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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
1975 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION HONORS LUNCHEON

SHERATON PARK HOTEL

1:57 P.M. EST

Dr. Chapman, Art Linkletter, distinguished honorees, ladies and gentlemen:

At the outset, let me congratulate John, Pat, Randy, Jarrett and Tony for their outstanding athletic record and their superb achievements in the field of academic standing, and I wish each and every one of you the very best as you begin your career on behalf of yourself and your country.

May I say to Bob Folsom, Billy Jones, Bill Keating, Ralph O'Brien and Captain Ryan the very best to you for what you have done, the records you have made, and I wish you, along with the others, the very, very best.

Dr. Chapman, may I most sincerely thank you for this award and for the good will and the good wishes that it represents. It will always occupy a very honored position in my office, in my life, and obviously in my memories. I am most grateful.

I want you to know that I feel very much at home here today because if you stop to think about it, the athletic director of any college and the President of the United States have a great deal in common. We both need the talent. We both need the cooperation of others if we are going to succeed. We both get a lot more criticism for the losses than we get credit for the wins. We both buy aspirin by the six-packs, and we both have a certain lack of performance in our jobs.

As one coach put it to me -- I was talking to one of them recently -- he didn't so much mind the fact that his name on the office door was written in chalk. It was that big, wet sponge that was hanging beside it. (Laughter)

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But I am sure I don't have to tell any of you in this audience particularly the problems of being an athletic director or head coach. For instance, I see my good friend Bear Bryant down here. I was talking to Bear and he said, "We both had the very same experience on New Year's Day." I said, "How is that possible? I was skiing and you were at the Orange Bowl." He said, "That is what I mean. We both hit the top and after that it was all down hill." (Laughter)

You know, I think Alabama played a superb ball game, but Notre Dame just seemed to have something a little extra. I could tell as I watched it anyhow that Notre Dame was feeling pretty confident. I heard later they brought in Earl Butz to give the blessing. (Laughter)

It was once said that many of Britain's battles were won on the playing fields of Eton. We could also say -- and I think those of us who have had the experience can say it with great conviction -- that amateur athletics has developed much of the muscle that has built and defended and will continue to defend this country.

Though a young person might not go to college, no youngster grows up in America today without some competitive sport. Sports are not only a preparation for life, their spirit is part of the very essence of the American competitive system.

We have a saying in my old home State of Michigan, Mark. As the lakes, rivers and ponds freeze over, the sight of eager children skimming over the ice is a very common one, and if you asked a young boy or a young girl how he or she ever learned to ice skate, the answer out our way is very, very simple: "I got up when I fell down."

It is my judgment that we have got to get up here in America as a Nation. We must be physically and mentally fit because the times demand that we not only compete but that we excel, and we must do it with enthusiasm, the enthusiasm found more prominently on the fields of sport.

Emerson once said, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." This is a time for greatness in our Nation, and especially for enthusiasm.

In this spirit, Dr. Chapman, I accept the National Collegiate Athletic Association's 1975 Theodore Roosevelt Award. I accept it not for what I might have achieved in the past, but for what I will strive to accomplish with the help of all Americans in the future.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 2:04 P.M. EST)