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Centennial Year of Liberty in the United States

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

She remains a Wonder of the World—an uncanny fusion of art and engineering. She is the result of a unique collaboration between two freedom-loving Frenchmen with a profound affection for America: a great sculptor, Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi, and the greatest structural engineer of his time, Alexandre Gustave Eiffel. Next year she will be 100 years old.

Nineteen hundred and eighty-six marks the Centennial of the Statue of Liberty. Originally called "Liberty Enlightening the World," the Statue was a generous gift from the people of France to the people of the United States. It represents the close and cordial relationship that traditionally has existed between our countries and our common devotion to freedom and democracy.

She rises majestically 151 feet above the magnificent base designed by Richard M. Hunt, the preeminent American architect. But she is much more than her awesome dimensions and her physical splendor. For millions of anxious immigrants, the forebears of countless millions of today's Americans, she was the first glimpse of America. She was assurance of journey's end, safe harbor reached at last, and the beginning of a new adventure in a free and blessed land. For them she was a dream come true, the Lady with the Lamp, a warm welcome to a new world and a new life.

The gifted American poet Emma Lazarus, hailing her as the "New Colossus," put the message of the Statue of Liberty in unforgettable words:

Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp . . .
Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost, to me.
I lift my lamp beside the Golden Door.

Since its dedication on October 28, 1886, the Statue of Liberty has held high the beacon of freedom, hope, and opportunity to welcome millions of immigrants and visitors from foreign lands. From that time she has been one of the proudest symbols of the American ideal of liberty and justice for all.

Today, the Statue of Liberty and nearby Ellis Island are being restored from the ravages of time and weather by the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Centennial Foundation, Inc.

The United States will celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Statue of Liberty through commemorative events scheduled to take place during the Fourth of July Weekend in 1986 and on October 28, 1986.

In recognition of the importance of the Statue of Liberty to the American people, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 407, has designated the twelve-month period ending on October 28, 1986, as the "Centennial Year of Liberty in the United States" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this occasion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the twelve-month period ending on October 28, 1986, as the Centennial Year of Liberty in the United States, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe this year with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan