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SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH DOLE
SALVATION ARMY ANNUAL DINNER
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
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I'm delighted to be here this evening to offer my congratulations to you, Wallace, on an outstanding year, and my personal tribute to each of you in this room for your tireless contributions toward the success of one of the strongest and most active Salvation Army organizations in America. And I'm especially glad to participate tonight in this celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Women's Auxiliary.

Since it was founded in 1865 by a Methodist evangelist, the Salvation Army has worked another kind of miracle for millions of people in need. General William Booth believed in "love of God and a practical concern for the needs of all humanity", or put simply, "serving God and helping others." Sharing is the foundation on which the Salvation Army was built, you've stood tall for more than a century. Nowhere is that motivation more successful than here in the shadows of Red Mountain and the great statue of Vulcan where your organization reaches out a helping hand in so many ways to people in need. The quality and quantity of your services in a city the size of Birmingham are truly remarkable. From providing emergency lodging to running a work release program for federal offenders to youth emergency services, you are involved in every part of this great community. And I find most gratifying the innovative talent in carrying out your commitment. It is extremely impressive that the Women's Auxiliary's Doll Festival raised more than \$18,000 last year to support the humanitarian services of the Salvation Army in Birmingham. You are a marvelous example of the energy President Reagan has sought to revive in this country, a renewed confidence in the spirit of public service and the helping hand of friendship that built our great nation in the first place. And you certainly are an

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inspiration to me as I try through my public service to make a difference -- a positive difference -- in people's lives.

Think for a moment about who we are, and where we came from. Before there was an American government, there were Americans drawn together in voluntary associations. From our earliest days, we have been prone to organize for the betterment of the community. Prior to independence, there were Sons of Liberty and communities of correspondence to raise the flag of our nation. Government arose to defend our territory, promote our enterprise, and embody the charitable attitudes of the people themselves. Over the years, the volunteer tradition continued: on western prairies and in urban slums, at church suppers and community chests. For much of our history, Americans relied on the voluntary efforts of business, churches, foundations and other civic organizations to provide jobs, income, health care, food and housing to those most in need. When disaster struck, the Red Cross arrived before Federal loans. Over 40 years ago when American servicemen lacked recreational facilities, the U.S.O. stepped in to fill the void. And for over 100 years the Salvation Army has brought hope to the hopeless, food to the hungry and salvation to millions of destitute people across our land.

In those early days we drew much of our strength as a nation from our moral commitment to each other. When the problems grew too large for the private sector to address, government inevitably succeeded to the challenge. But government, it has been conclusively demonstrated, cannot by itself provide the full range of social services to all who are in need. Equally important, government can rarely summon the enthusiasm or the imagination that aroused private citizens can bring to bear on a stubborn problem. Public intentions can rarely equal private solutions.

In no other land does philanthropy rest on as broad a base as here where a Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, found it flourishing a hundred and fifty years ago. While visiting the shores of our infant republic in 1826, the great French philosopher discerned something uniquely American. "If I were asked ... to what the prosperity and growing strength of that people ought mainly to be attributed," he wrote, "I should reply: to the superiority of its women ... and the voluntary association -- that unique American institution whereby people associate to strengthen their cause as well as their voice."

In truth, we are still what we were at our nation's beginning -- a philanthropic family: one million voluntary organizations rolling up their sleeves instead of twiddling their thumbs; millions of individuals who gave billions of dollars in charitable donations last year alone; thousands of corporations and foundations, who chipped in billions more on top of that amount. And in America, generosity is not measured by wealth -- how much money one has -- half of all the giving in this country comes from families with annual incomes of less than \$20,000.

One of the prime objectives of this administration has been to put more dollars in the hands of such generous citizens, to enable individuals to retain and use for charitable purposes more of their hard earned dollars. We do not intend to replace government's social conscience. We will not retreat from social responsibility. We have however, rediscovered a national sense of community. Since he first came to office the President has had a very active partnership with free enterprise to find alternative ways of helping those in genuine need. Not in lieu of Federal efforts, but in addition to them. The first order of business was to restore our economy to good health. The most compassionate action that government can now take, the President believes, is to maintain our strong economy by reducing federal deficits and providing opportunity for individual growth. It will allow all of us to continue to generate the millions of individual miracles that happen when men and women are given the chance to make their own lives, harness their own ambitions, create their own futures and strengthen their own families.

More than any administration in recent memory, this one relies on the marketplace to provide justice as well as jobs. And we are reducing Federal spending, Federal taxation and the burden of excessive Federal regulation. We have enjoyed, beginning in 1982, 38 consecutive months of economic growth. Productivity has risen. Inflation remains subdued at just 3.8 percent, and we've created more than 9.5 million jobs since November 1982, the height of the recession. The prime interest rate is down from 21 percent in 1980 to 9.5 percent; young people can dream the truly American dream of home ownership -- and realistically expect to accomplish it.

Since 1981 we have witnessed all across America a tremendous reawakening; a resurgence of those fundamental principles that gave character to our land and reality to our dreams. We are renewing the proven ideals of hard work, pride of family, love of freedom and -- yes -- trust in God. And the results of our renewal are as invigorating to the spirit as the camellias and yellowhammers are to the Alabama landscape.

I think of a brilliant woman born not far from here -- at Tuscumbia, Alabama -- who knew great adversity, yet her spirit and her example inspired millions. Helen Keller summed up her philosophy in a single sentence "One can never consent to creep," she wrote, "when one feels an impulse to soar." Today, half a century after Helen Keller spoke out, Americans in voluntary organizations such as this one, are soaring to new heights. And we have just begun.

A few years ago in Newport Beach, California, there were some lovely beachfront homes that were threatened by an abnormally high tide and heavy surf -- homes in danger of total destruction. And all through a cold winter day and night, volunteers worked filling and piling sandbags in an effort to save the homes. About 2 o'clock in the morning a newscaster grabbed a young fellow in his teens, attired only in wet trunks. Along with several hundred other young people, he'd been working day and night. No, he told the reporter, he didn't live in one of those homes they were trying to save.

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Yes, he was cold and tired. Why then, were he and his friends doing this, the reporter wanted to know. The young man stopped for a minute and then he answered, "Well, I guess it's the first time we ever felt like we were needed." Ladies and gentlemen, we are truly needed.

You are needed. I am needed.

Those who first spoke out against drunk driving were volunteers. Most of them, like so many members of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), suffered the loss of a child or loved one. They stepped forward. They made themselves heard. They labeled drunk driving a crime against humanity, unacceptable in a society that reveres life. I am privileged to be working closely with them and other volunteer groups and we will fight until we get every last drunk driver off the roads and highways of this country. And it's been most gratifying to me to see the commitment of so many people. We have SADD, Students Against Drunk Driving, and even BADD, Bartenders Against Drunk Driving as well as dozens of other organizations working in this campaign.

As Secretary of Transportation, I have no higher priority than safety across all modes. My three pronged highway safety campaign is saving lives. One, we are working to change the behavior of the driver. Drunk driving is the number one killer of young people. And in 1984, we strongly supported legislation encouraging states to set 21 as their legal minimum drinking age. A uniform drinking age, as the President said, will do away with today's "crazy quilt" of different state drinking laws, resulting in what have been called "blood borders" --where teenagers have a positive incentive to drink and drive, to cross state lines to take advantage of lower drinking age. I'm proud that Alabama passed an age 21 drinking law last year. You're going to save lives.

Of course, the best defense against drunk drivers is to buckle that safety belt. And humanitarian cause for you. The rule that I put into effect a year ago in July has spawned safety belt laws in 17 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, laws in Iowa and Utah are awaiting the signature of the Governors, and both Houses of the Minnesota legislature have passed a law. For the first time in the 15 year history of the passive restraint issue, lives are being saved now.

Two, we are rehabilitating our highways and bridges to make them safer. Three, we are concentrating on safety features in the design of cars. Cars manufactured after last September 1 are required to have a new rear stop lamp, which will supplement the two lower brake lights. You may have seen them on the highways already. Once all the vehicles are equipped with a third lamp it will cut the number of rear-end collisions significantly, eliminate 40,000 injuries, save \$434 million in property damage and prevent 900,000 accidents. I was flattered that someone called it the Dole light, it's an honor to be associated with such a positive safety device.

The results we are achieving in this safety campaign have been one of my most gratifying ways of making a difference -- a positive difference -- in people's lives. I urge you to join me in this campaign to ensure that the momentum for these crucial changes does not die, but becomes increasingly stronger. For one life lost on our highways is one too many. We are making progress. The highway accident death rate has declined by 3 percent to 44,000. We have put in force a new rule requiring railroad employees not to drink or use drugs on the job.

There are so many ways to serve, whether in public office or in a volunteer capacity. Certainly, there are no limits on the good you can do. You know who is in need, and you know them as human beings, not statistics. What Washington calls a social problem, you see for yourselves as a breadwinner without a job, or an elderly woman alone with her memories.

And in the end, a society is judged by how it acts on its deepest convictions. One American who gave eloquent voice to our national credo of independence entwined with generosity was the great novelist of the American frontier, Willa Cather. She was born in Virginia, raised in Nebraska, and had her artistic flowering in a crowded corner of New York city. And she never abandoned a way of life that was individually strong because it was socially compassionate.

Cather's heroes and heroines were ordinary Americans: cowboys and bohemian immigrants, southwestern missionaries and rural clerks. Most were poor: many suffered from being strangers in a strange land. Yet, all obtained a kind of nobility by working hard and caring deeply. And when Miss Cather died, she was buried, at her request, on a New Hampshire hillside, behind a white-steepled meetinghouse that was itself raised by a congregation of yankee carpenters and laborers. On her tombstone, she had inscribed words from her classic novel "My Antonia."

"That is happiness," it says. "To be dissolved into something complete and great."

There is another line, less poetic but no less valid. You only begin to live when you begin to give. God has given to us freely out of his abundance. We honor him when we give of ourselves and our resources to others. And as Americans, it is our tradition.

Ours is neither the time nor is this the place for men or women with faint hearts, feeble courage, weak commitment or selfish motives. All of you associated with this mighty army have proven your strength and demonstrated your commitment. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to thank you personally and I ask God to bless you richly as you continue "serving God and helping others" in such a powerful way.

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