

Jan. 22 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

an oath, and from this moment on, it is our jobs to honor it.

Today everything is so promising and new. My hope is that the day will never come when any of us take this place for granted and this honor for granted. As we serve, we must always remember three things.

First, we must remember the high standards that come with high office. This begins with careful adherence to the rules. I expect every member of this administration to stay well within the boundaries that define legal and ethical conduct. This means avoiding even the appearance of problems. This means checking and, if need be, doublechecking that the rules have been obeyed. This means never compromising those rules. No one in the White House should be afraid to confront the people they work for, for ethical concerns. And no one should hesitate to confront me, as well. We're all accountable to one another. And above all, we're all accountable to the law and to the American people. My White House Counsel, Al Gonzalez, is my point man on these issues. If you have even a hint of ethical doubt, I urge you to talk to Al.

Second, we must remember that high standards of conduct involve not only obeying the law but showing civility. As we go about our work, there is no excuse for arrogance and never a reason for disrespect toward others. People who work here are highly visible throughout the Government. In many ways, in many of your dealings,

you'll be the face and voice of the White House staff. You will be my representative. I expect each of you, as an official of this administration, to be an example of humility and decency and fairness.

And finally, we must all remember that we are here for a reason. You and I and the Vice President share the same goals for our country and the same commitment to achieving them. We are here to make progress. We are not here just to mark time. The next few weeks, we'll affirm the central policy goals of this administration, beginning this week with education reform. Everyone will know where we stand. Everyone will know where we're headed. Every morning I want you to remember these goals. Every evening I want you to review the progress we have made. I want it said of us, at the end of our service, that promises made were promises kept.

On a mantelpiece in this great house is inscribed the prayer of John Adams, that only the wise and honest may rule under this roof. He was speaking of those who live here. But wisdom and honesty are also required of those who work here. I know each of you is capable of meeting that charge.

This is only our second day, but time moves fast around here. So let us begin the work we were hired to do and leave this a better place than we found it.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Republican Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

January 22, 2001

The President. Thank you all for coming. It's been my honor to host a working lunch with the Speaker and Members from the House and even Members from the United

States Senate. This is the beginning of a series of luncheons and dinners that I will have and the Vice President will have with Members of the Congress. If we're to get