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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
DEDICATION OF THE
LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON MEMORIAL GROVE

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

11:30 A.M. EST

Mr. Secretary, Mrs. Johnson, Lynda, Lucy, Chuck, Mr. Vice President, my friend and former colleague in the House of Representatives, George Mahon, distinguished guests and friends all of Lyndon Johnson:

I really welcome this opportunity today to join in the ceremonies honoring a good friend and a great American patriot.

It is entirely fitting that in this city of bronze and marble monuments we choose to remember Lyndon Johnson with a living memorial of pines here along the banks of the Potomac.

Lyndon Johnson and his dear wife Lady Bird were ardent conservationists in the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt whose own memorial stands among a grove of trees very nearby.

Washington, D. C. has not always been kind to the needs of the environment. During his Presidency, Lyndon B. Johnson worked hard to respond to those needs in a more sensitive way. His goal, he once said, was to leave to future generations a glimpse of the world as God really made it, not as it looked when we got through with it. This grove of pines helps to fulfill Lyndon Johnson's dream for America.

Standing here and looking out over the vista of our Capital, I believe this memorial also helps to capture something else, something more -- the excitement and the inspiration that moved Lyndon Johnson when he first came to Washington, D. C., fresh from teaching school, to begin work in a Congressman's office.

From this vantage point, visitors can absorb the city as a whole, including the Capitol and the great monuments to Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson, before visiting the shrines of America's democracy in this great Capital.

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I would especially urge young people to come to this spot to ponder the site that has quickened the pulse of many young Americans starting out on their careers in Government, just as it did for Lyndon Johnson. It is the very heart of democracy that fresh, vital ideas continue to be infused into the body politic.

No doubt young people must do their own thing but I would say to them, as Lyndon Johnson often said, "Consider serving our Nation and Government whether at the local, State or Federal level."

Let this place, this living memorial to a life devoted to public service, be the inspiration for such a decision.

Let me add one word of thanks, thanks from Betty and myself, to express the gratitude of the Nation to a great and gracious First Lady, Mrs. Johnson. We all know of her tireless efforts on behalf of a more beautiful America and in large measure she made this spot come alive with nature's blessings. Her work for beautification all across the land as well as for perennial springtime beauty in the Nation's Capital has changed the face of America for a better place.

I, along with many others, in the House as well as in the Senate, had an opportunity to work with Mrs. Johnson in the formative stages of this Memorial Grove. To all of those who played some part in its conception as well as its implementation, this dedication today is a dream become reality. And it is a very fitting tribute, not only to the former President, but to his First Lady to whom we all owe so very, very much.

END (AT 11:35 A.M. EST)