



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 12, 2008

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President Bush Recognizes Rep. Lewis Contribution

In a speech honoring the legacy of African Americans President Bush saluted the work of historian Carter G. Woodson, former Secretary of Transportation William Coleman, one of the Little Rock Nine Ernest Green, former Temptation Otis Williams, and Rep. John Lewis.

“It is an honor,” said Rep. Lewis, “for a President of the United States to acknowledge the legacy of African Americans. We have been a part of every conflict ever fought to defend this nation, and for centuries we have been on the frontlines of the call for justice in our democracy. This nation is a better nation, and we are a better people because of the talents, sacrifice, and ingenuity of African Africans in this society. So it is fitting and appropriate that President Bush would take the time to acknowledge this great contribution to American history. I feel very gratified to be named in the company of such distinguished men.”

President Bush made the following comments about Rep. John Lewis:

“Congressman John Lewis earned his place in history long before winning a seat in the United States Capitol. As a young man, he became one of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. He organized freedom rides, sit-ins, and voter registration drives. One Sunday in 1965, he set out to lead a march from Selma to Montgomery. The marchers never made it past the rows of state troopers outside Selma. But their message made it all the way to Washington. Five months later, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act. More than forty years later, John Lewis continues to inspire us -- and we are blessed to have him among us today.”

The President also began his speech with a discussion about the recent incidence of noose hangings that have occurred around the country. He called the noose a “tool of murder” and “intimidation” and identified with African Americans’ alarm at the resurgence in the use of this symbol of hate.

Rep. Lewis was the only member of Congress named in the President’s address.

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