

boredom, fear, frustration, and jealousy. [Laughter] His books have become staples of children's libraries and family bookshelves. They will always be a beloved part of our national culture, and they have done a great deal to help our children find their own imaginations.

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

We were having a picture—Mr. Sendak said that, “This is my first grown-up award.” [Laughter]

I feel that I should sing about our next honoree—but I won't; relax. [Laughter] Stephen Sondheim is one of our Nation's finest composers and lyricists. Not only are his words and melodies timeless, appealing to all generations, they mirror the history and experiences we share as Americans. His work is indelibly etched on our national cultural landscape. Who among us can't rattle off some words from “West Side Story,” “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum,” “Gypsy,” “A Little Night Music,” or “Sweeney Todd”? Decade after decade, Stephen Sondheim continues to delight audiences here and around the world with his treasured lyrics. He has won five Tony Awards, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1993, received the Kennedy Center Honor for Lifetime Achievement in 1993. But he has given us more than we could ever give to him.

Stephen Sondheim.

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

In less than 30 years, the Boys Choir of Harlem has become one of the world's finest singing ensembles. The choir gives 100 concerts every year and has performed at the White House, the United Nations, and all around the world. These accomplishments would be enough to merit a medal, but the Boys Choir of Harlem has also changed and saved lives. Over the years it has recognized and nurtured the God-given potential of thousands of young people whose talents might otherwise have gone unnoticed. The 550 boys and girls who attend the Choir Academy of Harlem learn much more than how to sing on key and in harmony. They learn that through discipline, hard work, and cooperation, anything is possible and dreams do come true. I again say they are a powerful, shining symbol to all the young people of this country about

what they can become if the rest of us will just do our part to give them the chance.

[The President and the First Lady congratulated choir director Walter Turnbull and presented the medal.]

I now have the honor of introducing the recipients of the Charles Frankel Prize.

Poet, professor of poems, and activist for poetry Rita Dove helps us to find the extraordinary in the ordinary moments of our lives. She has used her gift for language, her penetrating insight, and her sensitivity to the world around her to mine the richness of the African-American experience as well as the experience of everyday living. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1987 and recently Poet Laureate of the United States, she is considered one of our finest poets, and she truly is a life force of poetry.

[The President and the First Lady congratulated Ms. Dove and presented the prize.]

Best-selling author, historian, and political commentator Doris Kearns Goodwin has enriched our understanding and appreciation of the people and institutions that have shaped American government, American history, and American politics. Her great gift is to tell the story of America through rigorous scholarship, engaging prose, and anecdotes and details that bring alive major events and political figures. She has worked in the White House, taught at Harvard, written books about President Johnson, the Kennedys, and the Roosevelts. Her latest work, “No Ordinary Time,” won the Pulitzer Prize in 1994. And I can tell you it made the details of the White House come alive. I actually had the book, walking from room to room, imagining what it all looked like all those long years ago. In that book alone, she did a great service to the United States in helping us to understand our history, our leaders, and what this country is really all about.

[The President and the First Lady congratulated Ms. Goodwin and presented the prize.]

Political philosopher, public servant, builder of civil society Daniel Kemmis has dedicated his life to reawakening America's sense of community, of citizenship, of working together for the common good. In his books and lectures and during his tenure in politics, he has spread