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Father's Day, 1981

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

There is no institution more vital to our Nation's survival than the American family. Here the seeds of personal character are planted, the roots of public virtue first nourished. Through love and instruction, discipline, guidance and example, we learn from our mothers and fathers the values that will shape our private lives and our public citizenship.

The days of our childhood forecast our lives, as poets and philosophers long have told us. "The childhood shows the man as morning shows the day," John Milton wrote. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it," Solomon tells us. Clearly, the future is in the care of our parents. Such is the responsibility, promise and hope of fatherhood. Such is the gift that our fathers give us.

Our fathers bear an awesome responsibility—one that they shoulder willingly and fulfill with a love that asks no recompense. By turns both gentle and firm, our fathers guide us along the path from infancy to adulthood. We embody their joy, pain and sacrifice, and inherit memories more cherished than any possession.

On Father's Day each year, we express formally a love and gratitude whose roots go deeper than conscious memory can recite. It is only fitting that we have this special day to pay tribute to those men—our natural fathers, adoptive fathers and foster fathers—who deserve our deepest respect and devotion. It is equally fitting, as we recall the ancient and loving command to honor our fathers, that we resolve to do so by becoming ourselves parents and citizens who are worthy of honor.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim, in accordance with the joint resolution of Congress (36 U.S.C., § 142a), that Sunday, June 21, 1981 be observed as Father's Day. I call upon all citizens to mark this day with appropriate public and private expressions of the honor we owe our fathers, and invite the States and local communities throughout the Nation to observe Father's Day with appropriate ceremonies.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 20th day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred eighty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifth.

Ronald Reagan