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medal

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 12, 1986

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT MEDAL OF FREEDOM LUNCHEON

The East Room

1:17 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all for being here. Nancy and I want to welcome you all to the White House for this happy occasion. On days like this and at lunches like this I find myself looking up and thinking what a wonderful job I have.

We are here today to present the Medal of Freedom to seven Americans. This medal is the highest civilian honor our nation can bestow, and I've always thought it highly significant that we call it not the Medal of Talent or the Medal of Valor or the Medal of Courage or Genius, but the Medal of Freedom. I think that says a lot about our values and what we honor and what we love.

Freedom is important to all of us. As someone who spent many years making speeches, I have quoted many definitions of freedom -- some very moving and eloquent. But I have always liked George Orwell's blunt and unadorned statement. He said freedom is the right to say no. There is something kind of happily rebellious about that definition, and I thought of it this morning because I decided this year's recipients of the Medal of Freedom are distinguished by this. You're a group of happy rebels.

In your careers and in the way you have lived your lives, you've all said no -- a most emphatic no -- to mediocrity, to averageness, to timidity. You've said no to the rules of the game and the regulations of the day. You've said no to the conventional wisdom, no to the merely adequate, no to the limits and limitations on yourselves and others.

But it is probably true that there is little point to freedom unless it is accompanied by a big yes, and each of you has uttered a resounding Whitmanesque yes to many things -- to excellence and risk and reach, to courage and the untried and the supposedly impossible. You've rebelled against the artificial and embraced the authentic. You've achieved a great deal and your creativity itself has been life-affirming, for creation is a profoundly faithful act -- an act that says I trust in the future and I trust in life itself.

You are all originals. You've all made America better -- a better place -- and you've made it seem a better place in the eyes of the people of the world. And this today is just our way of saying thanks.

And without further ado I'm going to read the citations for the medals now and award them to the recipients.

MORE

Walter Hubert Annenberg. (Applause.)

"Following a brilliant career in publishing and pioneering, the use of television for educational purposes, Walter Hubert Annenberg was in 1969 appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James where he served with extraordinary diligence, bringing the governments and people of the United States and United Kingdom closer together. Since returning to private life, Walter Annenberg has devoted himself to the development of higher education and has provided support to countless institutions. Today, our nation repays his lifetime of achievement with its gratitude."

Walter --

AMBASSADOR ANNENBERG: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: -- pleased and proud.

AMBASSADOR ANNENBERG: Thank you, Mr. President.
(Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Earl Henry Blaik. (Applause.)

"A soldier of the gridiron, Colonel Earl "Red" Blaik led the West Point team he coached into the pages of the history books. He rallied the Black Knights from a record of devastating defeats and carried them on to some of their greatest victories, winning the esteem of his cadet players and the admiration of his vanquished rivals. One of America's great coaches, he brought a winning spirit to his team, honor to his branch of service and pride to his nation."

And, Red, here you go and well deserved. (Applause.)

Barry Morris Goldwater. (Applause.)

SENATOR GOLDWATER: Thank God I made it. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: "Soldier and statesman, Barry Morris Goldwater has stood at the center of American history. Respected by both ally and adversary, Barry Goldwater's celebrated candor and patriotism have made him an American legend. Hailed as a prophet before his time, selfless in the service of his nation, Barry Goldwater has earned the unbounded affection and admiration of his countrymen and the enduring gratitude of all future generations of Americans."

And here you go, Mr. Conservative. (Applause.)

And Helen Hayes.

I can't resist pointing out that Helen was married to a happy rebel named Charlie McArthur, a wonderful playwright and a man of natural style. And, Helen, today, I was remembering your story -- no, in just a minute -- I'm going to make you listen to a story. When she first set eyes on Charlie, it was at a party. And he was eating from a bag of peanuts.

He looked at her and asked if she'd like some peanuts. And as he poured them into her hand he said, "I wish they were emeralds." And years later, as a famous and celebrated playwright, he bought Helen what she'd asked for as an anniversary gift, a handful of jewels. And as he poured the emeralds into her hand, you know what he said? "I wish they were peanuts." (Laughter.)

Helen Hayes McArthur. (Applause.)

"Many are admired but few are beloved, and fewer still are both. But Helen Hayes is and has been for almost all the years of this century both. Peerless actress, peerless star, she has excelled on stage, screen and television, playing everything from virtuous young ingenues to Victorian queens, Helen Hayes is that rare thing -- a true original. She is also, demonstrably, a great actress, a great patriot, and a great soul."

Helen, congratulations. (Applause.)

General Matthew B. Ridgway. (Applause.)

"When a soldier rising, sword in hand, reaches to protect an idea -- freedom, liberty, human kindness -- the world is, for a moment, hushed. Greatness is often born in quiet, in stillness. And so it was that night in June of 1944 when General Matthew B. Ridgway prayed the words God spoke to Joshua: 'I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' D-Day saved a continent, and so, a world. And Ridgway helped save D-Day. Heroes come when they're needed; great men step forward when courage seems in short supply. World War II was such a time. And there was Ridgway."

General, thank you and God bless you. (Applause.)

Vermont Connecticut Royster. (Applause.)

MR. ROYSTER: Did they have to put the middle name in?

THE PRESIDENT: (Laughter.) Not any more.

"For over half a century, as a journalist, author, and teacher, Vermont Royster illuminated the political and economic life of our times. His common sense exploded the pretensions of 'expert opinion,' and his compelling eloquence warned of the evils of society loosed from its moorings in faith. The voice of the American people can be heard in his prose -- honest, open, proud, and free."

Vermont, congratulations to you and to the rest of New England. (Applause.)

Albert Bruce Sabin. (Applause.)

When as a boy Albert Bruce Sabin came to the United States from Russia and no one could have known that he would number among the most prominent immigrants of our century. From an early age Sabin devoted his life to medicine, and by the 1950s his research had resulted in a breakthrough. In the years since, the Sabin vaccine has helped to make dramatic advances against the scourge of polio myelitis.

This medal is awarded to Dr. Sabin on behalf on a proud nation and a grateful world. Doctor, thank you for everything. (Applause.)

There is nothing to add to achievements such as these, and no praise that can add any more luster to these great names. May I say to you simply, to all of you, thank you just for being, for doing what you have done what you do.

And thank you all, and God bless you. (Applause.)

(NOONAN)

MAY 12, 1986

MEDAL OF FREEDOM LUNCHEON

THANK YOU ALL. NANCY AND I WANT TO WELCOME YOU ALL TO THE WHITE HOUSE FOR THIS HAPPY OCCASION. ON DAYS LIKE THIS AT LUNCHESES LIKE THIS I SOMETIMES FIND MYSELF LOOKING UP AND THINKING: WHAT A WONDERFUL JOB I HAVE.

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FREEDOM IS IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US. AS SOMEONE WHO'S SPENT MANY YEARS MAKING SPEECHES I HAVE QUOTED MANY DEFINITIONS OF FREEDOM, SOME VERY MOVING AND ELOQUENT.

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WALTER, FRONT AND CENTER.
CONGRATULATIONS.

EARL HENRY BLAIK:

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HERE YOU GO, MISTER CONSERVATIVE.

HELEN HAYES -- I CAN'T RESIST POINTING OUT THAT HELEN WAS MARRIED TO A HAPPY REBEL NAMED CHARLIE MACARTHUR. A WONDERFUL PLAYWRIGHT AND A MAN OF NATURAL STYLE. HELEN, TODAY I WAS REMEMBERING YOUR STORY. WHEN SHE FIRST SET EYES ON CHARLIE IT WAS AT A PARTY, AND HE WAS EATING FROM A BAG OF PEANUTS. HE LOOKED AT HER AND ASKED IF SHE'D LIKE SOME PEANUTS, AND AS HE Poured THEM INTO HER HAND HE SAID, "I WISH THEY WERE EMERALDS." YEARS LATER AS A FAMOUS AND CELEBRATED PLAYWRIGHT HE BOUGHT HELEN WHAT SHE'D ASKED FOR AS AN ANNIVERSARY GIFT: A HANDFUL OF JEWELS. AND AS HE Poured THE EMERALDS INTO HER HAND YOU KNOW WHAT HE SAID. "I WISH THEY WERE PEANUTS!"

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(Robinson/BE)
April 22, 1986
11:45 a.m.

MAR 22 1986

MEDAL OF FREEDOM CITATION

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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Katherine

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(Noonan/BE/RR)

May 9, 1986

1:30 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: MEDAL OF FREEDOM LUNCHEON
MONDAY, MAY 12, 1986

Thank you all. Nancy and I want to welcome you all to the White House for this happy occasion. On days like this at lunches like this I sometimes find myself looking up and thinking: what a wonderful job I have.

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conventional wisdom, no to the merely adequate, no to the limits and limitations of yourselves and others.

But it's probably true that there's little point to freedom unless it's accompanied by a big Yes. And each of you has uttered a resounding, Whitmanesque yes to many things -- to excellence and risk and reach, to courage and the untried and the supposedly impossible. You've rebelled against the artificial and embraced the authentic. You have achieved a great deal, and your creativity itself has been life affirming, for creation is a profoundly faithful act, an act that says I trust in the future, I trust in life itself.

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Walter my friend, front and center. Congratulations.

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Red, here you go and well deserved.

Helen Hayes -- I can't resist pointing out that Helen was married to a happy rebel named Charlie MacArthur. A wonderful playwright and a man of natural style. Helen, today I was remembering your story. When she first set eyes on Charlie it was at a party, and he was eating from a bag of peanuts. He looked at her and asked if she'd like some peanuts, and as he poured them into her hand he said, "I wish they were emeralds." Years later as a famous and celebrated playwright he bought Helen what she'd asked for as an anniversary gift: a handful of jewels. And as he poured the emeralds into her hand you know what he said. "I wish they were peanuts!"

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Muster
Δ's p. 3+4

(Noonan/BE)

May 8, 1986

4:30 p.m.

pronunciation on page 5.

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WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 5/9/86 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: -----

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: MEDAL OF FREEDOM LUNCHEON

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LACY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
REGAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	POINDEXTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MILLER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RYAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BALL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SPEAKES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BUCHANAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPRINKEL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CHAVEZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SVAHN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CHEW	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	THOMAS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DANIELS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TUTTLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HENKEL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WALLISON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HICKS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>ELLIOTT</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
KING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>COURTEMANCHE</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
KINGON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>FAULKNER</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS: The attached has been forwarded to the President.

RESPONSE:

RF more

(Noonan/BE)
May 8, 1986
4:30 p.m.

RECORDED
MAY 9 5:00
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Ma *2, 3*

(Noonan/BE)

May 7, 1986

10:00 a.m. *SS*

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Red, here you go and well deserved.

① Walter Hubert Annenberg:

"Following a brilliant career in publishing, Walter Hubert Annenberg was in 1969 appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James, where he served with extraordinary diligence, bringing the governments and people of the United States and United Kingdom closer together. Since returning to private life, Walter Annenberg has devoted himself to the philanthropy for which he has always been renowned, providing support to countless institutions both in the United States and abroad. Today our Nation repays his lifetime of achievement with its gratitude."

Walter my friend, front and center. Congratulations.

Helen Hayes -- I can't resist pointing out that Helen was married to a happy rebel named Charley McArthur. A wonderful playwright and a man of natural style. Helen, today I was remembering your story. When she first set eyes on Charley it was at a party, and he was eating from a bag of peanuts. He looked at her and asked if she'd like some peanuts, and as he

poured them into her hand he said, "I wish they were emeralds." Years later as a famous and celebrated playwright he bought Helen what she'd asked for as an anniversary gift: a handful of jewels. And as he poured the emeralds into her hand you know what he said. "I wish they were peanuts!"

③ Helen Hayes:

"Many are admired but few are beloved and fewer still are both. But Helen Hayes is and has been for almost all the years of this century. Peerless actress, peerless star, she has excelled on stage, screen and television playing everything from virtuous young ingenues to Victorian Queens. Helen Hayes is that rare thing -- a true original. She is also, demonstrably, a great actress, a great patriot and a great soul."

Helen, congratulations.

⑤ General Matthew B. Ridgway:

"When a soldier rising sword in hand reaches to protect an idea -- freedom, liberty, human kindness -- the world is, for a moment, hushed. Greatness is often born in quiet, in stillness: so it was that night in June of 1944 when General Matthew B. Ridgway prayed the words God spoke to Joshua: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. D-Day saved a continent, and so, a world; Ridgway helped save D-Day. Heroes come when they are needed; great men step forward when courage seems in short supply. World War II was such a time: and there was Ridgway."

General, thank you and God bless you.

④ Barry Morris Goldwater:

"Soldier and statesman, Barry Morris Goldwater has stood at the center of American history. Respected by both ally and adversary, Barry Goldwater's celebrated candor and patriotism have made him an American legend. Hailed as a prophet before his time -- selfless in the service of his Nation, Barry Goldwater has earned the unbounded affection and admiration of his countrymen and the enduring gratitude of all future generations of Americans."

Here you go, Mister Conservative.

⑦ And Albert Bruce Sabin:

"When as a boy Albert Bruce Sabin came to the United States from Russia, no one could have known that he would number among the most prominent immigrants of our century. From an early age Sabin devoted his life to medicine, and by the 1950's his research had resulted in a breakthrough. In the years since, the Sabin vaccine has helped to make dramatic advances against the scourge of poliomyelitis. This medal is awarded to Dr. Sabin on behalf of a proud Nation and a grateful world."

Doctor, thank you for everything.

There's nothing to add to achievements such as these, no praise that can add any more luster to these great names. May I say to you simply: thank you just for being, for doing what you've done -- and do.

Thank you all, and God bless you.