

[*The President and the First Lady congratulated Mr. Guerrero and presented the medal.*]

He still has his salsa, you see. [*Laughter*]

First, let me say that we are glad to see Lionel Hampton here safe and sound. A legendary bandleader, singer, and the first musician to make a vibraphone sing and swing, he has been delighting jazz audiences for over half a century. Anyone who has ever heard his music knows that he is much more than a performer; he is a pioneer. When Louis Armstrong invited him to play the vibraphones at a recording session in 1936, he realized he had found his calling. He mastered the vibes quickly and performed the first jazz vibraphone solo ever recorded. In 1936 he joined the Benny Goodman Trio, but soon he formed his own band and over the years has nurtured the talents of many jazz leaders, including Quincy Jones and Dinah Washington. He is a lion of American music, and he still makes the vibraphone sing.

[*The President and the First Lady congratulated Mr. Hampton and presented the medal.*]

Dancer, choreographer, and teacher Bella Lewitzky first began creating dances in her hometown of Redlands, California, when she was just 7 years old. With Lester Horton, she founded the Dance Theater of Los Angeles in 1946. Twenty years later, she formed the Lewitzky Dance Company, a troupe that has performed to critical acclaim around the world. Now in her 80th year, when it would be just as easy to rest upon her well-deserved laurels, she is eagerly looking to start new projects, and I hope all of you have inspired her here today.

[*The President and the First Lady congratulated Ms. Lewitzky and presented the medal.*]

Vera List has touched generations of students, teachers, artists, performers, audiences, and artistic institutions across America. For more than half a century, she has lent her vision, energy, and resources to philanthropic efforts to promote the arts at universities, museums, and through artistic endowments. The charitable foundation that she and her husband, Albert, created in 1945 helped to underwrite the construction of the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center more than three decades ago. She has sponsored an opera performance for under-privileged children, PBS broadcasts highlighting the American artist, and many other

varied and worthy arts projects. She has done what private citizens must do if we are going to bring the arts to all the American people, and we thank her for it.

[*The President and the First Lady congratulated Ms. List and presented the medal.*]

We would be hard-pressed to find any American who doesn't recognize Robert Redford as one of our Nation's most acclaimed actors, directors, and producers. He won an Academy Award for Best Director for "Ordinary People." He's won numerous other awards and made wonderful movies. The most important thing to me about Robert Redford is that he could have been well satisfied to be a movie superstar but instead chose an entirely different life, because for years and years and years, he has supported and encouraged many young and emerging screenwriters and directors through the Sundance Institute in Utah. He's helped to promote nontraditional cinema. He's opened the doors for many new artists and their films. I can say also, in an area not covered by today's awards, he has been a passionate advocate of preserving our natural heritage and protecting our environment. And the Vice President and I were honored to have him with us at the Grand Canyon a few months ago when we set aside 1.7 million acres, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah, a cause that he pressed for for years and years and years. It is very important when a person with immense talent, resources, and fame tries to give the gift of creativity back to people who would otherwise never have a chance to fulfill their own God-given abilities. We honor him for that today and thank him.

[*The President and the First Lady congratulated Mr. Redford and presented the medal.*]

Throughout a lifetime as an author and illustrator, Maurice Sendak has singlehandedly revolutionized children's literature. In works such as "Where the Wild Things Are," he has created heroes and adventures that have captured the imagination of generations of young readers. His books have helped children to explore and resolve their feelings of anger, boredom, fear, frustration, and jealousy. Hillary and I read "Where the Wild Things Are" alone to our daughter scores and scores of times. And I can tell you, he helped me to explore my feelings of anger,