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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1968

Office of the Press Secretary
to Mrs. Johnson

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON
AT DEDICATION OF CLINICAL RESEARCH CENTER,
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Every hand that has rocked a cradle, every parent who has spent a long and watchful night with a feverish child knows the great responsibilities you bear. In the spring of 1953, I remember leading a small girl by the hand into Children's Hospital for a minor operation that nevertheless could have been serious. A few hours later, happy and relieved, we walked out. That event is repeated thousands of times here: the scared child, the brave-looking but scared parent, and later, the welcome relief at the end of an ordeal. Occasionally we know the outcome is sad.

The most intense and poignant hopes of the human family are entrusted into your care here at Children's Hospital.

It is an honor for me to join you today, because I warmly support and admire all that you do -- and because I am thrilled by the new facility that we have come to dedicate.

And to you, Mr. Secretary, whose guiding hand has translated so much compassion into Government programs, I want to say a special thanks.

This hospital -- Children's Hospital -- is one of the institutional treasures of metropolitan Washington. Its doors are open to all who knock. Race is never a barrier here; income is never a barrier. Last year, 113,500 children came through these doors and were treated.

In 1871 -- the year the hospital was first established, only 94 children could be helped. This thousandfold increase in one hundred years reflects the nearly miraculous strides medical science and this institution have made.

Visualize Washington one hundred years ago. The streets of our capital were mud. The city was crowded and maimed with the aftermath of the Civil War. A makeshift old house at the corner of thirteenth and F Streets served as Children's Hospital.

The diseases of the time were cholera, smallpox, dyptheria -- names we hardly hear nowadays, as your talents are bent to solving the much more complicated problems of cancer, retardation, and malformation.

I look back over these hundred years and forward to the future. I find myself hoping that we, as American, can address ourselves as effectively to the other ills that beset society -- hard-core unemployment, educational inequalities, poor housing, clogged transportation -- as we have in the past to the ills of the human body. For man is a whole, and

when we treat his needs, we must deal compassionately and effectively with his body, his mind, and the environment in which he lives.

There is a message to take to heart here, an example for the rest of society to learn from its medical achievements.

The medical achievement we are celebrating today is one I welcome wholeheartedly.

We are dedicating the Montgomery Blair Clinical Research Center -- a kind of hospital within the hospital, a very special island within this very special place.

This is the 92nd clinical research center to be established in the United States by the National Institutes of Health. The city of Washington welcomes its services because these centers are the proven way of tackling the most delicate and complex medical problems.

The Montgomery Blair Clinical Research Center will have eight patient bedrooms and ten new laboratory units beside them. A specially trained team of doctors, nurses and technicians will be working right at the bedside, so that knowledge from the laboratory can be instantly applied, and new needs of the patient instantly tested.

Here at any one time will be eight children who typify the unsolved health problems of our Nation. These patients may have come from this hospital's 230 sick inpatients, or its thousands of outpatients, or they may be referred from other hospitals and centers in the Middle Atlantic Area. They will represent both the common health problems and the rare: the complex and heart-rending conditions for which we must find a solution, conditions such as:

- Babies who are born but never grow;
- Babies whose bodies grow but whose mental capacity is stunted;
- Babies whose life and growth are stunted because their heart and blood vessels are not properly formed;
- Babies who die or are severely affected with common virus infections;
- Children and young people who are overweight and stay overweight.

These young patients, sometimes only hours old, will present the questions: Why? How? What can be done? These patients will also -- with their doctor-scientist friends at the hospital -- provide some of the answers.

Sometimes the answers will come through intricate measurements with special devices; sometimes through a sample of blood; sometimes through a special diet; or a trial of a new vaccine or medication. In no case will there be a charge to the family: the National Institute of Health grant for the center pays the bill.

Each child will be cared for in the atmosphere of love which is typical of Children's Hospital.

This Center is a focal point of medicine and science, doctors and patients, government and private medicine: all directed toward the needs of children.

Intensive study of even a modest number of children under ideal conditions in a Center like this one can reveal general principles which may operate over the years to save lives and reduce suffering.

What you do for -- and learn from -- the eight little patients in this new Montgomery Blair Center will bring new life to thousands of children throughout our land and around the globe.

Before I came here today, I was leafing through the first annual report of the Children's Hospital. It is dated 1871, and says, so appropriately: "Children whose after-lives could only be unhappiness, from suffering, deformity and disability, have by the blessings of God, been restored to health, and comeliness, and fitted to enter upon the duties and enjoyments of a life which had only promised affliction and helplessness."

I am sure that parents and children throughout the country join me in a prayer for your continued devotion to child health and for the healings-to-come from the Montgomery Blair Clinical Research Center.

And so it is to all children everywhere and their well-being that we dedicate this wing today.

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