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**Collection:** Speechwriting, White House Office  
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**Folder Title:** Nancy Reagan: Physical Fitness  
Dinner-April 15, 1985  
**Box:** 436

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PHYSICAL FITNESS DINNER

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 1985

-- THANK YOU, COACH ALLEN. I'M DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE THIS HONOR FROM THE NATIONAL FITNESS FOUNDATION, AND I'M ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO BE THE FIRST WOMAN TO DO SO. WHEN I TOLD MY HUSBAND I WAS RECEIVING THIS AWARD, HE ASKED ME IF I WAS GETTING IT FOR BEING IN GOOD SHAPE. I TOLD HIM, "I'VE HAD TO BE IN GOOD SHAPE TO KEEP UP WITH YOU FOR OVER 30 YEARS."

-- BUT THIS FELLOW I MARRIED TAKES PHYSICAL FITNESS PRETTY

1

SERIOUSLY AND I'M GLAD HE DOES BECAUSE IT HELPED SAVE HIS LIFE. IF HE HADN'T BEEN IN GOOD CONDITION THAT RAINY DAY FOUR YEARS AGO, HE WOULDN'T BE WITH US TODAY. FORTUNATELY, HE HAD ALWAYS LED AN ACTIVE, VIGOROUS LIFE AND STILL DOES. IN FACT, HE'S IN BETTER SHAPE NOW THAN BEFORE THE SHOOTING. HE BEGAN WORKING OUT WITH WEIGHTS AS PART OF HIS PHYSICAL THERAPY AND IT GREW INTO A FULL-FLEDGED EXERCISE ROUTINE WHICH HE STILL RELIGIOUSLY PRACTICES. WE EVEN HAVE A GYM SET UP IN OUR LIVING QUARTERS AT

2

THE WHITE HOUSE. IF YOU'D STAND OUTSIDE ITS DOOR THREE OR FOUR EVENINGS A WEEK, YOU'D HEAR THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HUFFING AND PUFFING AND GIVING HIS HEART, LUNGS AND MUSCLES A WORKOUT.

-- BUT BEYOND THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF FITNESS, I'VE OFTEN HEARD HIM SPEAK OF HOW SPORTS GAVE HIM CONFIDENCE AS HE WAS GROWING UP AND HOW IT PROVIDED A SENSE OF BELONGING TO MANY KIDS WHO DIDN'T QUITE KNOW WHERE THEY FIT. PHYSICAL FITNESS AND

3

SPORTS DO GIVE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE A PURPOSE. I DON'T BELIEVE CHILDREN SHOULD BE BURDENED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADULTHOOD, YET THEY DO NEED A SENSE OF DIRECTION AND ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THEIR LIVES.

-- I RECENTLY HEARD AN INSPIRING STORY THAT ILLUSTRATES HOW SPORTS CAN HELP AN INDIVIDUAL GROW AND DEVELOP. ITS ABOUT A 22 YEAR OLD WHO WON 582 OUT OF 626 WRESTLING MATCHES. WHAT MAKES THESE VICTORIES EVEN MORE REMARKABLE IS THAT THE YOUNG MAN WHO

4

EARNED THEM IS BLIND. HIS OPPONENTS WERE NOT. AND HE'S HERE  
TONIGHT IN THE AUDIENCE FROM HOUSTON, TEXAS, AND HIS NAME IS  
CRAIG McFARLANE.

-- THROUGH SPORTS, CRAIG FOUND SOME SPECIAL STRENGTH WITHIN  
HIMSELF THAT CARRIES OVER TO THE REST OF HIS LIFE. PARENTS, OF  
COURSE, ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE  
IN THEIR CHILDREN, BUT THE SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT SPORT AND  
FITNESS CAN PROVIDE IS CLOSELY BEHIND. YOUNG PEOPLE NEED A BASIC

5

FULFILLMENT -- THAT ELEMENTAL SENSE OF PURPOSE, OF BELONGING, OF  
WORTH -- AS MUCH AS ADULTS. THE NATIONAL FITNESS FOUNDATION  
STANDS FOR THOSE VERY QUALITIES. AND THAT IS WHY I SUPPORT YOUR  
GOALS WHOLEHEARTEDLY AND WHY I AM SO HONORED TO RECEIVE THIS  
AWARD TONIGHT. THANK YOU.

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