

Introduction of the President of the United States

By John C. Bogle, Chairman, National Constitution Center

Groundbreaking Ceremony, Sunday, September 17, 2000*

Hear the words of the preamble, a Constitution for “ourselves and our Posterity.” The more perfect union established by our Constitution was intended to establish justice, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty, not merely to the Founders and their fellow-citizens, but “to ourselves *and* our Posterity.” It was a noble promise.

It is simply not possible for those of us who represent *this* generation of citizens of this blessed land to look at the United States of America today without the knowledge certain that the promise made by the Founding Fathers 213 years ago has stood the test of time. Thanks to their wisdom and foresight, our nation leads the world, not only in things easily quantified—wealth, strength, commerce, agriculture, technology and innovation—but in blessings not so easily measured, but far greater importance—liberty, democracy, freedom, and generosity of spirit.

It is *we the people* who, working together over two centuries, have been responsible for the rise of our nation to world pre-eminence. But turning noble intentions into concrete actions requires strong leadership. Our Constitution was both wise and clear on that point. In Article II, Section 1, it provides that “The executive power shall be vested in a President.” And during our Nation’s proud history, we have been well-served by an extraordinary succession of able, dedicated Presidents who have steadily led the nation to new heights.

It is particularly fitting that the current occupant of the nation’s highest office be with us today to lend us his authority as our chief executive at this memorable groundbreaking ceremony for the National Constitution Center. Under the extraordinary leadership of our President, America’s general welfare and our blessings of liberty and freedom—our global strength and our prosperity—have surged to levels without historic precedent.

Our President honors us not only by his presence, but by his long-standing support of our mission and our mandate, and the vision of his Administration’s National Park Service. Without this support, I assure you, we would not be here today to honor, through the National Constitution Center, *our* generation’s obligation to fortify and preserve the blessings sought by our Founders for future generations—“ourselves and *our* posterity.”

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am proud to present to you the 42nd President of the United States of America, William Jefferson Clinton.

* Each of the seven speakers at the ceremony was asked to focus his remarks on a specific phrase from the Preamble to the Constitution:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The President’s theme was the final “do ordain and establish this Constitution” phrase in the Preamble.