

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY  
SECRETARY ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MINORITY AUTOMOBILE DEALERS  
DALLAS, TEXAS  
FEBRUARY 4, 1984

AR  
2/1  
Jim Bunkley

Draft Prepared by Wynola Robison  
1-31-84

Draft #4

Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_, for those kind words of introduction. It is indeed a pleasure to be in Dallas for the opening of the NADA convention and to have this opportunity to meet with a very special segment of the automobile industry. I want to congratulate the National Association of Minority Automobile Dealers on an outstanding job not only in providing members with the information to compete in today's fast-paced marketplace but in making all of us aware of your special concerns, and of your dynamism.

When I learned how your membership -- now 200 -- compares with more than 25,000 auto dealers in this country, I was reminded of my first day at the Harvard Law School in 1962. I was one of 25 women in a class of 550. And I'll never forget one of my classmates coming up to me that first day of school, one of the men, who demanded in tones of moral outrage to know what I was doing there. I can remember every word. In fact, that man is in Washington right now. And someday I'm going to remind him of this. He said to me: "What are you doing here, Elizabeth. What are you doing here, when there are men who would give their right arm to be in this school, men who would use their legal education." The implication was, of course, that I was taking the place of a man. Come to think of it some might have thought the same thing when I was appointed Secretary of Transportation.

I don't suggest my experiences as a woman struggling to achieve equal opportunity in America fully compare to the struggle of minorities in one of our nation's most competitive industries. But my struggle has helped me understand. It's helped me to be sensitive to your special problems.

I know, for example, minority auto dealers were the first to suffer in the recent recession. Many of your businesses are both young and small. Even if you've been in



business and are well known, like Joe McLaughlin of the Washington, D. C. area, your competitor down the street may operate in a business environment created by his father 60 years ago. Longevity has its advantages in business; advantages you may not notice in good years but which become apparent in leaner years.

That's why the Reagan Administration recognizes the enormous potential you possess. And we will be responsive to your special needs.

I'm proud too that you are gaining from the growing economic strength that abounds in our land. For the first time in recent memory, our economy in 1983 reflected a favorable combination of the goals we all seek -- consistent growth, low inflation and falling interest rates. Lower inflation rates directly affect you. Lower interest rates bring more buyers to your showrooms. Consistent growth proves the President's economic recovery program is working, and the results are especially clear in the auto industry. Leading economic indicators have risen in 14 of the past 15 months. New car sales for 1983 were up 18 percent to 9.2 million units -- the best since 1979 -- and prospects appear even brighter for 1984.

Minority auto dealers are entering 1984 in a strengthened position. This is obvious from the 50 new members welcomed into your association in the past year. You count among your ranks 27 percent of the top 100 black business enterprises in the country. You are a tremendously influential group within both your industry and your community. Your hard work has brought us to this point in 1984 but our task is not finished and the struggle is not over. Two hundred dealerships in 25,000 is not enough. We still have a long way to go and I look forward to making the journey with you.