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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Green Bay, Wisconsin)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
UNVEILING OF THE DEDICATORY PLAQUE
GREEN BAY PACKERS HALL OF FAME BUILDING

1:58 P.M. CST

Mr. Chairman and Bart and all of the wonderful fans of the Green Bay Packers:

Obviously, it is a great privilege and a very high honor for me to have an opportunity to participate in this groundbreaking ceremony.

As I was flying up here today I could not help but think of the great, great traditions that the Green Bay Packers have developed over the years, the wonderful ball players and the superb coaches that have done a great, great job. And then I began to think about the experiences that I have had with some of the Green Bay people. I played with one of your all-time greats. I was almost signed to play with the Green Bay Packers by one of your coaches, your first coach and a coach here a good many years. I have known your present coach a great many years and I had an opportunity to know Curlie Lambeau -- I mean, Vince Lombardi for a number of years.

Back in 1935 in the All-Star Game in Chicago, I played with the All-Stars against the Chicago Bears and that was the year that Don Hudson had finished at the University of Alabama and came and played and then came up here and had that tremendous career, and those of us who saw him in the All-Star Game could not help but know that he was going to be a star for a long, long time and establish the kinds of records that he did.

Then I played in the Shrine East-West game on January 1, 1935, and that is a long time ago, back when the ball was round. On the way out to San Francisco we were on the train--we traveled by train then-- and Curlie Lambeau was along. The Michigan team that I played on that year won one game and lost seven, and Curlie didn't think there were many ball players from Michigan that were worth looking at, and there probably weren't.

But anyhow, out at the ball game on New Year's Day there were two centers on the team and I didn't start and the other center got hurt so I played 59 minutes and had a pretty good ball game. From San Francisco back to Chicago Curlie spent an awful lot of time talking to me and he finally offered me, as was said, 200 bucks a game for 14 games.

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Well, I had a hard time deciding whether to take that job or try to get it or whether to take a job coaching football at Yale so I could go to law school. Well, I finally made the decision to go to law school and coach at New Haven.

Then, later I got to know Bart Starr, who I think by any standards is one of the all-time great quarterbacks in the history of professional football. Few, if any, quarterbacks will ever achieve the success that Bart has had. You know, good players like Bart have the capability of being great coaches so I am confident that Green Bay is going to be at the top, as it was for so long, very quickly under Bart's leadership.

Now I also had the privilege in Washington, D. C. of knowing Vince Lombardi and also had the opportunity of getting to know his wonderful wife, Marie. Bart knows, I am sure even better than I, the great inspirational characteristics of Vince Lombardi. I think Vince sort of epitomizes what is the need and necessity of this country today to meet the challenges that we face just like there were great leaders in all kinds of activities starting some 200 years ago to give this country the kind of leadership that has taken us from 13 small struggling colonies of some three million people to the greatest Nation in the history of mankind, and we are going to keep it there.

But the main thing is that through tradition, through the great successes -- winning three consecutive football championships, the first two AFL, NFL championships, here in Green Bay you have developed a character and a leader and inspiration and a tradition that are the envy of all of our 215 million Americans, and I am among them.

I congratulate you. I am honored to participate in this.

Good luck and God bless you.

Thank you.

END (AT 2:02 P.M. CST)