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St. John's Hospital Dedication Speech

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ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL DEDICATION

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1984

THANK YOU, AL, FOR THAT VERY KIND INTRODUCTION.

I'M SO HAPPY TO BE HERE TODAY AND I'M THRILLED TO SEE SO MANY FAMILIAR FACES: MY GOOD FRIEND BISHOP SULLIVAN; CONGRESSMAN JOE ADDABBO [NOTE: CHECK]; QUEENS PRESIDENT DONALD MANES; AND AL CONWAY, THE PRESIDENT OF THE CATHOLIC MEDICAL CENTER. [AND SINCE THIS IS ALL IN THE FAMILY, I ALSO WANT TO INTRODUCE MY HUSBAND JOHN, MY MOTHER, ANTONETTA, AND JOHN'S MOTHER, ROSE ZACCARO.]

being with

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE FAMILY. AND, I CAN TELL YOU, THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.

AS YOU ALL KNOW, I'VE BEEN GOING BACK AND FORTH TO THE AIRPORT QUITE A BIT IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. AND EACH TIME I PASS THIS SITE, I THINK TO MYSELF: I WONDER IF ST. JOHN'S HAS FOUND A CURE FOR JET LAG.

I'VE GOT AS MANY HAPPY MEMORIES OF ST. JOHN'S AS THIS NEW *Building* HOSPITAL IS GOING TO HAVE SATISFIED PATIENTS.

IN 1978, ALONG WITH A WONDERFUL WOMAN BY THE NAME OF MISS LILLIAN, I LAUNCHED MY POLITICAL CAREER IN THE CORRIDORS OF ST. JOHN'S.

A FEW YEARS LATER -- IN THE SPRING OF 1981 -- I CAME HERE TO THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONIES FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL NEW PAVILLION. SOME OF YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER, BUT WE HAD SPECIAL GUEST WITH US LATER THAT DAY: WALTER MONDALE.

THE DAY BEFORE, IN FACT, A FAR-SIGHTED LOCAL COLUMNIST SPECULATED THAT COME 1984, WALTER MONDALE AND GERRY FERRARO MIGHT BE RUNNING TOGETHER ON THE DEMOCRATIC TICKET. AND WHEN FRITZ WAS ASKED HOW HE FELT ABOUT THAT, HE REPLIED (QUOTE): "IF IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH GERRY, IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH ME."

WELL, I GUESS BY NOW YOU'VE FIGURED OUT THAT IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH ME. AND YOU CAN'T DENY IT: FRITZ MONDALE IS A MAN OF HIS WORD.

TODAY I'M HERE FOR A SIMPLE REASON: ST. JOHN'S HOLDS A VERY SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART. AND I KNOW I SPEAK FOR ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF QUEENS WHEN I SAY THAT.

INSTITUTIONS LIKE ST. JOHN'S EMBODY THE ENERGY AND COMMITMENT OF THE PEOPLE WHO BUILD AND RUN THEM.

ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF ST. JOHN'S ARE VITAL TO ITS SUCCESS. BUT NONE IS MORE IMPORTANT TO THIS COMMUNITY THAN THE WOMAN WHOSE CAREER THIS NEW PAVILLION HONORS.

I'VE KNOWN SISTER THOMAS FRANCIS FOR MANY YEARS NOW. / I'M HONORED TO CALL HER MY FRIEND. / SISTER THOMAS FRANCIS STANDS FOR A SPIRIT WHICH MAKES OUR GREAT COUNTRY STRONG: THE SPIRIT OF CARING FOR EACH OTHER.

LAST WEEK IN SEATTLE, WHEN DISCUSSING THE UPCOMING ELECTION, SOME YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD ME THAT THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT AMERICANS HAVE BECOME SELFISH, AND CARE ONLY FOR THEMSELVES. /

MAYBE THEY WERE RIGHT. / BUT SISTER THOMAS FRANCIS AND THE OTHERS WHO WORKED TO MAKE THIS PROJECT A REALITY SHOW THAT WE'RE NOT A SELFISH PEOPLE. WE CARE ABOUT EVERYONE IN THIS SOCIETY, INCLUDING THE SICK, THE DISABLED, AND THE ELDERLY. WE DO THESE THINGS, NOT BECAUSE THEY'LL BRING US GAIN, BUT BECAUSE THEY'RE RIGHT.

AND THAT'S WHY I'M HERE TODAY: BECAUSE HOSPITALS LIKE ST. JOHN'S HELP PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN THE HEALTH AND DIGNITY WHICH WE ALL DESERVE.

FOR MANY YEARS, THE CATHOLIC MEDICAL CENTER HAS REACHED OUT TO THE PEOPLE OF BROOKLYN AND QUEENS WHEN THEY NEEDED HELP. THE NEW ST. JOHN'S ENSURES THAT THE PROMISE OF SISTER THOMAS FRANCIS WILL ENDURE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME.

THE GREAT GREEK PHYSICIAN AND PHILOSOPHER, HIPPOCRATES,
CALLED HEALTH "THE GREATEST HUMAN BLESSING." ALL OF US WHO ARE
FREE FROM INJURY AND SICKNESS ARE DOUBLY BLESSED. BECAUSE WE
KNOW THAT IF WE NEED HELP, SOME DAY, THE PEOPLE AT ST. JOHN'S ARE
READY AND WILLING TO HELP US. TODAY I APPLAUD YOUR COMMITMENT,
YOUR DEVOTION, AND YOUR SPIRIT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

-- END --