

REMARKS OF GOVERNOR THOMAS H. KEAN  
LIBERTY PARK MONUMENT COMMITTEE  
AND DEDICATION OF LIBERATION MONUMENT  
LIBERTY STATE PARK  
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY  
THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1985

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THANK YOU, DAVID. THANK YOU SO VERY, VERY MUCH.

I STAND HERE THIS MORNING AS A MAN WHO IS VERY MOVED.

MOVED BY A BEAUTIFUL --- INDEED AN INSPIRING --- STATUE.

MOVED BY THE WORDS OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SPOKEN HERE THIS  
MORNING.

MOVED BY THE SIGHT --- HERE, IN BRONZE --- OF WHAT WAS ONLY  
A DREAM JUST TWO SHORT YEARS AGO.

AND MOVED, MOST OF ALL, BY THE INCREDIBLE CONVERGENCE OF  
HUMAN ENERGY, HUMAN GENEROSITY, AND HUMAN SPIRIT THAT HAS BROUGHT  
THIS DREAM, THIS IDEA, TO LIFE HERE THIS MORNING.

I HAVE JUST RECEIVED FROM DAVID KOTOK AND LUNA KAUFFMAN THE RESOLUTION WHICH PASSES THE TITLE FOR THIS MONUMENT TO THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY.

BUT THEY --- AND ALL OF YOU --- HAVE PASSED ON MUCH MORE THAN A TITLE; MUCH MORE THAN A MERE SLIP OF PAPER.

TODAY, YOU ARE PASSING ON A LEGACY --- A LEGACY TO NEW JERSEY, AND A LEGACY TO AMERICA.

AS I STAND HERE WITH THIS TITLE --- SERVING NOW FOR THIS MOMENT AS THE CUSTODIAN OF THAT LEGACY --- NEVER BEFORE HAVE I FELT SUCH PRIDE WELL UP INSIDE ME. PRIDE IN THE DIVERSE AND WONDERFUL PEOPLE THAT MAKE UP THIS STATE THAT I LOVE.

SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE COME TOGETHER IN THESE LAST TWO YEARS TO BUILD THIS LEGACY --- TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS LASTING REMINDER OF WHAT AMERICA REALLY STANDS FOR.

I LOOK OUT FROM THIS STAGE AND SEE SO MANY OF YOU.

ALL OF OUR VETERANS GROUPS: THE AMERICAN LEGION, THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS, THE JEWISH WAR VETERANS, THE VETERANS SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY,

THE SOD GROWERS ASSOCIATION, WHO PROVIDED THIS LOVELY SOD,

THE CONTRACTORS WHO HELPED WITH CONSTRUCTION,

THE AFL-CIO, AND SO MANY LABOR LOCALS.

THE SCHOOLCHILDREN --- FROM ALL OVER THE STATE --- WHO SAVED THEIR PENNIES.

OUR NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, LED BY GENERAL GERARD,  
WHO HAS DONE SUCH A MARVELOUS JOB WITH THIS DEDICATION CEREMONY.

SENATOR LAUTENBERG AND SENATOR BRADLEY, MAYOR McCANN.

THE VARIOUS STATE AGENCIES, INDEPENDENT AUTHORITIES, AND THE  
CITY OF JERSEY CITY.

THE LADIES AUXILIARIES FROM THE VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS, WHO,  
TOGETHER WITH WELSH FARMS, ARE PROVIDING THE REFRESHMENTS TODAY.

THE THOUSANDS OF BUSINESSES AND BANKS; TALENTED ARTISTS AND  
JUST PLAIN GENEROUS CONTRIBUTORS.

THIS HAS TRULY BEEN A UNITED EFFORT BY THE FAMILY OF NEW JERSEY --- IT HAS BEEN A CELEBRATION OF THAT FAMILY LIKE FEW OTHERS THAT HAVE EVER BEEN WITNESSED BEFORE.

THIS STIRRING MONUMENT, THIS BRONZE LEGACY, IS A TRIBUTE TO THE GENEROSITY OF THOUSANDS OF NEW JERSEYANS. ALL OF THEM CAME TOGETHER TO DONATE THEIR TIME, THEIR EFFORT, THEIR SKILLS, AND THEIR MONEY TO BUILD SOMETHING THAT WOULD LAST --- AND LAST IT WILL.

BUT I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN'T SINGLE OUT A FEW INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THIS MONUMENT.

THEY WERE THE GLUE THAT HELD ALL OF OUR MANY AND VARIED EFFORTS TOGETHER.

THEY WERE THE FIRE THAT STIRRED ALL OF US ON WHEN THIS PROJECT SEEMED SO FAR IN THE DISTANCE.

THEY WERE, REALLY, THE ORIGINATORS OF THE IDEA FOR THIS MONUMENT.

I FEEL FORTUNATE THAT I CAN COUNT THEM ALL AMONG MY GOOD FRIENDS.

AND I BELIEVE THAT ALL OF YOU WHO JOINED TOGETHER TO BUILD THIS MONUMENT CAN, TOO.

I AM SPEAKING OF COURSE OF THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE LIBERTY PARK MONUMENT COMMITTEE, DAVID KOTOK AND LUNA KAUFFMAN; THE TREASURER, MARTY BARBER; AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NOREEN BODMAN.

TOGETHER, THEY HAVE DONE WHAT, FRANKLY, TWO YEARS AGO VERY FEW OF US WOULD HAVE THOUGHT POSSIBLE.

TOGETHER, THEY HAVE BROUGHT OUT THE BEST IN ALL OF THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHOSE SKILLS AND ENERGY THEY TAPPED FOR THIS MONUMENT.

TOGETHER, THEY HAVE SHOWN US THAT WE CAN REACH FOR OUR DREAMS --- IF ONLY WE HAVE THE DARING TO DO SO AND THE DRIVE TO KEEP REACHING.

DAVID, LUNA, MARTY, NOREEN: FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART, THANK YOU.

YOU HAVE GIVEN US SOMETHING THAT WE SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER.

(PAUSE)



SO, THERE YOU HAVE IT. A MONUMENT THAT NOT ONLY HONORS THE HUMAN SPIRIT --- BUT WHICH WAS LITERALLY CREATED BY THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

A MONUMENT THAT IS A LEGACY, IF I MAY CORRECT MYSELF, NOT ONLY TO NEW JERSEY AND TO AMERICA, BUT TO HUMANKIND.

WHAT DOES ONE SAY AT THE PRESENTATION OF A GREAT ARTISTIC STATEMENT? HOW SHOULD ONE EXPRESS COMMENTS? HOW CAN ONE TREAD, SO GINGERLY, ON THOSE INDIVIDUAL IMPRESSIONS AND REACTIONS THAT EACH OF US EXPERIENCES AT A SPECIAL EVENT LIKE TODAY.

I THOUGHT ABOUT THOSE QUESTIONS AS I WAS THINKING ABOUT THIS DEDICATION CEREMONY. AND AS I PONDERED UPON THEM, I BEGAN TO REFLECT ON HISTORY AND I BEGAN TO RAISE THOSE QUESTIONS IN OTHER SETTINGS.

I WONDER, IN FACT WE ALL MIGHT WONDER, WHAT WAS SAID WHEN MICHAELANGELO PRESENTED THE PIETA, WHICH NOW GRACES THE VATICAN? WHAT CRITICISMS WERE ARTICULATED ABOUT REMBRANDT'S "NIGHT WATCH"?

WHAT WERE THE COMMENTS ABOUT BEETHOVEN'S AFFIRMATION OF HOPE IN HIS "PASTORAL." WHAT WAS THE REACTION TO CHOPIN'S CALL FOR FREEDOM WITH HIS "REVOLUTIONARY ETUDE?"

HOW DID PEOPLE RESPOND? WHAT DID THEY SAY? WHAT DID THEY FEEL WHEN THEY HEARD WALT WHITMAN'S POEM "I HEAR AMERICA SINGING?"

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT EACH ARTISTIC STATEMENT ACHIEVES ITS GREATNESS BECAUSE IT EVOKES RESPONSE, BECAUSE IT STIMULATED HUMAN REACTION AND HUMAN FEELINGS.

EACH OF US RESPONDS DIFFERENTLY; EACH OF US IN OUR OWN WAY. WE DO THAT BECAUSE WE'RE DIFFERENT AND BECAUSE WE EACH HAVE OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES. NO TWO REACTIONS TO NATAN RAPOPORT'S MAGNIFICENT SCULPTURE WILL BE EXACTLY ALIKE. THIS MONUMENT'S GREATNESS, IS THAT IT CAUSES SO MANY OF US TO PAUSE, AND TO REFLECT, AND TO LOOK WITHIN OURSELVES. IT ENCOURAGES US TO EXPERIENCE OUR INTERNAL AND REAL HUMAN EMOTIONS.

GREAT WORKS OF ART ARE AN ACHIEVEMENT, AND THE TALENT TO PRODUCE THEM IS RARE INDEED. TODAY, WE ARE ABLE TO SEE A GREAT WORK OF ART AND TO SHARE A SPECIAL MOMENT WITH THE ARTIST WHO CREATED IT.

I'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT NATAN'S STUDIO AND TO OBSERVE SEVERAL OF HIS MAJOR WORKS IN VARIOUS CITIES IN THE WORLD. HIS SCULPTURE IS POWERFUL. IT IS RELEVANT TO THE HUMAN CONDITION. IT INTERPRETS HISTORY WITH A UNIQUE BLEND OF SERIOUS CONTEMPLATION AND ENDURING HOPE.

IT WAS DURING THAT VISIT TO THE STUDIO THAT I FIRST EXPERIENCED MY OWN PERSONAL RESPONSE TO THE SKETCH OF THE MONUMENT WHICH WE ARE DEDICATING TODAY. I FOUND IT MOVING AND IT INSPIRED ME, AND IT CAUSED ME, TO REFLECT DEEPLY.

TO ME, THIS MONUMENT IS AN AFFIRMATION OF MY AMERICAN HERITAGE. IT CAUSES ME TO FEEL DEEP PRIDE IN MY AMERICAN VALUES --- NOT A BOASTFUL PRIDE, LIKE WHEN YOU WIN A FOOTBALL GAME --- BUT RATHER, A PHILOSOPHICAL AND DIGNIFIED SENSE OF INNER COMFORT, IT IS A CONFIRMING PRESENTATION ABOUT THOSE PARTICULAR STANDARDS OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOR WHICH WE, AS AMERICANS, HOLD SO DEAR.

THIS MONUMENT SAYS THAT WE, AS A COLLECTIVE PEOPLE, STAND FOR FREEDOM. WE, AS AMERICANS, ARE NOT OPPRESSORS, AND WE, AS AMERICANS, DO NOT ENGAGE IN MILITARY CONFLICT FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONQUEST. OUR ROLE IN THE WORLD IS TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE THAT PRECIOUS, PRECIOUS THING THAT WE CONSIDER TO BE A FREE DEMOCRACY. ABRAHAM LINCOLN SPOKE FOR ALL OF US WHEN HE SAID "AS I WOULD NOT BE A SLAVE, SO I WOULD NOT BE A MASTER. THIS EXPRESSES MY IDEA OF DEMOCRACY. WHATEVER DIFFERS FROM THIS, TO THE EXTENT OF THE DIFFERENCE, IS NO DEMOCRACY."

LINCOLN CAPTURED THE BALANCE, THE ESSENCE; NEITHER SLAVE, NOR MASTER. AND IN HIS ARTISTIC WORK, NATAN RAPOPORT HAS DONE THE SAME. THAT IS WHY THE SOLDIER HAS NO GUN. THAT IS WHY THE SOLDIER IS GENTLE AND COMPASSIONATE. EVEN AS HE USES HIS GREAT STRENGTH TO CARRY THE VICTIM THAT HE LIBERATED. AND THAT IS WHY THE VICTIM IS ALIVE AND HAS HOPE. THAT IS WHY THE VICTIM HAS SURVIVED THE DARKEST HOUR.

THE RESCUER FULFILLS THE MISSION OF BROTHERHOOD. IT IS A MISSION, A RESPONSIBILITY, WHICH WAS FIRST STATED IN THE BIBLE. AS THE PROPHET MALACHI ASKED, "HAVE WE NOT ALL ONE FATHER? HATH NOT ONE GOD CREATED US?"

THE RESCUER IS NOT ALONE IN RAPOPORT'S EYES. THE SOLDIER HAS A BROTHER. AND THE BROTHER'S HOPE AND FAITH IS AFFIRMED IN THE CHARACTER OF THE VICTIM HE CARRIES.

ALL OF US WHO WORKED ON THIS PROJECT WERE NOT ALONE, EITHER.

IN FACT, IN THIS BEAUTIFUL PROJECT --- IN THIS REMARKABLE TEAM EFFORT --- WE HAVE ONCE AGAIN DISCUSSED OUR BALANCE, WE HAVE ONCE AGAIN UPON THE CENTRAL NOTION OF OUR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY. WE ARE A PEOPLE FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS, AND ALL RACES, AND ALL CREEDS. WE PRACTICE ALL RELIGIONS, AND WE COME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE.

AND WE CAN COME TOGETHER, AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS, TO REAFFIRM OUR UNIQUE HUMAN SPIRIT --- OUR DIVERSITY --- OUR STRENGTH.

NEW JERSEY IS AN ENDLESSLY FASCINATING SOURCE OF THAT SPIRIT. DIVERSE. COMPLICATED. ENERGETIC. NEW JERSEY IS THE EMBODIMENT OF ALL THAT IS AMERICA. AND THIS FITTING LEGACY REFLECTS THAT FACT.

AMERICANS ARE COLLECTIVELY A PEOPLE WHO CAN LIVE TOGETHER AND CAN SEEK PEACE AND LIBERTY. AND WE EXTEND OUR DESIRE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THIS IS THE BELIEF WHICH IS AT THE CORE OF OUR AMERICAN HERITAGE AND THIS IS THE BELIEF WHICH NATAN RAPOPORT'S MONUMENT SUGGESTS TO ME.

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME RAPOPORT HAS DEMONSTRATED THIS THEME. WE HAVE SEEN IT AT WORK BEFORE TODAY.

WHEN POPE JOHN PAUL VISITED POLAND, HE PLACED A WREATH AT THE BASE OF NATAN RAPOPORT'S MONUMENT DEDICATED TO FREEDOM FIGHTERS.

IN JERUSALEM, RAPOPORT CHOSE THE BIBLICAL FIGURE OF JOB TO ARTISTICALLY AFFIRM HIS FAITH AND HOPE.

AND IN TORONTO, JACOB WRESTLES THE ANGEL IN BRONZE, AS EVIDENCE THAT THE STRUGGLE IS ETERNAL.

AND NOW, IN NEW JERSEY, THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT, IN BRONZE, WILL BE A LEGACY THAT OUR GENERATION WILL GIVE TO THOSE WHO WILL FOLLOW US.

THIS MONUMENT IS CONSISTENT WITH A THEME WRITTEN BY A GREAT AMERICAN PRESIDENT. LET ME QUOTE HIM. "AND EVEN SHOULD THE CLOUD OF BARBARISM AND DESPOTISM AGAIN OBSCURE THE SCIENCE AND LIBRARIES OF EUROPE, THIS COUNTRY REMAINS TO PRESERVE AND RESTORE LIGHT AND LIBERTY TO THEM. IN SHORT, THE FLAMES KINDLED ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1776, HAVE SPREAD OVER TOO MUCH OF THE GLOBE TO BE EXTINGUISHED BY THE FEEBLE ENGINES OF DESPOTISM."



THAT STATEMENT, SO RELEVANT TO THIS MONUMENT, DOES NOT COME FROM THIS CENTURY.

IT COMES FROM THE DRAFTER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, THOMAS JEFFERSON, IN A LETTER TO HIS COLLEAGUE JOHN ADAMS IN 1821.

YES, LONG BEFORE THIS MONUMENT WAS CONCEIVED, LONG BEFORE THE TWO GREAT WORLD WARS OF THIS CENTURY WERE FOUGHT, BEFORE THE STATUE OF LIBERTY GRACED THIS HARBOR, LONG BEFORE ALL OF THESE, JEFFERSON FORESAW THAT OUR AMERICAN TRADITION --- OUR FUTURE AS A NATION AND AS A PEOPLE --- DEPENDED ON OUR WILLINGNESS TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT FREE DEMOCRACY. HE REALIZED THE NECESSITY OF OUR COMMITMENT TO RESCUE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS FROM OPPRESSION.

TODAY, WE WILL REMEMBER THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR FREEDOM.

AND TODAY, HERE, AT THIS DEDICATION, WE HONOR THEM WHILE WE  
AFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO THESE GREAT AMERICAN VALUES OF LIBERTY,  
DEMOCRACY, AND COMPASSION.

THANK YOU.