



U.S. Department of
Transportation

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
HUGH O'BRIAN YOUTH FOUNDATION DINNER
ALBERT SCHWEITZER AWARD
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1986
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

I'm delighted to accept this cherished award from the Hugh O'Brian Youth Foundation and to join the other honorees tonight: William Ellinghaus and Ed Pratt -- with whom I served on the Duke Board of Trustees for many years.

Hugh O'Brian has helped so many young people make a bold start in life over the years. His dream of a foundation that could somehow reach across the generations to link today's leaders with tomorrow's has come true with startling success. On behalf of my boss, the President, who has taught me a great deal about effective leadership, and who's a friend and former colleague of Hugh's, I would like to congratulate the foundation on its 28th anniversary.

I feel very humble at this hour. For it is I who should be honoring you. While Albert Schweitzer -- a man who cared so deeply for his fellow citizens -- provided the inspiration for this foundation, you are providing the momentum, putting beliefs into action by opening the eyes and minds of our young people to the potential of democracy, freedom, and free enterprise.

You who support the Hugh O'Brian Youth Foundation are strengthening minds and building leaders to cope with dynamic issues of change in our society. This audience is just remarkable, and you deserve great credit for a magnificent contribution to our young people.

In the limited time I have to serve as Transportation Secretary, I've tried to focus my efforts on those issues where I can make a difference -- a positive difference -- in people's lives. And public service finds its greatest fulfillment when it is joined to crucial causes. What could be a higher priority than the saving of precious lives, the prevention of crippling and disabling injuries and so much heartbreak caused by drinking and driving? Statistics project that one out of two Americans at some time in his or her life will be involved in an alcohol-related crash. Many have lost loved ones. I lost an uncle to a drunk driver.

President Reagan supports us in this worthy objective. It was the President who personally supported and signed into law in 1984 a bill encouraging states to set 21 as their legal minimum drinking age. We normally defer to states on traffic law issues, but where a state with age 21 has a neighbor state with a lower drinking age, a positive incentive to drink and drive is produced. These "blood borders" -- where teenagers have an incentive to cross state lines to take advantage of lower drinking age laws and return home "under the influence," must be eliminated. Statistics show that drivers between the ages of 18 and 20 are more than twice as likely as older drivers to get involved in alcohol-related accidents. In states where the drinking age has been raised, there has been an approximate reduction of 13 percent in alcohol involvement among young people. Currently, 40 states have age 21 drinking laws -- 17 states have passed laws since the president signed the bill. From 1980 through 1984 the number of fatally injured drivers who were intoxicated declined by 24 percent. Our challenge is to keep the momentum going. We must never let it die.

It's been my pleasure to work with an array of dedicated public figures to draw the message home to all segments of society. For example, Barbara Mandrell -- her appeal is universal -- but the Indy 500 -- and Bobby Rahal -- can best reach the "good ole boys," Fred Flintstone and Micky Mouse, the kids -- and Stevie Wonder, the young adults.

And ladies and gentlemen, we will push on until we get every last drunk driver off the roads and highways of this country. The best defense against the drunk driver is the use of safety belts. A regulation we put into place two years ago has spawned 25 state safety belt laws -- and New York has led the way -- resulting, last year, in the lowest number of highway deaths since 1949.

Every student of public service is familiar with Edmund Burke's classic declaration: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Of course, if Burke were living today, I'm sure he would include women in his observation, because in the last eight years alone, the number of women in the public administration profession has increased by more than 60 percent.

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This Foundation is certainly preparing such outstanding men and women. This spring, over 10,000 sophomores selected to represent as many high schools attended your 74 state seminars. And in August, your excellent International Leadership Seminar will be held in Indianapolis.

In accepting this award, I do so with the knowledge that it is an honor and a privilege to serve, that if I have made any contribution, my efforts are only a small part of the work of so many dedicated Americans.

Once again, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for honoring me in this way tonight. May your future endeavors continue to be blessed with great success. May God bless you all.

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