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ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Tuesday, May 10, 1994

Great Hall
Main Justice Building
Washington, D.C.

2:00 p.m.

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1 STATEMENT OF STEPHEN R. COLGATE, ASSISTANT ATTORNEY

2 GENERAL FOR ADMINISTRATION

3 Mr. Colgate: Now, it is my proud honor to present to
4 you a person who has a long established record as a
5 champion of fairness, equal opportunity, and justice, our
6 Attorney General.

7 [Applause.]

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1 STATEMENT OF HON. JANET RENO, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE
2 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

3 Attorney General Reno: I thank you for that warm
4 welcome. But I thank you, too, for representing the
5 Department of Justice with such distinction.

6 And with doing so much to make the name real to more
7 and more Americans everyday. It's a great pleasure for me
8 to be here today, to participate in the Department's
9 observance of Asian/Pacific American Heritage month.

10 But I will tell you something, and I was reminded of
11 it as everybody talked about Mother's Day this past
12 Sunday, my mother said she didn't approve of Mother's Day.
13 Everyday should be a mother's day.

14 And as far as I'm concerned, everyday we should
15 respect, admire, and cherish the differences of all of the
16 people in our cultures, including Asian/Pacific Americans,
17 Hispanics.

18 All of us should come together and look at each other
19 as individuals, recognizing the wonderful differences in
20 us all and coming together to work toward mutual
21 solutions.

22 So let us resolve to go forth from today, not
23 celebrating a month, but celebrating everyday of the year
24 in our differences and our respect for each other.

25 [Applause.]

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1 Attorney General Reno: I don't think we should do it
2 based on numbers and how many of one group of people there
3 are, or there are going to be.

4 I think we should do it on the fact that each culture
5 is special and wonderful, no matter whether there be one
6 representative of that culture amongst us, or millions,
7 and that each person, each culture, background, tradition
8 that they represent, is very special to us all.

9 I think that one of the great joys of this job, in
10 this past year, has been to travel across this nation and
11 to see the great diversity.

12 And I will say that, coming from Miami, I didn't meet
13 that many Asian/Pacific Americans. One of the joys has
14 been to go to the bar association meeting in Los Angeles,
15 to travel around this country, to go to the meeting in New
16 York, to visit with so many wonderful representatives of
17 the bar, of so many different communities throughout
18 America who have come together to celebrate and to join
19 together in eliminating discrimination, bigotry and hatred
20 amongst us all.

21 It has been my pleasure, and you have always made me
22 feel so welcome. And I am deeply grateful to you for
23 that.

24 We have much to do in this department. I am so proud
25 of the Asian/Pacific Americans who work here. But we have

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1 got to do much more in terms of diversity.

2 It is difficult with a hiring freeze on, with little
3 attrition, but we have got to commit ourselves to ever
4 increasing efforts.

5 We've got to make sure that minorities are given --
6 placed right for promotional opportunities, that they are
7 given appropriate positions, that we look at them in terms
8 of promotion and how we can assist and support them in
9 promotional opportunities as well.

10 We are dedicated to doing as much as we possibly can.
11 And we welcome suggestions as to how we can do more. But
12 what hurts is to travel around this nation and to see the
13 examples of hatred, to understand that people can be this
14 mean, this evil, this emotionally and spiritually corrupt,
15 as to perpetuate hatred in forms that we should not
16 tolerate.

17 I have had, now, too many instances where either in a
18 large meeting, or at a community setting, or in a town
19 hall meeting, an Asian/Pacific American has come to me,
20 either singularly or as a group, expressing concern about
21 hate crimes, about instances that they have seen in their
22 community that they fear may be caused by prejudice,
23 bigotry, and hate.

24 This department has got to join together with
25 Americans throughout this land and do something that I saw

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1 actually firsthand, the results of, in Billings, Montana,
2 this past weekend.

3 Billings, over this past year has seen examples of
4 hate, not in that instance directed against Asian/Pacific
5 Americans, but against Jews.

6 That community rose up. Its newspaper, its citizens
7 came out. They joined together in town meetings at the
8 university in the city, throughout the city, and said, "We
9 as a community will not tolerate this."

10 The Department of Justice, all representatives of all
11 federal agencies, and the American people, must now rise
12 up and say the same. And so I just commend you for this
13 panel today. And I look forward to hearing it.

14 [Applause.]

15 (Whereupon, at 2:15 p.m., the speech was concluded.)
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