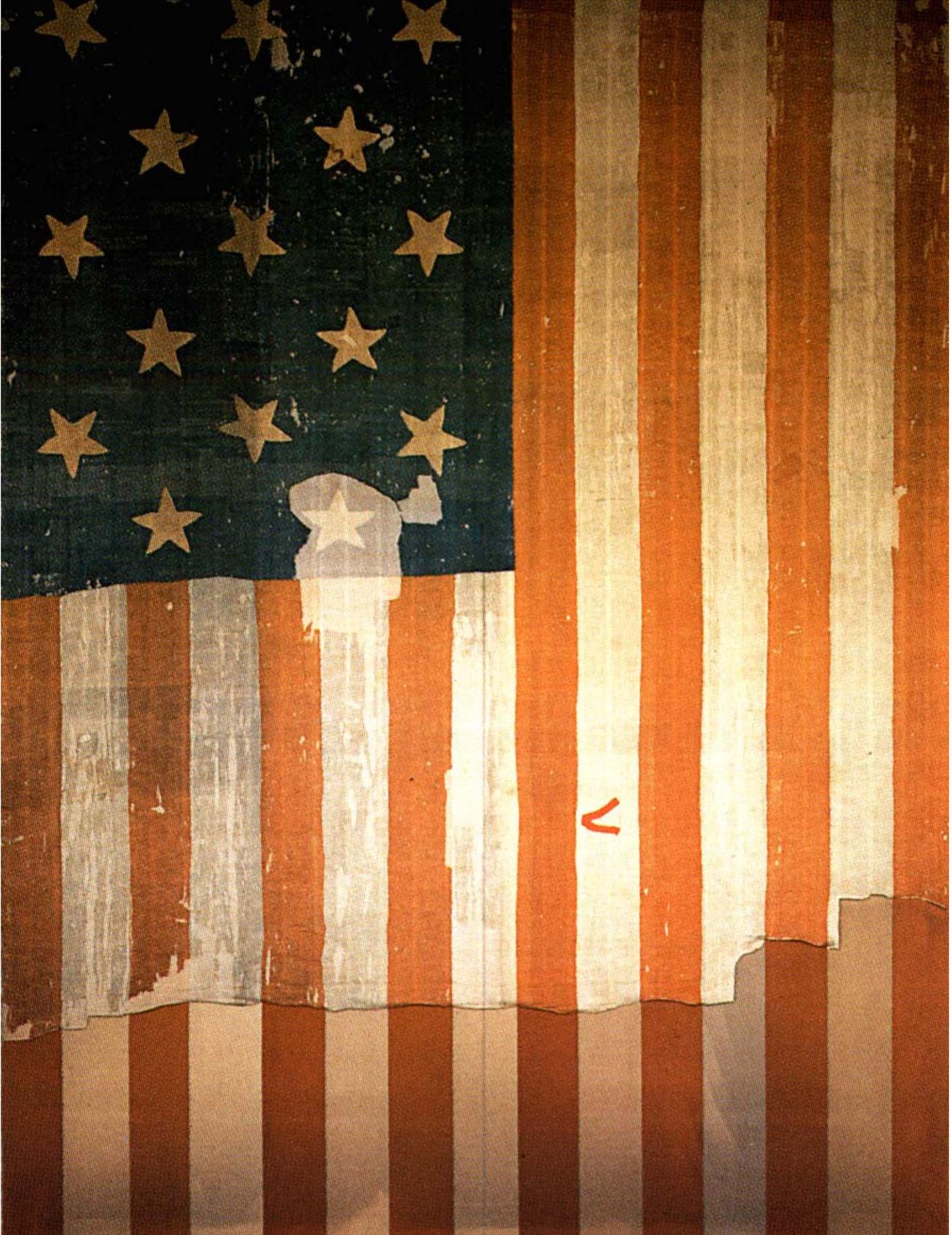


With Liberty and Justice for All



Toward A Culture of Individualized Empowerment
Justin Dart

THE VOICES OF EMPOWERMENT

"This is essentially a people's contest. On the side of the Union, it is a struggle for maintaining in the world that form ... of government, whose leading object is to elevate the condition of people – to lift artificial weights from their shoulders ... to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance in the race of life." (A1)

Abraham Lincoln

"Over the last century, our lives as disabled people have improved because we have fought for our rights. We have refused to allow people to crush our dreams. While our victories have been great, we have much further to go. True equality will be obtained only when all disabled people create and fulfill their dreams, and fight for the rights of all." (A2)

Judy Heumann

"People with disabilities are becoming empowered to make choices and control their own lives. It's about freedom and becoming independent. This is the time for people with capabilities of all kinds to come to the table. We need to reach out to all Americans to work together for the new millennium." (A3)

Debbie Robinson

**A GOAL FOR
THE 21ST CENTURY**

**TOWARD A CULTURE OF
INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT
FOR ALL**

**YOU HAVE THE POWER
YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY
TO MAKE THE DREAM LIVE
FOR ALL**

JUSTIN DART

AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE ENDORSED THE CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT - BUT NOT NECESSARILY EVERY WORD OF THIS WRITING - ARE: JAMES BILLY, MARCA BRISTO, FRED FAY, LEX FRIEDEN, TOM HARKIN, WADE HENDERSON, JUDY HEUMANN, ANDY IMPARATO, BOB KAFKA, RON MACE, PAUL MARCHAND, GINA MCDONALD, KATHY MCGINLEY, RALPH NEAS, BECKY OGLE, MARCIE ROTH, MARK SMITH, STEPHANIE THOMAS, JIM WARD, PAUL WELLSTONE

THE VOICES OF EMPOWERMENT

The basic things expected by our people of their political and economic systems are simple. They are: Equality of opportunity for youth and for others. Jobs for those who can work. Security for those who need it. The ending of special privilege for the few. The preservation of civil liberties for all.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." (A12)

Martin Luther King

"Shine your light...our society really needs you now." (A10)

Diane Coleman

"Be the change you want to see in the world." (A25)

Mahatma Gandhi

"Most important, we must keep our eyes on the prize – full empowerment for all." (A37)

Paul Marchand

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THE VOICES OF EMPOWERMENT

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services... Everyone has the right to education."(A38)

United Nations

"It is the right and the responsibility of disabled people (of all oppressed people) to redefine themselves (their identities and their values) as opposed to accepting the definitions imposed by our oppressors."(A15)

Bruce Curtis

"The efficacy of the independent living concept is being proven each day by more and more severely disabled individuals as they choose to assume the responsibilities of directing their own lives and as they become active participants in the mainstream of life in their communities."(A16)

Lex Frieden

"...despite progress, we are still pursuing the very heart of 'life, liberty, and happiness.' What is that heart? It is the communal norm that people with mental retardation will be of, not just in, our communities, that in every way they will be part of our communities."(A17)

Rud Turnbull

INTRODUCTION

BELOVED COLLEAGUES, this writing attempts to say one thing which dominates the consciousness of my sunset time.

The first goal, the burning vision, of 21st century people must be the creation of a culture that guarantees the tools and choices of individualized empowerment to every person.

The present politics and media are dominated by the powerful forces of the status quo and of retreat. The people of America are confronted by a painfully divided society: conspicuous prosperity at the top and an increasing underclass of people mired in poverty, involvement with the courts and dependence on welfare and charity. Traditional culture is designed to empower only those who have the traditional qualifications and connections to participate in a hierarchy of power and prestige. This is in total conflict with the goal of democracy: the best life for all.

Only you (and I) and thousands like us have the power to make the dream of individualized empowerment live in every life.

We must give up life as usual and devote long years of passionate, single minded, 365 day advocacy for individualized empowerment. This writing will present ways to do it successfully.

Democracy is under attack. The do or die elections of 2002 and 2004 are upon us. We must defeat the enemies of democracy. We must elect governments that will go forward to guarantee individualized empowerment to all.

FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES I HAVE BEEN A FULL TIME ADVOCATE for the rights and empowerment of people with disabilities. Most often I write in the terms of that experience. Often I address my colleagues in the disability rights movement. They are most of the people I know. How, then, can I claim to be presenting a serious revolution in public policy for all people? I have been a mainstream civil rights advocate for fifty years. I find civil rights and disability rights to have identical root values.

OBSOLETE POLICY AND PUBLIC APATHY HAVE CONDEMNED MILLIONS TO POVERTY IN THE RICHEST COUNTRY OF ALL HISTORY.

■ **The '90s poverty gap in America was the largest in the 50 years of federal record keeping.** During the last decade incomes of the poorest fifth of the population have increased 0.7 percent, less than one percent; the top fifth 15.6 percent – 22 times as much. Incomes for the top twentieth increased 26.3 percent – 37 times the increase of the lower fifth.

■ **According to official US figures almost 40 million Americans live in poverty.** Our government arrived at this misleading, low figure for the year 2000 by estimating that a family of four needed \$17,050- to live above the poverty level. Webster's defines poverty as implying "a lack of resources for reasonably comfortable living." My ad hoc research indicates that in most areas a family living on an income almost twice the official poverty level cannot afford to buy a "reasonably comfortable" home. Our obsession with the ad agency life style has created a huge and growing underclass struggling unsuccessfully to live a glittering illusion of euphoric superiority.

■ **America is the only modern democracy without guaranteed universal health care.** Millions of Americans lack quality healthcare. We pay more for healthcare per capita than any other nation, and the people of several nations live longer than we do.

■ **Americans with disabilities are the poorest of the poor.** Two thirds of potentially employable persons with disabilities are jobless. Millions are dependent on welfare and charity. Millions are locked in jails, institutions and nursing homes for lack of simple, economical community based services. Many people with disabilities cannot buy healthcare for any price.

THERE ARE FIFTY-SIX MILLION AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES at any given time. Millions more, their families and friends are personally impacted by disability rights. Seven out of ten Americans will, at some time in their lives experience a serious disability. We have proven that almost all of them have the potential to live lives of quality during and after the onset of disability. Every American family will eventually include one or more members with severe disabilities.

"We have the tools, we need to enter the arena. We need to sweat a little bit; we need to bleed a little bit to take our rightful place. If we don't get into the arena the opportunity is lost, our future is gone and we will live in the shadows of what might have been." (A8)

Fred Greasby

"Challenge yourself and change the world!" (A43)

Susan Sygall

"...Man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being...the peculiar character of human morality is that it is without excuse." (B10)

Jean Paul Sartre

"I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity." (A44)

Nelson Mandela

THE VOICES OF EMPOWERMENT

"The paramount goal of the United States... is to guard the rights of the individual, to ensure his development, and to enlarge his opportunity... Our enduring aim is to build a nation and help build a world in which every human being shall be free to develop his capacities to the fullest. We must rededicate ourselves to this principle and thereby strengthen its appeal to a world in political, social and economic and technological revolution."(B11)

**Canham, Conant, Darden, Greenwalt, Gruenther,
Hand, Kerr, Killian, Meany, Pace and Wriston
The Eisenhower Commission on Goals for Americans**

"In twenty years, people with disabilities will either be routinely locked away in institutions or well on their way to full societal interaction. The choice is not up to the politicians and the pundits, it's up to you. Act now. And continue to act until all our people have the choice to be free."(A23)

Janine Bertram Kemp

"Surely our great-grandsons will not be wrong if they think of us as barbarians? The truth is that as children of a transition period, we are neither fully conscious of, nor in full control of, the new powers that have been unleashed. Clinging to outworn habit, we still see in science only a new means of providing more easily the same old things."(A18)

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

"Too many millions of Americans remain as spectators, allowing politicians, business people, the public media and other manipulators to make decisions for them. We need a revolution that empowers all to take full responsibility for themselves and the world."(A22)

Frank Bowe

DISABILITY IS A NORMAL CHARACTERISTIC OF HUMAN LIFE. Solutions for people with disabilities must be solutions for everyone.

I HAVE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF DRAFTING A DETAILED POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PLATFORM FOR INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT. I have printed this as a separate, but allied document so as to minimize weighting the superb concept of universal empowerment with the heavy emotional chains of political correctness. I would not want anyone rejecting individualized empowerment based on a potentially minor disagreement over the details of government guaranteed healthcare.

UNIVERSAL EMPOWERMENT IS IMPERATIVE TO THE FULFILLMENT OF THE HUMAN DREAM. Somebody must plant the seeds, no matter how rocky the political soil, no matter how dim the prospects of instant progress. And so I write, and I earnestly solicit your criticism, your edits and your co-authorship of this draft in progress.

I AM PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL to those many who have already contributed to this writing either through editing or inspirational example. A very few of their names follow. Many more will be listed in the final document. Among them are: Yoshiko Dart, Fred Pelka, Frank Bowe, Marca Bristo, Paul Marchand, Fred Fay, Bobby Silverstein, Judy Heumann, Bob Kafka, Lex Frieden, Wade Henderson, Gina McDonald, Kathy McGinley, Mark Smith, Dan Fisher, Lucy Wong-Hernandez, John Lancaster, Konoka Izumi, Masami Morigami, Asuka Sato, and Mari Dart.

INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT - A PRACTICAL PLAN TO MAKE THE AMERICAN DREAM LIVE IN EVERY LIFE

AMERICANS ARE INSTINCTIVELY CONCERNED ABOUT A POLITICS OF STATUS QUO AND RETREAT. THEY SEEK A POSITIVE VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY. A forward vision that includes all unconditionally, that loves them for their distinctive humanity rather than their TV bodies and personalities, and their ad agency life styles.

WE HAVE THAT VISION: THE INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT OF ALL. A society based on the value that every human life is equally sacred and equally worthy of optimal personalized empowerment to achieve his or her best possible quality of life. An America for all. A world for all.

FORCED TO DEAL WITH THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF DISABILITY, our disability rights movement has played a leading role in pioneering the infant science of individualized empowerment. Many of our (your) experiments have had dazzling success. We of the disability community have a unique ability and therefore a unique responsibility, to lead the world toward a culture that empowers all to live the life of quality that is possible.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ELIMINATE THE deadly residue of traditional authoritarian culture, which attempts to create cookie cutter people for hierarchies of privilege. Millions who do not fit the stereotypical molds are forced into an underclass of poverty and degrading dependence on welfare and charity.

NOW IS THE TIME TO CREATE A CULTURE THAT FOCUSES THE FULL FORCE OF SCIENCE AND FREE ENTERPRISE DEMOCRACY ON THE INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT OF ALL PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR UNIQUE, PERSONAL GOD GIVEN POTENTIAL.

THE CULTURE OF INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT will provide all human beings the customized education and services, and the customized tools to meet each of their distinctive needs and to maximize each of their distinctive abilities. This will not mean that individuals are given lock step formulae for success, but rather that they are empowered to make their own choices and to create their own successful lives based on the development of their best personal abilities and to fulfill their self-evident responsibilities to the interdependent quality of democracy.

"The marvelous thing about American freedom is the opportunity it provides for all groups to empower themselves."(A41)

Major Owens

"A society good for disabled people is a better society for all. All of us know that this is true. Let us use our insight to convince others!"(A26)

Bengt Lindquist

"Empowerment is part psychological, part social, and part political. It is the process by which individuals define their own voice, develop their own plans, act on their own behalf, and claim their own power. Empowerment means more than having responsibility, but also having the authority and ability to make one's own choices. In the process, it requires hard work and sacrifice."(B9)

Lee Schulz

THE VOICES OF EMPOWERMENT

"... for the first time in history, man has the real power to overcome poverty. We have proved that by the wise application of modern technology, the determined labor of skilled men and women can ultimately produce enough food and clothing and shelter for all mankind. The possession of new abilities gives us new responsibilities and we want to live up to those responsibilities." (B14)

President Lyndon B. Johnson

"Empowerment is giving people the tools they need to be independent, to make their own choices, to take control of their own lives." (A35)

Mark Smith

"My vision for the future is that one day we will empower every American, disabled and nondisabled, through education, opportunity and encouragement, to fulfill his/her own personal dream...and, in so doing, build a better nation and a better world." (A14)

Larry Johnson

"Empowerment is when you have gained the confidence in yourself to have the light bulb go on in your head. You realize you can take control of your life and you understand that now you have done it." (A21)

Nancy Ward

DEMOCRACY AT RISK - THE ELECTIONS OF 2002 AND 2004

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE PROMISED LAND, OUR DREAM OF ALL INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY IS BARRICADED - BY OUR OWN SELF-INDULGENCE AND BY A SEDUCTIVE POLITICS OF RETREAT. We Americans have struggled for more than 200 years to achieve the richest, most democratic culture in the history of the world. We finally have the resources to overcome the devastating ancient poverty and social gaps that still exist, and to empower all Americans to live lives of profound quality in the productive mainstream. But we are not taking all of the necessary action. Why?

WE THE PEOPLE OF PROGRESS, ARE IN THE THROES OF A BRILLIANT, TURBULENT, CULTURAL ADOLESCENCE. We struggle valiantly to live the “adult” values of science and democracy - to live the lives of superb quality and responsibility that are clearly possible. But parts of too many of our minds retain primitive addictions to symbols of power, prestige, and to other stereotypes ingrained during millennia of “childhood” under authoritarian regimes. We fear a future of responsibility for a world of change and complexity that no human is experienced to face. We squander enormous amounts of money and time on frantic escapism.

MANY OF US ARE EASY PREY FOR A POWERFUL POLITICS OF RETREAT that has achieved increasing measures of control in the Congress, the White House, the judiciary, the public media and the public consciousness.

- They blocked universal health care.
- They attempt to limit ADA, IDEA, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security and other components of basic social responsibility.
- They passed a massive cut in taxes which favors wealthy people disproportionately and renders it impossible for the federal government to make the minimum necessary investments in the welfare of all the people.

■ They attempt to limit the democracy of Abraham Lincoln, FDR and Marty Luther King – a democracy with federal authority to protect and empower all its citizens. They would take us back toward states rights and domination by the privileged few.

WE WHO LOVE DEMOCRACY MUST MOBILIZE TO SAVE IT. We must give up life as usual. We must become passionate everyday advocates for democracy – in our homes, in our communities, in the media, in our churches and civic organizations and especially in the elections of 2002 and 2004.

I am not saying that the advocates of retreat are evil people who are stealing democracy from innocent citizens. In many ways they are us – grasping fearfully for a vision in a time of terrifying change and complexity. We the people enable them to do everything they do – through our direct support – financially, in the polls, at the voting places; through our conformity to their dogmatic political correctness and especially through our roles as escapist spectators of democracy rather than active members. We who love democracy must stop being spectators and start being leaders.

"Nothing moves your soul more than to see the light go on in someone's head that says, 'I can do this.' 'I can take control of my life.' Applauding the perception is easy. Helping to make it reality is tough."(A40)

Michelle Hoffman

"When we rule ourselves, we have the responsibilities of sovereigns, not of subjects."(A4)

Theodore Roosevelt

"You have to do the things you think you can't do."(A11)

Eleanor Roosevelt

YOU HAVE POWER MAKE THE DREAM LIVE

THE LEGITIMACY OF OUR GOAL IS SELF-EVIDENT. BUT CAN WE OVERCOME the psychology and the politics of retreat? Can we overcome forces that invest billions in the maintenance of traditional stereotypes? Not quickly, not easily. But we can win. We have the ultimate powers: people, truth, love. We have you. We have each other.

COLLEAGUES, YOU HAVE THE POWER, and therefore the responsibility, to defend democracy and to create a society of individualized empowerment for all. Because you are the society. Society is not a magical super god that can give or withhold quality of life. Society is nothing more than what you do and think everyday. When you speak, the society speaks. When you change, the society changes. When you expose, turn off the ads, and boycott the interests that support the far right, they are weakened instantly. When enough people do it, their power is gone. They have little money except what we give them.

BUT THE EMPOWERMENT SOCIETY WILL NOT OCCUR THROUGH ADVOCACY AS USUAL. It is not enough to meet the President or the Mayor. We must vote, all of us. We must not only vote and petition government, we must become government, through official positions, and through 365 days a year citizen advocacy. We must create a social environment in which no person who requires public support – public official, businessperson, media person – could afford to oppose individualized empowerment for all.

WE NEED YOUR AGGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP to increase our passion and our tiny empowerment army one hundred fold. We need leaders who are ready to live, and if necessary to die, for democracy.

YOU CAN LEAD. Unlike our opponents on the far right, you will not be able to buy multimillion-dollar ad campaigns. But if you reach out constantly, repetitively with love and truth, spoken and lived, to everyone in your personal universe, you can be a walking/rolling/talking ad for individualized empowerment that no money could buy. Your truth in action will change the part of society that you are. The intensity of your loving truthful action will be a powerful influence on others.

TEN WAYS YOU CAN MAKE THE DREAM LIVE

■ Give up life as usual – escapist television and games, time consuming, expensive travel and recreation, and devote the time to passionate advocacy for individualized empowerment.

■ Give up politically and socially correct conversation and become a single minded, repetitious communicator of the message of individualized empowerment – so that when people see you across the street, your message will register in their minds even though you say nothing.

■ Speak to people with words of love, giving them sincere, loving praise for the distinctive positives that everybody has. They will be glad to see you coming and be far more likely to internalize your message of empowerment.

■ Recruit your family members and friends first. People from age one to a hundred can be good advocates. Severely disabled people living in nursing homes can be good advocates. Small babies and dogs can carry good buttons and signs with great effect.

■ The vital election campaigns of 2002 and 2004 are fully underway. Become a politician, promoting your agenda everyday through every political process. Volunteer and contribute money to the campaigns of good politicians. You will have ten times more influence than if you simply ask them for favors. Get into politics as if your life depended on it – because it does – and the lives of your children’s children.

- Become a media person – write letters to the editors, participate in radio and TV talk shows, become friends with media employees and business and political staff. Become a media professional.
- Use the electronic technology to send out brief talking points on the issues – make sure they are 100% accurate. Most political advocacy is obvious hyperbole. It goes directly into the wastebasket.
- Be an aggressive participant in your local and national advocacy organizations – from AAPD, LCCR, CCD, NCIL, ADAPT, DREDF, People First, psychiatric survivors and People for the American Way to your local independent living center, disability and civil rights coalitions. If you support them, they will support your advocacy for individualized empowerment.
- If there is no cross disability action group in your area, form one. Thirteen penniless people started the Christian revolution, and the same number started the modern Chinese revolution.
- When necessary, send your messages of love and truth with militant action. You will be surprised how a small demonstration at a political, media or business office can change attitudes.

"Let your vision always guide you. Keep your eyes on the prize. Try whatever it takes. Keep it simple. And be in it for the long haul. Never give up." (A42)

Marca Bristo

"In order to win, we must galvanize our grass roots army to create a world of barrier busters." (A20)

Patrishia Wright

"We must give people a voice to say to their keepers: I am pissed off. Your authority over me is illegitimate. I'm taking my life back. It's mine. And the second thing is uniting people. Hey honey, we are all in this together, solidarity!" (A39)

Lucy Gwin

THE VOICES OF EMPOWERMENT

"I think the great challenge today is to make the promise of America a reality for all of its citizens, and to make achieving the American dream, which I believe in fervently, a reality for all Americans. It can be done." (A24)

Wade Henderson

"Each day we choose. We can choose indifference. Or we can choose to make a difference. We can choose to view adversity as opportunity. We all have the freedom to choose how we view our situation. In coalition with others who share our vision we can reach our destination: The choices are ours. The future is ours. The world is ours. If we choose." (A5)

Fred Fay

"Every time you, as an individual disabled person, struggle against discrimination and lack of opportunities to give yourself more choice and control over your own life, every time you throw aside or challenge the stereotype of yourself as a passive, oppressed person - you are empowered - and are then able to empower others." (B5)

Rachel Hurst

"Self-advocacy is about independent groups of people with disabilities working together for justice by helping each other take charge of their lives and fight discrimination. It teaches us how to make decisions and choices that affect our lives so we can be more independent. It teaches us about our rights, but along with learning about our rights, we learn responsibilities. The way we learn about advocating for ourselves is supporting each other, and helping each other gain confidence in ourselves to speak out for what we believe in." (B6)

Tia Nelis

OUR AGENDA FOR INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT WILL BE ATTACKED WITH THE TRADITIONAL STEREOTYPES

OUR AGENDA IS SIMPLE COMMON SENSE and simple family values. It is simple justice. But the traditional stereotypes will be raised.

STEREOTYPE: THE TRADITIONALISTS WILL CRY “GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES ARE UN-AMERICAN, socialism, the death of free enterprise.”

BULLFEATHERS! The empowerment of all is the American Dream, the Dream that brought millions to the Statue of Liberty. It is the pledge of liberty and justice for all. It is the opposite of the paternalistic regimentation of primitive socialism. It empowers each to make maximal choices. It's the culture doing what every good family and business does: giving the tools of empowerment to its members. We already try to provide the minimum necessities of life to every person, but we often do it in such a messy, degrading way - crisis welfare, charity and law enforcement - that we make beggars and prisoners out of millions and rob them of their health, productivity, prosperity and pride.

I SPEAK OF STRENGTHENING, NOT WEAKENING, FREE ENTERPRISE. I speak of strengthening it by adopting values that are self-evidently in the interest of choices by people as individuals, by people as business, by people as government. I speak of greatly expanding free enterprise by empowering all to participate in its mainstream - free choices, free enterprise made real for all.

I SEE A NEW MARRIAGE OF GOVERNMENT AND FREE ENTERPRISE. I see a stronger government that guarantees individualized empowerment to each citizen, and oversees the implementation of those guarantees. I see a leaner, more streamlined government passing much process - millions of choices and actions -

to individuals and free enterprise. I see a stronger free enterprise with a much-expanded role in implementing the mandates of government. Government guarantees, free enterprise provides choices, individuals decide.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREE ENTERPRISE ARE NOT IN CONFLICT; they are two sides of the same solid gold cultural currency. In combination, they have powered American democracy to miracles of productivity, self-realization and quality of life that have revolutionized the political, economic and cultural processes of the world.

STEREOTYPE: “UNIVERSAL EMPOWERMENT WILL COST TOO MUCH. WE CAN’T AFFORD TO DO IT.”

BULLFEATHERS! That’s what they said about the Homestead Act, rural electrification and Social Security.

WE CAN’T AFFORD NOT TO DO IT. Emergency room health care costs twice as much as guaranteed quality health insurance. Policemen, prisons, substance abuse, welfare and crisis charity cost far more than guaranteed subsidies for quality education and employment. Institutions, hospitals and nursing homes cost far more than guaranteed community based services. Homelessness and breadlines cost far more than guarantees of subsidies for housing and nutrition. Our unemployed, underemployed, welfare and charity poor cost us tens of billions of dollars annually in crisis spending and lost productivity. Empowerment government can eliminate hundreds of thousands of bureaucrats, millions of paper forms and billions of dollars in paternalistic overhead. As people are liberated by individualized empowerment, they will have thousands of extra hours and thousands of extra dollars to invest in productivity and quality of life.

THE CULTURE OF INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT WILL RESULT IN EXPLOSIVE INCREASES in productivity and quality of life at least equal to the astounding progress of the initial revolutions of science, industry and democracy. It will be the ultimate form of free enterprise democracy for all. But it is not inevitable. It won’t happen without you.

SUMMARY: OUR FIGHT TO EXPAND HUMANITY

TODAY WE HAVE AN HISTORIC WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND THE HORIZONS AND THE QUALITY OF HUMANITY. We have this opportunity because patriots past and present – including many of you – have given their fortunes, their sweat often their blood to move free enterprise democracy toward liberty, justice and prosperity for all. We owe our grandchildren the same passionate dedication.

WE MUST FIGHT AS WE HAVE NEVER FOUGHT BEFORE – not simply to defend our movement and democracy, but to lift the eyes of America to a vision of action that will make the patriots' Dream live.

OUR VISION: PASSIONATE LOVE FOR PRINCIPLE IN ACTION.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL AMERICANS TO RISE ABOVE PARTISANSHIP, STEREOTYPES, FEAR AND APATHY AND TO UNITE IN MILITANT LOVE FOR EVERY HUMAN BEING. INDIVIDUALIZED EMPOWERMENT FOR ALL.

UNITED IN LOVE AND JUSTICE, WE SHALL OVERCOME!

"We have three top priorities: advocacy, advocacy, advocacy." (A46)

Ed Roberts

"The revolution of empowerment is going to truly implement what our rhetoric has always said. The first revolution that needs to happen is within our own community." (A47)

Bob Kafka

EPILOGUE - WE HAVE THE POWER. DO WE HAVE THE WILL?

WE HAVE THE POWER. DO WE HAVE THE WILL? *Do we have the will to set aside life as usual and go into passionate action to save democracy and to create a culture that empowers all?*

THE WORLD IS WATCHING. *The world will follow. Will the American Dream - the human Dream - prevail? Or will we follow great cultures past down the road of demagogues and self-indulgence to the land of "might have been?" Failure is unthinkable.*

YOU WILL MAKE THE CHOICE, *to be an explosion of love for all, or to be a spectator of unspeakable tragedy.*

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." (A48)

Margaret Mead

"Perfection of means and confusion of goals seem - in my opinion - to characterize our age. If we desire sincerely and passionately the safety, the welfare and the free development of the talents of all men, we shall not be in want of the means to approach such a state. Even if only a small part of mankind strives for such goals, their superiority will prove itself in the long run." (A49)

Albert Einstein

256 PEOPLE WHO HAVE EMPOWERED ME

COLLEAGUES, I'M THE LUCKIEST MAN IN THE WORLD

because I'm in the best movement in the world, with the best people in the world. You. The beauty of working with you keeps me alive. The beauty of working with you gives me hope and faith that against all odds we shall prevail. Lead! Lead! Lead!

I HAVE NEVER DONE A SINGLE SUCCESSFUL THING

without the help of beautiful, strong, loving people **like you** who empowered me directly, or by inspiration - hundreds of them.

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF 256.

This is not my Top 256. It is a work in progress. If your name should be on this list and is not, be not dismayed. I am fighting through a medication fogged 71 year old mind. This list is a work in progress - of 256 so far - magnificent human beings whose names might help some of you understand what I try to mean by empowerment. Some of them are well known, many are not. But these are people who have sacrificed for me, invested in me, counseled me, shouted at me, smiled at me - loved me - or simply inspired me by their principled living. They have empowered me. They have saved my life and made it worth living. I know that you have such people in your life and that you have been equally effective to empower others.

THE EMPOWERMENT 256

YOSHIKO DART - A DYING CHILD IN VIETNAM

SUE AMMETER, LINDA ANTHONY, MIKE AUBERGER, POLLY ARANGO, MAX ARRELL, TSUNEKO BAILEY, GERALD BAPTISTE, PATSY BARRETT, SANDY BEASLEY, ELIZABETH BENDER, ROB BENSON, BARBARA BERNHART, JANINE BERTRAM, WADE BLANK, ELIZABETH BOGGS, HENRY BETTS,

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THE VOICES OF EMPOWERMENT

"Self advocacy begins by understanding that rights are never granted from above. They are grasped from below by those with the courage and determination to seize that to which they are entitled. Freedom is never bestowed. It is claimed. Justice is never conferred. It is won by sweat and sacrifice." (B7)

Tony Coelho

"At the banquet table of nature there are no reserved seats. You get what you can take, and you keep what you can hold; if you can't take anything, you won't get anything; and if you can't hold anything, you won't keep anything. And you can't take anything without organization." (B8)

A. Philip Randolph

"Our oppressors are and always have been weak, frightened people. Our complete liberation depends on improving everybody's mental health." (A6)

Ethan Ellis

"There are only two kinds of power: money and people. We don't have the money, so our only hope for having power is to effect changes in people." (A7)

Belinda Carlton

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THE VOICES OF EMPOWERMENT

"The legitimate object of government is to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they cannot, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves." (A50)

Abraham Lincoln

"We are all the same and we are all different. Just as we understand and respect the sameness, we must acknowledge and respect the difference. Our best hope in the success of this effort is to join forces, recognize our sameness and differences, and work together for the empowerment of all of us." (A51)

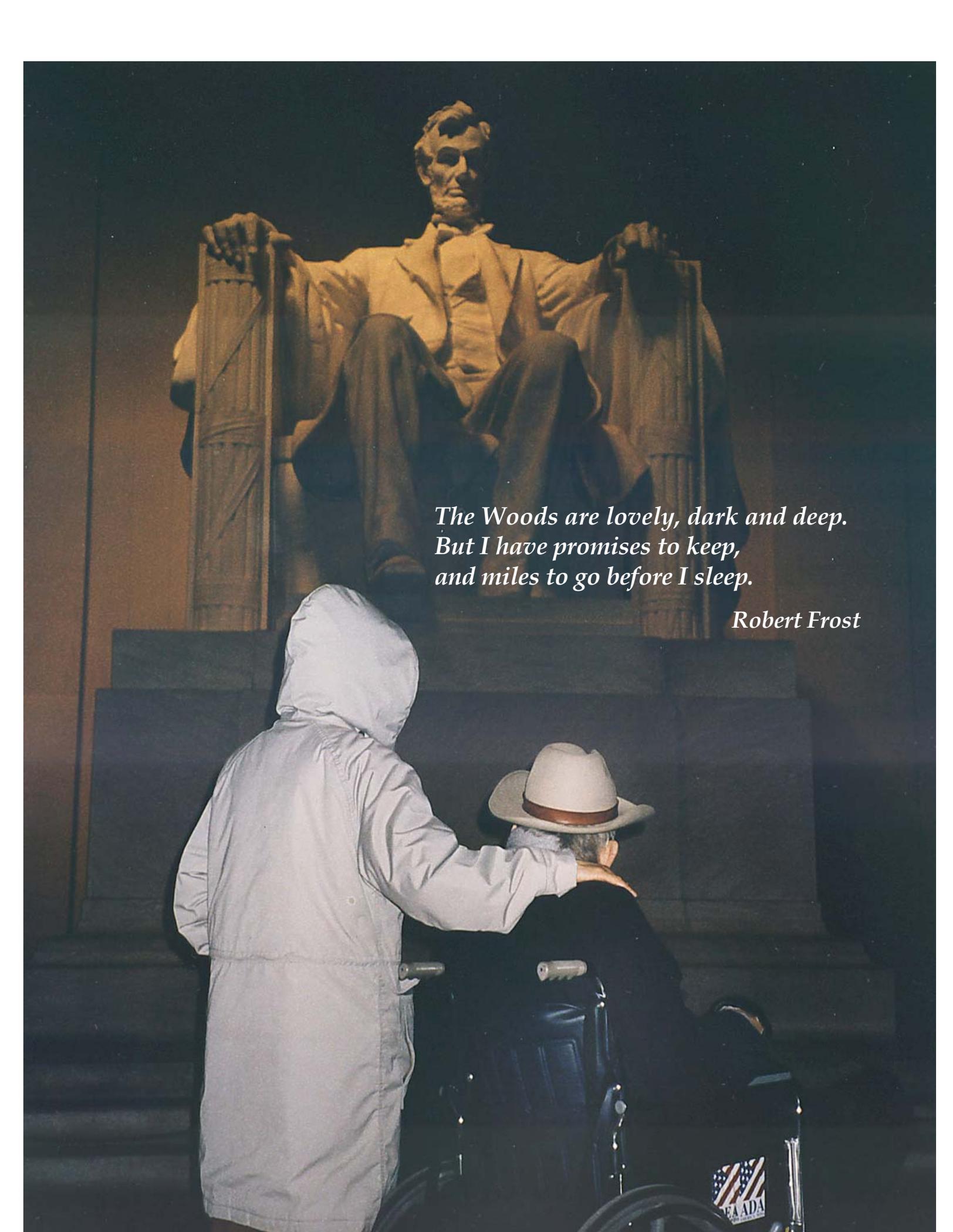
I. King Jordan

"Blindness doesn't prevent people from having vision. Being a part of the disability rights movement truly allows me to be all that I am because I don't have to be ashamed of being blind. In fact, I can embrace all the things I can do well because I am blind and celebrate every accomplishment among people who can appreciate what every victory means." (A52)

Paul Edwards

"Our problems are large, but our unified heart is larger. Our challenges are great, but our will is greater. And in our America, the most generous, optimistic nation on the face of the earth, we must not and will not rest until every man and woman with a dream has the means to achieve it." (A53)

President George H. W. Bush



*The Woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
and miles to go before I sleep.*

Robert Frost