

**The original documents are located in Box 132, folder “Rourke, Russell” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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RNV

February 26, 1976

MEMORANDUM TO: TED MARBS  
FROM: RUSS ROURKE

Ted, in order to keep our signals straight, it was my understanding that Ron was merely seeking guidance prior to responding directly to Molinari. I am sure, however, that he appreciates the initiatives you have taken.

Please coordinate your actions re Molinari with Ron, and I will step neatly out of the picture.

Many thanks.

cc: RNessen ✓

RAR:cb



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 23, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH

FROM: TED MARRS *TM*

Reference the Eastern States Country Music Association request.

I'm not so sure a country music session at the White House is such a bad idea. The music does appeal to a large segment of the population. However, there are considerations which must be weighed in any final decision.

- This would set some sort of precedent concerning performing groups with Bicentennial programs.
- We have not surfaced plans, as yet, for entertainment at the White House other than that which is a part of state dinners.
- Is this association really representative of the country music field?

Milt and I have discussed this and agree that more needs to be uncovered before offering an intelligent appraisal. Meanwhile, I did contact the Social Office and determined that at this time they have no plans for country music entertainment in concert with their planned social events. It may be that this request should eventually go to that office for any further consideration.

I will write to Molinari and determine more about his organization and the talent it represents. I will also tell him that his letter has been forwarded to the Social Secretary for any further consideration.



R-

Keep me advised. Perhaps there may be some other use for us.

*TM*

MICHAEL J. MOLINA

2165 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, New York 10314

FEB 11 1976

February 5th, 1976

Mr. Ron Nessen,  
Press Secretary to the President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ron,

Perhaps you'll recall our frequent get-togethers when we both were but novices in the broadcasting industry. I'm still active in broadcasting as Regional Marketing Director with SESAC in New York City. I've also maintained my roots in Country Music and I'm quite proud to be serving a tenure as Vice President of the Eastern States Country Music Association.

As you know, I've witnessed the fantastic growth of Country Music through the years and I'm equally proud to be a part of its history and progress. It was with former President Nixon that I was able to arrange for the "first" National Proclamation on behalf of Country Music Month in September, 1970. It was also during this period that I worked with the Inaugural Committee to insure that Country Music be included in the events of Inauguration Day.

Needless to say, I am also quite aware of your "early days" in Country Music. As a matter of fact, two weeks ago I had a very cordial visit with Al Kessler at WAVA in Arlington. A far cry from the old WARL, however, the present format still serves the metro area quite well.

Ron, it's because of your interest in Country Music that I'm addressing this letter to you on behalf our our Board of Directors at the Eastern States Country Music Association.

Our association has outlined several Bicentennial events involving Country Music throughout 1976. In October (Country Music Month), New York's Times Square will be renamed "Country Music Square" with a sign changing ceremony set for October 1st at the "Crossroads of the World".



We are also working with the National Park Service in arranging Country Music concerts at the foot of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor. The concerts will be held throughout the summer as part of the Bicentennial celebration and visitors to the shrine will be able to share in a double heritage . . . that of freedom and music.

As you are well aware, Country Music is America's own music. It was born here in the United States and tells the stories of its peoples joys and sorrows in a manner un-equalled in any other form of American entertainment. It is most fitting, therefore, that Country Music be included, hand in hand, with the Bicentennial celebration.

It was during the past weekend that popular entertainer Tony Orlando made this statement during a nationwide TV awards show. Tony said, "whenever I hear the words Country Music in my travels around the world, it's always mentioned as America's Music." A fitting tribute to an American heritage.

With this in mind, Ron, I am asking for a few moments from your most valuable time in order to investigate with me the possibilities of presenting an "Evening of Country Music" in concert form in the East Room of The White House sometime during this Bicentennial year as we also celebrate our musical heritage.

*Ron  
This was done  
during your absence  
4/23/76*

The Bicentennial concert of America's own music would bring the "vintage" masters of Country Music to the White House. Names such as Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe, etc., could join today's more contemporary Country Music artists in presenting an evening of musical heritage for President and Mrs. Ford, the President's family, selected members of Congress and perhaps chosen Governor's of southern states and Mayor's of southern cities where Country Music maintains its roots. The evening would be a fitting Bicentennial delight and a most enjoyable way to honor America, its heritage, its music and its Birthday. The history of the East Room would then blend with the history of Country Music to provide a most fitting tribute of both past and present.

Our association would also like to present President and Mrs. Ford with a beautiful mounted "guitar-shaped" wall clock in honor of the Bicentennial and Country Music. The presentation would immediately follow the evening of musical heritage with the sound of Country Music still alive in the East Room of the Executive Mansion.

Ron, I know it's an evening that you personally would enjoy and I anxiously await your thoughts on the possibilities.

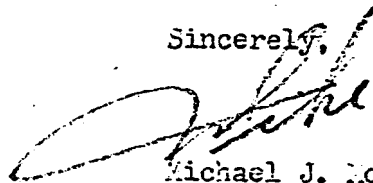


Ron, I would like to take these last few words to thank you for sharing our thoughts and desire. I agree with our Board in thinking the gesture a noble one and an idea which carries an equal amount of possibilities and responsibility. A responsibility to our country, our music and our heritage.

The very nature of the President and his family tend to lead me to believe that they firmly believe in the ideals as expressed through Country Music and thus I ask you, as our Country Music representative in the White House, to take our request to the desk of the President for consideration.

I thank you for your time, your consideration and your efforts on our behalf. Extending every best wish and continued best personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely,



Michael J. Molinari  
Vice President,  
Eastern States Country Music  
Association

MJM;ms

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 2, 1976

TO: RON NESSEN

FROM: RUSSELL A. ROURKE

*Rourke*

\_\_\_\_\_ For Direct Reply

\_\_\_\_\_ For Draft Response

  X   For Your Information

\_\_\_\_\_ Please advise

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1976

*RM*

MEMORANDUM TO: JACK MARSH  
FROM: RUSS ROURKE

Jack, in Roger Stevens' absence from the City, I spoke with his Assistant, Charlotte Woolard re a Rose Garden type Presidential event for the cast of "1600 Pennsylvania Avenue".

Nicholson is relatively optimistic that we will be able to work this out. We are presently looking at the afternoon of either April 12 or 13.

Be advised that I gave Charlotte no guarantee whatever concerning this event, and that the entire proposal must remain tentative until it is locked in. She indicated that the entire cast would be thrilled if the event could be scheduled.

cc: TMarrs  
MMitler