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It is a distinct personal honor to join you in celebrating the 75th anniversary of the NAACP. I appreciate the spirit of cooperation you have shown me first as Assistant to the President for Public Liaison and now as Secretary of Transportation. If I leave you with no other message this morning, I want you, Ben Hooks and Kelly Alexander, Sr. to know this: I understand that the NAACP stands for economic as well as political and social justice and my heart, my mind and my door will always be open to you.

I am keenly aware that the strength of the NAACP rests in its 2,500 local branches, youth and college units. Your three top national officers all rose from the ranks of local leadership. They demonstrate that the NAACP is one of the most influential "grassroots" organizations in the country. You remain, as you have been, a real force for progress, because the NAACP marshalls these community-based forces in bold and often eloquent support of Black America's goals.

Just how effective you are can be seen in a couple of major recent victories. One was the campaign to extend the Voting Rights Act. Two years ago President Reagan signed the longest extension yet of that Act. I'm proud that my husband not only gave it his wholehearted support but played a key role in the Senate. Then, last November, the President signed into law legislation making Martin Luther King's birthday a national holiday -- the first honoring a Black American.

A few days earlier, Bob had called me to say he would be leading the floor fight in the Senate for the King Holiday Bill. I cleared my calendar and went to Capitol Hill for the debate. Coretta Scott King and I enjoyed a brief conversation in the Senate gallery. We talked about the personal significance of this very emotional moment and what it meant for our country. Looking down at the Senate chamber that afternoon, I remembered the familiar sight of Clarence Mitchell, tirelessly walking the halls of Congress, promoting the cause of Black America until the day he died. And certainly Althea Simmons is continuing in the same tradition. I recalled the steady, deliberate, well-reasoned words of Roy Wilkins, persistently pleading for the justice and equality

that are America's promise to all her citizens. I thought of the bloody bridge in Selma, Alabama, from which grew the 1965 voting rights act. I also remembered a young Black woman lawyer named Constance Baker Motley, bravely and brilliantly taking the NAACP's battle for school desegregation to courtrooms throughout the South. She later distinguished herself as a Federal judge. And I couldn't forget that Martin Luther King was unable to join a local NAACP branch in the state where he lived because your distinguished organization was banned there for eight years. Yet, neither Dr. King nor your cause would be silenced. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was born; the struggle went on. Striving separately and together, against great odds, Black America has proved the words of Frederick Douglass that "without struggle there will be no progress." Hard work has brought handsome victories -- victories that have benefited America as a whole.

As a generation reaching maturity in the shadows of Roy Wilkins, Clarence Mitchell and their contemporaries, we've learned that to be alive is to be attuned to the potential for justice. Today it's not only our business -- it is our moral obligation -- to realize that potential.

America's rich Black heritage has been rooted in religious faith and a hope that not even centuries of persecution could erase. Without these two spiritual elements, a great people could not have made such a massive contribution to our society. But the faith and the hope that are embodied in your dreams and aspirations are qualities which all of us here today have in common. What's more, we share a commitment to realize both.

We share a deep abhorrence for the seeds of hatred sown by those misguided members of our society who would deny others their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We share, too, the pleasure of celebrating this diamond anniversary -- a time to consider the future as well as the past; to talk about new ideas and profit from old ones. Or, as Ben Hooks put it when he spoke at the Republican National Convention in 1980, "we must decide as a nation if we ought to become prisoners of our past or possessors of an enlightened future."

By your agenda, the NAACP has opted for a progressive and enlightened future. Your organization recognizes that without economic viability, social and political justice have little meaning. You have made economic viability a major objective on your agenda for progress. But that is nothing new for the NAACP. As early as 1961, your very dynamic youth division shifted its emphasis to jobs and the upgrading of the skills of Black workers. Today you are taking another approach. You've reached within the private sector for solutions. And you're evoking a tremendous response.

In the "fair share agreements" you're negotiating with industry, your goals are more jobs and promotions, and more procurement of goods and services from minorities, and opportunities to sit in the Board Room. In the realization that minority business is good business for America, you seek more opportunities at all levels and in all segments of the economy. Quite simply, Black America seeks its fair share of the nation's economy. That's only fair, isn't it? That's a just and reasonable goal. And I'm here to tell you that you can count on my support and my help.

For the struggle goes on. Let's talk for a moment about the economic viability of Black America: where we as a nation are today and where we can go together. As my husband said on the floor of the Senate in support of the King Holiday bill: "A nation defines itself in many ways: in the promises it makes, and the programs it enacts, the dreams it enshrines or the doors it slams shut." Our task now is to open wide the door of economic and educational opportunity to all Americans.

The American economy itself is again healthy. In 19 of the last 20 months, leading economic indicators have pushed upward, carrying investment and job creation with them. Last year, inflation fell below 4 percent. This year, it's running at the lowest levels in 17 years. Unemployment has dropped sharply from its peak two years ago; in the months since, this economy has generated 6.3 million new jobs -- while many European countries continue to lose them. A million of those jobs -- one in six -- have gone to Black men and women. Black unemployment clearly remains too high, especially among Black teenagers. We must continue to strive to make equal opportunity for all an economic reality as well as a moral imperative. For the pursuit of equal opportunity is a drama without intermission.

I know it's not enough to say the economy is improving. We must do more. We must attack the problems of the poor and disadvantaged at the source. We must be bold in our search for new solutions to old problems such as the decay of our inner cities. For example, we have been vigorously seeking the enterprise zone experiment. We would like to test it in cities all across America. Designated zones would be relieved of many tax and regulatory burdens, producing incentives for new business and new jobs. Although not a comprehensive answer to the problems in our inner cities, enterprise zones offer real hope for the mostly minority communities trapped at the bottom of America's economic ladder, in the heart -- the often forgotten heart, -- of our cities.

Our challenge, mine as well as yours, is to assure that all segments of our society have every chance to benefit from renewed economic prosperity. I pledge to work with you to really make a difference in people's lives -- in education, in transportation and in other fields of opportunity too long closed to Black America.

On the education front, I was involved at the White House in shaping the President's Executive Order on Black colleges. As Secretary of Transportation I am deeply committed to giving life and relevance to such a statement of official policy.

In keeping with the President's directive last year, during fiscal year 1983 DOT increased its awards to Black colleges and universities by 69 percent over the previous year. It will be still more this year. These are not just statistics, they represent a utilization of Black America's long untapped resources.

The Federal Aviation Administration plans to award a one-time grant of \$2.25 million to a minority institution for establishing and supporting an airway science curriculum. This unique grant will assure minority participation in aviation-related technical fields. And this is just one example.

We recognize that the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities have been and remain a valuable national resource. They offer opportunities to develop skills and talent -- training for service to our professions, to our community and our nation. My home state of North Carolina and the home of your chairman, Kelly Alexander, has

the largest number of Black colleges in the country. I know how important these institutions are. Together America's Black colleges have produced 50 percent of our Black business executives, an equal percentage of Black engineers, 75 percent of Black military officers, 80 percent of Black Federal judges and 85 percent of Black physicians. Such institutions are an American treasure. They must be preserved and they must be strengthened.

Of course, this program is only a small but, I think, significant part of the opportunities surfacing in transportation today. I view these changes as tremendously positive with an immediate effect on the expansion of the Black economy -- not only for the jobs and business opportunities that will be created, but for the economic benefits that come when any horizon is broadened and the quality of life improved.

If I had to choose a current transportation program where real opportunities lie for minority economic advancement, it probably would be the increased construction program resulting from the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982.

In a nutshell, that law is adding \$4 billion a year for construction and rehabilitation of highways and bridges, and an additional \$1 billion a year for improvements to transit systems. That means this year alone we'll spend \$12 billion on highways and bridge construction and repairs. I can assure you a significant part of that work is being done by minority contractors. Last year alone, I directed over \$1 billion in highway and transit contracts to minority firms. And we are doing even better this fiscal year. Let me assure you the ten percent watermark set by that law is a goal to be surpassed. For I realize these contracts mean more Black businesses -- more jobs for Blacks and therefore, increased economic growth for Black America.

To insure success, we have initiated various innovative programs. For example, our Urban Mass Transportation Administration entered into a cooperative agreement with the Florida State Conferences of NAACP branches to identify opportunities for minority participation in selected Florida programs. By this agreement the Florida NAACP will provide technical assistance to match minority business with available contract opportunities. And I hope this agreement provides a model for similar cooperation all across this nation!

So I ask you, while negotiating with the private sector to increase minority procurement, work with us as well to make the Federal procurement outreach to minorities more successful. Between 1983 and 1985, we expect the Federal government's purchases of goods and services from minority-owned businesses to total \$15 billion. That may, in fact, be a conservative goal. The minority share of Federal procurement dollars can be as high as all of us, working together, can make it.

And I'm also working to solve some of the problems that keep minority business enterprises from realizing their full potential. We know, for example, a large Federal contract means little to a minority firm unable to secure adequate bonding and financing. DOT has established specific programs to deal with that age-old problem -- lack of access to capital and bonding. The first of these is a short-term working capital and -- to a lesser extent -- long-term capital loan program for transportation-related projects. The second is a DOT/Minority Business Resource Center bonding assistance program. Last fall we succeeded in gaining Congressional approval to extend these programs from just railroads to all forms of transportation. In addition, we announced

last April a four-city demonstration project providing bonding opportunities for minority and women contractors.

But again, we can't stop there. Blacks must be able to own the lunchrooms as well as sit at the counter -- to operate a bus line as well as occupy a front seat. Deregulation across all forms of transportation has increased business opportunities. It has stimulated competition. The results for minorities, particularly in trucking, have been impressive.

In 1980, for example, there were barely 100 Black-owned trucking firms. Most were small, fragmented and operated the least valuable routes. In the first year of deregulation alone, more than 200 new Black trucking firms went into business. Others, already in business but restricted in their ability to compete, now have freedom to negotiate rates, to expand services and to enter new markets.

These programs in a little corner of the government are symbolic of the kinds of things we can accomplish when well-meaning people open their minds and hearts and work together. We seek to sharpen the tools by which millions of underprivileged Americans can escape the outskirts of hope. You and I both share a determination to bring them into the mainstream of society, socially, economically, politically.

And let us resolve to work together on those problems which know no racial barriers. One is highway safety, where 92 percent of the fatalities occur. The drunk driver does not discriminate in bringing death and destruction to our highways and 25,000 people a year lose their lives to drunk drivers. I beg you to lend your strong support to the campaign to rid our highways of drunk drivers. That campaign, like your own, began at the grassroots. Thank God there's been a consciousness raising in this country. As a result of protests by concerned citizens, community action groups and the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving, many state legislatures have enacted tougher laws. Judges, juries and the public alike are today much less tolerant, and the drunk driver -- particularly the repeat offender -- increasingly faces criminal prosecution.

We are making progress. Overall, traffic fatalities have declined by 17 percent since 1980. Nineteen eighty-three's highway death toll was the lowest in 20 years; our national fatality rate the lowest ever recorded. Yet we're determined to do more to make all transportation not only more efficient, but safer and better for all our citizens.

I have been especially concerned by the high teenage involvement in alcohol-related fatalities. Motor vehicle crashes, in fact, are the leading cause of death among teenagers -- and many of those involve alcohol.

We worked very closely with groups like MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) and SADD (Students Against Drunk Drivers) and members of the Congress to win early action on legislation to encourage the states to set 21 as their legal drinking age. It will give me the authority to withhold five percent of a state's Federal highway funds, if it has not enacted a 21-year-old drinking age by October 1986. States not acting by October 1987 will lose 10 percent.

This law is not a cure but a strong preventive. We must continue the momentum. I'm determined to fight until we get the last drunk driver off the roads. And I need your

help. Join me in this great crusade. And as in many other campaigns, together we will succeed.

Seventy-five years ago the call went forth, the call for a conference emphasizing the civil and political rights of Black Americans. That summons created the NAACP. I ask you now to issue a new call -- to blacks and whites together -- to go forth and complete the journey. To rid this nation of racism, to endow it with opportunity and to stimulate the creative energies of every person to make life better. Then we can go beyond "Let us march on till victory is won" to a declaration of "victory, victory today is mine."

Not long ago I had the privilege of delivering the commencement address at Livingstone College in my home town in Salisbury, North Carolina. And I was very proud that day to be awarded an honorary degree. I reminded the graduates that the founder of the college, Joseph Charles Price, was a black leader of great intellectual stature who always looked beyond the trials of the present to the triumphs of the future.

"I don't care how dark the night," Price once wrote, "I believe in the coming of the morning."

Sometimes we all feel weary as we strive toward goals that will make a real difference -- a positive difference for people. I think, too, of the verse of scripture I keep on my desk to remind me that though we grow weary, we have a source of strength beyond our own. You know the verse -- Isaiah 40:31: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." Ours is neither the time nor is this the place for those with faint hearts, feeble courage, weak commitments, or selfish motives.

Three-quarters of a century of progress is but a prelude to the achievements that lie ahead. In the words of Roy Wilkins, written shortly before his death in 1981:

"We must never lose faith in the justness of our cause and the certainty of our success. We believe in our country. We have believed in our Constitution. We believe that the Declaration of Independence meant what it said. All my life I have believed these things, and I will die believing them. I share this faith with others -- and I know that it will last and guide us..."

Thank you and God bless you all.

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