the Family and Medical Leave Act. He has written about building parental competence, strengthening social support networks by bringing generations together, and child development.

JOHN H. JOHNSON. Johnson is the Chief Executive Officer of Johnson Publishing Company, which produces leading African-American magazines, including Ebony and Jet. He has committed himself to breaking negative stereotypes and building self-respect in the Black community by turning the spotlight on successful African-Americans.

EUGENE LANG. In 1981, Lang "adopted" the sixth grade class of his alma mater in East Harlem, promising to cover the costs of college for any child who graduated from high school. A remarkable 90% of the class took him up on his offer and got their degrees or equivalency certificates. Inspired by that experience, Lang created the "I Have a Dream" Foundation in 1986, to give underprivileged children a chance at college by providing financial assistance, mentoring, and tutoring. Today, there are over 15,000 students in 59 cities involved in "I Have a Dream."

JAN NOWAK-JEZIORANSKI. National Director of the Polish-American Congress, Nowak has devoted his life to the cause of freedom and democracy. During World War II, he risked his life as a member of the Polish underground, making numerous trips from Nazi-occupied Warsaw to London in order to inform Allied leaders. For 25 years, he directed Radio Free Europe's Polish Service, serving as the voice of democracy for a generation of Poles.

ANTONIA PANTOJA. The founder of many organizations dedicated to serving the Puerto Rican community, Pantoja has devoted her energies to promoting community development. In 1961, she helped found ASPIRA, an organization that promotes education, leadership training, and community service for Latino youth. Spreading her "dare to dream" message, she has helped many Latino youth to achieve their higher educational goals. She is also a leading advocate of community restoration and development.

ROSA PARKS. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama and helped launch the modern civil rights movement. Since that historic act of civil disobedience, Parks has remained devoted to human rights issues. She is the director of the Parks Institute for Self Development in Detroit, which offers career training for teenagers. She makes frequent personal appearances and was a vocal opponent of apartheid in South Africa.

GINETTA SAGAN. Fifty years ago, Sagan was tortured and nearly killed by Mussolini's Black Brigade because of her involvement with the Italian resistance. With courage and determination, she has fought human rights abuses around the world. She founded the first West Coast chapter of Amnesty International USA and has organized some 75 other chapters around the United States. Amnesty International has honored her by creating the Ginetta Sagan Fund, which is dedicated to stopping torture and persecution of women and children and promotes human rights education.

MORRIS UDALL. A World War II veteran and former professional basketball player, Udall represented Arizona during a distinguished thirty-year career in the House of Representatives. Afflicted with Parkinson's disease, he resigned his seat in 1991. Widely respected for his humor and quiet dignity, he served as the Chairman of the Interior Committee for more than twenty years, leading the way on landmark environmental legislation, including the Alaska Lands Act, the 1984 Wilderness Act, and the 1982 Nuclear Waste Management Act.

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Freedom*

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF
THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDALS OF FREEDOM
THE WHITE HOUSE
SEPTEMBER 10, 1996**

Good morning and welcome to all of you, especially to the honorees, their friends and families, and the distinguished Members of Congress who have joined us here today.

We are here to award the highest honor our nation can bestow: The Presidential Medal of Freedom. President Harry Truman established these awards to pay tribute to those who helped win the fight for democracy in World War II. But it was President John F. Kennedy who elevated the medals to honor contributions to the quality of American life.

Although we confer these medals to worthy individuals, we are recognizing far more than individual achievement. We are honoring the American values that unite us as a people: Opportunity, Responsibility and Community; Determination, Dedication and Loyalty; Faith, Courage and Country. We are honoring renewed faith in the Freedom that brought this nation forth and will sustain it into the future.

William Faulkner once said that we must be free not because we **claim** freedom, but because we **practice** it. The 11 men and women we are honoring today have raised the practice of freedom to new heights. I would like to introduce each of them to you now.

Joseph Cardinal Bernadin: As the Archbishop of Chicago, Joseph Cardinal Bernadin is one of America's most beloved men and one of Catholicism's greatest leaders. Where others have pulled people apart, Cardinal Bernadin has sought common ground. In a time of transition in his Church, his community and the world, he has held fast to his mission to bring people together. Throughout his career, he has fought tirelessly against social injustice, poverty and ignorance. Without question, he is a man of God, for the People.

James Brady: Fifteen years ago, Press Secretary James Brady was at President Reagan's side when a would-be assassin nearly killed them both with a handgun he had purchased at a gun shop. But Jim Brady is living proof that courage and determination are stronger than the deadly assassin's bullet. Since that day, Jim and his wife, Sarah, have waged a moral and political battle to save lives and keep handguns out of the hands of criminals. His life is a testament to bravery, and we are all safer because of him.

Millard Fuller: I don't think it is too much to say that Millard Fuller has revolutionized the concept of philanthropy. Twenty years ago, he founded Habitat for Humanity to provide decent homes for disadvantaged people. To fund his plan, he didn't ask people for their money, he asked for the sweat of their brows. In return, he gave them something no tax deduction ever could -- tangible proof that they had improved someone

else's life -- a house. I have swung a hammer for Habitat for Humanity, and each time I do, I come away enriched. We are all the beneficiaries of Millard Fuller's vision.

David Hamburg: I have often said that strengthening America's families is one of our foremost challenges as a people. David Hamburg has spent much of his long career meeting that challenge. Convinced that America's children are a generation in crisis, David has used his Presidency of the influential Carnegie Corporation to advocate for better parenting, stronger families and more connected communities. A truly effective humanitarian, David embodies the spirit of altruism in action.

John Johnson: Ten years ago, I had the honor of recognizing John Johnson for his contributions as a native Arkansan. John was raised with few material blessings, but he rose to become one of the world's greatest pioneers in media, founding the landmark magazines Ebony and Jet. He gave African Americans a voice -- and a face -- at a time when they were virtually invisible in mainstream American culture. A humble man despite his great influence, John continues to inspire young African Americans to "succeed against the odds" and take advantage of their opportunities.

Eugene Lang: When I talk about providing opportunity for everyone who takes the responsibility to make the most of it, I have people like Eugene Lang in mind. In 1981, he made a simple promise to pay the college tuition of every student from his East Harlem alma mater who graduated from high school. Since then, his "I Have a Dream Foundation" has opened the doors of college for thousands of young people who have seized the opportunity he offered. Eugene Lang has helped them make the most of their God-given abilities, and we are all the beneficiaries of his innovative vision.

Jan Nowak: Jan Nowack [Yan No-vack] has dedicated his life to fight for freedom. In World War II, he risked everything to carry vital information to the allies. After the Nazi's defeat, he saw his native Poland once again in the grip of oppression and he vowed to break it. For 25 years he was a dominant force in Radio Free Europe -- the great beacon of hope that brought so many people through the dark hours of communism. And he continued to fight until the day he saw freedom triumph over tyranny. In America, his commitment to the ideal of democracy continues to inspire us all.

Antonia Pantoja: Pas e Respecto -- Peace and Respect: these are the values that define the life and work of Antonia Pantoja [Pan-to-ha]. Her efforts to create educational and economic opportunity for all Puerto Ricans have made her the most respected and beloved figure in the Puerto Rican community. Through Aspira [ah-speer-ah], the educational program she helped to found, she dares young Puerto Ricans to dream . . . and to work to achieve their dreams. Her dedication to her people -- and her contribution to America -- is unsurpassed.

Rosa Parks: When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Alabama bus 40 years ago, she ignited the single-most significant social movement in American history. When she sat down on that bus, she stood up for the American ideals of equality and justice, and she demanded that we **all** stand up for those

principles. When our descendants look back in time to trace the fight for Freedom, Rosa Parks will stand among the Patriots -- the legendary figures whose courage has sustained us as a nation. She is, quite simply, our national treasure.

Ginetta Sagan: Ginetta Sagan's name is synonymous with the fight for human rights around the world. In World War II, she paid dearly for her dedication to the cause of freedom. For more than a year, she was imprisoned and tortured by the Nazis . . . but they could not break her. Instead, she has devoted her life to save others from the ordeal that she endured. Through her tireless work with Amnesty International and her own Aurora Foundation, she has drawn the world's attention to the plight of prisoners of conscience and their families. She represents to all the triumph of the human spirit over tyranny.

Morris Udall: Mo Udall represents everything a lawmaker should be: dedicated to seeking common ground, committed to improving the political process, and singularly possessed of the one trait no Member of Congress should be without -- a sense of humor. Mo was fond of quoting Will Rogers, who once advised us to "get a few laughs and do the best you can." Mo's best set a standard few can match. His passionate commitment to preserve our national resources and leave to our children a safer environment is a more than an inspiration, it is a gift to all Americans.

Now it is my great honor and privilege to present to each of you the Presidential Medal of Freedom. I do so with the greatest respect for your work, for your dedication, and for the example you have set for all America.

File -
Presidential
Medal of
Freedom

PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

Professor John Hope Franklin

Mr. Leon Higginbotham, Jr.

Judge Johnson, Jr.

Dr. C. Everett Koop

Senator Gaylord Nelson

Mr. Walter Reuther

Mr. James W. Rouse

Mr. Willie Velasquez

Mr. Lew Wasserman

Ms. Peggy Charren

Ms. Joan Ganz Cooney

Mr. William T. Coleman

Mr. and Mrs. John Hope Franklin

Dr. and Mrs. Walter Brown

Mr. and Mrs. John W. Franklin

Dr. and Mrs. William Friday

Ms. Lisa Noel

Dr. and Mrs. Harold Pinkett

Mr. and Mrs. Lew Wasserman

Ms. Lynne Wasserman

Ms. Carol Leif

Mr. Casey Wasserman

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Valenti

Mrs. Abraham Ribicoff

Hon. Howard Baker

Amb. and Mrs. Robert Strauss

Alternate List

Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Jordan

Mr. and Mrs. Felix Rohatyn

Hon. and Mrs. John Dingell

Mr. and Mrs. James W. Rouse

Mr. and Mrs. Edward M. Norton, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward H. Norton

Mr. James W. Rouse, Jr.

Mr. Winstead Rouse

Mr. John Rixey, Jr.

Mrs. Charles Richard Gamper, Jr.

Mr. Willard G. Rouse, III

Hon. and Mrs. Frank M. Johnson, Jr.

Hon. and Mrs. Gerald Bard Tjoflat

Mr. John B. Sandage, Esq.

Mr. and Mrs. David Whiteside, Esq.

Sen. and Mrs. Howell Heflin

Mrs. Shirley Sandage

Alternates

Ms. Beth S. Brinkman

M. R. Nachman, Esq.

Mrs. Martha Nachman

Prof. Jack Bass

WALTER REUTHER

Mrs. Elizabeth Reuther Dickmeyer
Mr. Bruce Dickmeyer
Master Walter Reuther Dickmeyer
Miss May Reuther Dickmeyer
Master Victor Reuther
Mr. & Mrs. Ben Dickmeyer
Ms. Linda Reuther
Mr. Stephen Yokich (President of the UAW)
Congressman Bonior

additions:

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Fenton (Walter's good friend)
Mr. Victor Reuther (Walter's brother)
Mr. & Mrs. Gene Richey (Walter's sister (Chris) & brother in law)

PEGGY CHARREN

Mrs. Peggy & Mr. Stanley Charren
Ms. Claudia Moquin
Mr. Kyle Moquin
Ms. Deborah Charren
Ms. Hannah Charren-Diehl
Mr. Timothy Diehl
Ms. Barbara Korstvedt
Mr. Rolf Korstvedt
Mr. Maxwell Walzer

GAYLORD NELSON

Mr. & Mrs. Gaylord Nelson
Mr. & Mrs. Gaylord Nelson, Jr.
Miss Kiva Nelson
Master Jason Nelson
Mr. Jeffrey Nelson and guest (Laura Mitchell)
Ms. Tia Nelson

DR. C. EVERETT KOOP

Dr. & Mrs. C. Everett Koop
Ms. Heather Koop
Dr. Faye Abdellah
Dr. & Mrs. Martin Eichelberger
Dr. Edward Martin
Mr. & Mrs. Micheal Rittmann

A. LEON HIGGINBOTHAM

Mr. & Dr. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. (Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham)
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Higginbotham
Mr. Kenneth Higginbotham
Dr. Karen Higginbotham
Dr. Charlene Smith
Ms. Nia Higginbotham
Mrs. Elaine Wells
Mr. Arthur Liman, Esq.

additions:

Ms. Carol Derby
Mr. Nathan Dixon

JOAN GANZ COONEY

Ms. Joan Ganz Cooney
Mr. Peter Peterson
Mrs. Alan Houle
Mr. Paul Ganz
Mr. David Peterson
Ms. Holly Peterson
Mr. James Peterson
Mr. Michael Peterson
Mr. Lloyd Morrisett
Mr. David V.B. Britt

WILLIE VELASQUEZ

Ms. Jane Velasquez
Mr. Carmen Velasquez
Mr. Guillermo Velasquez
Ms. Catarina Velasquez
Ms. Mary Louise Velasquez
Ms. Stella Cortez
Mr. Juan Sepulveda
Mr. Robert Greenblum
Ms. Suzanne Calzoncit
Mr. Feliz Cortez

WILLIAM T. COLEMAN, Jr.

Mr. & Mrs. William T. Coleman, Jr.
Ms. Lovida Hardin Coleman
The Honorable William T. Coleman, III
Professor & Mrs. Hardin L.K. Coleman
Master Jessie Coleman
Master Aaron Coleman
Mr. Donald Bliss, Esq.
The Honorable and Mrs. Elliot Richardson

priority additions:

General and Mrs. Colin Powell
Mr. Joseph Robert, Jr.
Dr. and Mrs. Melvin Chisum
Dr. and Mrs. Melville Kennedy
Mrs. C. Barclay Jones
Mrs. Richard Kline
Mrs. Stanley Sarnoff
Dr. Milton Gusack
Mr. Arthur Culvahouse
Mr. John Besiner, Esq.
Mr. Elliot Hall
Mr. Alton Frye
Mrs. Jessica Einhorn
Mrs. Kenneth Duberstein
Mrs. Katherine MacLane

cont. additions for William Coleman, Jr.

Members of Congress:

The Honorable Howell Heflin
The Honorable James Jeffords
The Honorable Arlen Specter
The Honorable John Warner
The Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan
The Honorable James Leach
The Honorable Charles Rangel
The Honorable Charles Rangel
The Honorable Amo Houghton
The Honorable Thomas M. Davis, III

Helped him in his youth:

Mr. Berl Bernhard, Esq.
Mr. Harry McPherson, Jr. Esq.
Mr. & Mrs. John Hechinger
Mr. John Macomber
The Honorable Macomber
The Honorable Lloyd Cutler
Ms. Elaine Jones, Esq.
The Honorable Andrew Young
Mrs. Vernon Jordan, Jr.
Mrs. Thurgood Marshall, Sr.
Mr. William Moyers
Ms. Elizabeth Drew
Mr. Sam Donaldson
Ms. Andrea Mitchell

Partners in law firm:

The Honorable Warren Mr. Stanley Christopher
The Honorable Thomas Donilon, Chief of Staff and Assistant Secretary Pulic Affairs Bureau
Ms. Susan Richardson, Esq., Legal Affairs Department

Members of the Cabinet who he has close relationships with:

The Honorable Robert Rubin
The Honorable Ronald Noble, Under Secretray for Enforcement, Dept of Treasury
The Honorable Janet Reno
The Honorable Ronald Brown
The Honorable Donna Shalala
The Honorable Hazel O'Leary
The Honorable Robert Reich