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Mrs. Reagan's Remarks
"Just Say No" Week Signing Ceremony
Roosevelt Room

Tuesday, May 20, 1986

-- At the beginning of this year, someone asked me if I wanted to make a New Year's wish and I said, "Yes." And it was that I'd like to see every young person in the world join the "Just Say No To Drugs" Club. Well, just the fact that Congress has proclaimed "Just Say No" week and in light of all the activities taking place, it seems that my wish is well on the way to coming true.

-- I am so proud of all the young people, the parents, the citizens in cities and towns across this nation, the government, and everyone else who is helping to create what I believe is the final solution to this problem. And that is a way to teach every one of our children to "just say no" to drugs. The future of the world lies in their hands -- and we all must come together in their name -- to end drug and alcohol abuse once and for all.

-- Again, thank you so much for what you are doing and for joining us today.

(Rohrabacher)

May 19, 1986

5:00 p.m.

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1986 MAY 19 5:00 PM
PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: SIGNING CEREMONY FOR "JUST SAY NO" WEEK
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1986

I appreciate all of you joining us here today to kick off "Just Say No" week. Before I begin, I want to give a long-distance hello to Senator Paula Hawkins. Senator Hawkins has been a loyal warrior in the battle against drug abuse. Senator, thanks for all you've done and best wishes for a speedy recovery.

When our team got to Washington nearly 5-1/2 years ago, we pledged to put America's house in order. Well, that required more than economic reform and bolstering our national defense. Our country was threatened by an epidemic of drug abuse that had been growing in intensity since the 1960's. By 1980, illegal drugs were every bit as much a threat to the United States as enemy planes and missiles. The plague was fueled by an attitude of permissiveness, both public and private. America was losing its future by default.

Early in our Administration, I issued a challenge. Americans in and out of Government, I said, should do all we can to defeat the drug menace threatening our country. I'm pleased today that many of you who were there when I issued that challenge are with us today. I'm also grateful for all the hard work and long hours you've committed to this truly noble endeavor.

The first thing we did was take down the surrender flag and raise the battle flag. Together we beefed up our enforcement

arm, and today more arrests are being made and more narcotics are being seized than ever before. Today there's also more communication and effective coordination between the levels of government and departments and agencies than many believed was possible. We are, indeed, trying to do everything Government can do to combat drug traffickers.

But just as important, or perhaps even more important, we've enlisted the American people in this battle. Parents, service clubs, and youth organizations responded to our call. We found prominent citizens, captains of industry, singers, actors and athletes -- individuals who young people look up to -- were more than willing to do their part. Why? Because they love people and they love this country.

What we've got to do now is make certain we continue to give our young people -- like the ones with us today -- the support and backing they need to "Just Say No" to drugs. There is someone else here who shares these sentiments. She was a favorite of mine even before she got involved in this issue. However, I will have to confess that she has made me such a proud husband in these last few years.

Nancy was, and still is, the motivational force behind the "Just Say No" movement. It all started at an elementary school in Oakland, California, during the summer of 1984. She was talking to a class about drug abuse and out of her discussion with the youngsters came the idea of starting "Just Say No" clubs. From that very day the idea snowballed. Clubs first came into being in California, then they started up in towns and

cities all across the country, then overseas. On Thursday of this week, Nancy will participate in the "International Just Say No Walk" with hundreds of thousands of young people around the globe.

Because of these grassroots efforts, all of us, inside Government and out, are seeing a change of attitude about drug abuse. Public awareness has increased dramatically in the past several years, and our children are more aware of the dangers of drugs now than ever before. By educating our children about the dangers of drugs, we are going to dry up the drug market and kick the dope-peddlers right out of this country. Every time Nancy and I meet this country's wonderful young people we feel more confident that we are going to win this battle.

To our country's young people I say: we are so proud of each of you who has rejected drugs and also those of you who have overcome drug problems. Your courage and commitment has not gone unnoticed. You have a special place in our hearts.

And now, before I sign the proclamation, I'd like to introduce the champ whose been leading this battle -- Nancy.

[AFTER NANCY]

With that said, I'll sign the proclamation.

Special
Delivery

DB

10/7/86

You may want to save this
one for your files -
JP

September 1, 1986

Mrs. Nancy Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. Reagan:

It has been a little over a month since our thirty-one year old son died of a drug overdose. Mark had been abusing drugs since he was fifteen. We, along with his teachers, friends and drug counselors did everything possible to help him. Sadly, the appeal of drugs was more powerful than the aid we all tried to give him.

I am enclosing the eulogy that was written by his favorite teacher. Perhaps that eulogy might be of some help to you in your wonderful campaign to have our children "Just say no."

His mother and I would draw great comfort from knowing that our personal tragedy served to help other parents and their kids.

Please know that we, like millions of other Americans, are very grateful for your leadership and inspiration in the anti-drug movement. You and the President are in our prayers.

Yours truly,



Karl B. McMillen

THIS EULOGY WAS WRITTEN BY MARK'S FAVORITE TEACHER TERRY DEVITT.

MEMORIAL SERVICES ARE, BY DEFINITION, SAD AFFAIRS BUT THIS IS DOUBLY SAD BECAUSE IT SIMPLY SHOULDN'T BE HAPPENING. MARK WAS ONLY THIRTY-ONE (31) YEARS OLD.

HE WAS THE PRODUCT OF LOVING PARENTS AND A GOOD HOME. HE DID ALL THE THINGS KIDS DO. HE PLAYED BALL, WENT FISHING WITH HIS DAD AND MANY MEMORABLE TRIPS TO "BAJA" AND ATE THOUSANDS OF MOM'S COOKIES. HE HAD A LITTLE BROTHER WHO HE PROBABLY PICKED ON. AT FIFTEEN (15) MARK COULD HAVE BEEN ON THE COVER OF NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE. HE WAS THE EPITOME OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SURFER: TAN, LEAN AND GOOD LOOKING. TO WATCH HIM SURF WAS TO SEE POETRY IN MOTION. BUT HIS ATHLETIC SKILLS WERE JUST A FRACTION OF HIS GIFTS. HE HAD GREAT WIT, AN UNUSALLY KEEN MIND AND A CHARM THAT WOULD LIGHT UP A ROOM. HIS PEERS LOOKED UP TO HIM, HIS TEACHERS DELIGHTED IN HIS BRIGHTNESS AND HUMOR AND HIS PARENTS TOOK GREAT PRIDE IN HIM.

FEW KIDS HAD AS SOLID A FOUNDATION UPON WHICH TO GROW. FEW KIDS HAD THE VAST POTENTIAL AND GREAT PROMISE THAT MARK HAD. HE LITERALLY COULD HAVE BEEN ANYTHING HE WANTED. HIS FAVORITE TEACHER SO WANTED HIM TO BE A TEACHER. HIS DAD DOUBTLESS SAW HIM AS TAKING OVER THE BUSINESS. THEL, LIKE ALL GOOD MOM'S DIDN'T PARTICULARLY CARE WHAT HE DID JUST SO LONG AS HE WAS HEALTHY AND HAPPY. OUR FAITH IN HIM KNEW NO BOUNDS.

SO WHAT HAPPENED? WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY? IN A WORD: "DRUGS". DRUGS RUINED AND EVENTUALLY ENDED MARK'S LIFE. DRUGS STOLE HIS PROMISE AND DEVESTATED HIS FAMILY. THEY WRECKED HIS CHARACTER AND DESTROYED HIS SELF-ESTEEM.

MARK IS NOT THE FIRST YOUNG MAN TO LOSE HIS LIFE TO DRUGS, NOR SADLY WILL HE BE THE LAST. ONE NEED ONLY READ THE SPORTS SECTION TO KNOW THERE IS AN EPIDEMIC IN THIS SOCIETY. THOSE OF US HERE TODAY

CANNOT END DRUG ABUSE BUT WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. MARK'S FAMILY ASKS THAT EACH OF YOU, IN YOUR OWN WAY, IN YOUR OWN FAMILIES, HELP FIGHT THIS TERRIBLE SCOURGE. IF WE COULD BUT SAVE ONE PERSON, IT WOULD GIVE ADDED MEANING AND PURPOSE TO MARK'S LIFE. THAT WOULD BE THE MOST FITTING MEMORIAL IMAGINABLE.

THERE IS NO NEED TO ENLARGE IN DEATH WHAT MARK WAS IN LIFE. A TROUBLED YOUNG MAN BUT FUNDMENTALLY A NICE YOUNG MAN. HE NEVER MEANT TO HURT US. LET US REMEMBER THE GOOD TIMES AND FORGET THE BAD. TODAY WE MOURN HIM AND TOMORROW WE SHALL MISS HIM.

LET US PRAY THAT HE HAS FOUND THE PEACE HE SO RICHLY DESERVES.
GOD BLESS YOU MARK AND GOODBYE.

THIS IS MY PERSONAL EULOGY

MARK, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU WERE ALWAYS A GOOD FRIEND TO ME. WE HAD MANY SPECIAL TIMES I WILL NEVER FORGET. MEMORIES THAT WILL NEVER FADE. YOU WERE A VERY GIVING PERSON AND IT IS ASHAME THAT YOU LEFT US THE WAY YOU DID.

BUT MY GOOD FRIEND, IT WAS NOT A CHOICE OF YOUR OWN. BUT AN UNGUARDED MOMENT AND TIME WHERE DRUGS AND THIS DISEASE OF ADDICTION CAUGHT YOU WITH YOUR HANDS DOWN.

EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE NOT WITH US TODAY IN PERSON , YOU ARE WITH ALL OF US IN OUR HEARTS. AS SELFISH AND SAD IT IS THAT YOUR FAMILY AND LOVED ONES HAVE TO SUFFER, YOU WILL ALWAYS BE A MESSAGE AND REMINDER OF HOW DEADLY THIS DISEASE OF ADDICTION REALLY IS. THE PAIN AND DESPAIR WE ALL FEEL WILL BE A STRONG FORCE IN OUR QUEST FOR A BETTER WAY OF LIFE.

GOD BLESS YOU BROTHER _ I LOVE YOU MARK.

RICHARD

(OVER)