

FOR RELEASE AFTER 6:30 P.M.  
THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1968

Office of the Press Secretary  
to Mrs. Johnson

THE WHITE HOUSE

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REMARKS OF MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON  
GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA DINNER  
GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT  
MAY 16, 1968

It is with great appreciation that I accept the Frances K. Hutchinson Medal of the Garden Club of America.

Appreciation, because I have long admired your organization and all it has done across this country. You know -- and the cities in which your 175 clubs are active -- know how much your zest and know-how have improved the landscape. The emphasis which you put on planting in downtown areas around public buildings -- hospitals, schools, on public streets -- is a gift of major proportions to our country.

For me, nothing has been so rewarding in the past four years as my work with all the facets of environmental quality. And nothing has been so encouraging as to know that in this cause -- and it is a cause -- I have had my husband at my side. The President has asked me to thank you tonight for all that you have done to make your towns more livable.

I want to thank you too and your predecessors for establishing such a variety of awards. They call attention in a memorable way, and they make people strive harder. At least, I know today's honor, will in my case!

You may be sure that wherever I live I will be working diligently at the grass roots -- because that is where it must all begin.

I don't think that any gardener can talk to another without sharing some of the personal satisfactions that come from working with the land.

The lady whose name this medal bears -- Frances Hutchinson -- was a woman thrilled by the lovely world outside her doorstep. She spent many years working on her own woodland home beside a Wisconsin lake -- working with nature. I confess this is a luxury I look forward to pursuing after January, 1969.

Already I have done a very small thing, harvesting some wildflower seeds, and sowing them along roadsides and in one particular pasture at the ranch.

The effect is glorious in the spring and I look forward to doing more. Someday, if your paths lead you that way, I hope to show you the tapestry of bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush -- which adorn my part of the world as you have shown me the lovely gardens of Greenwich today.

I've loved meeting all of you -- hearing about the many activities which this group has initiated from redwood groves to youth education.

Each of you has added in a visible way to the heritage of this country.

We are daily conscious of the high cost of blight that demeans people's lives. Ugliness -- the grey, dreary, unchanging world of crowded, deprived neighborhoods -- has contributed to riots, to mental ill-health, to crime.

You have helped gardens come out from behind their walls. They are no longer the sole province of the homeowner or connoisseur. The bank on the corner, the new industrial development, the suburban shopping center, the new school, and even the old one -- are turning to attractive landscaping as being essential for human well-being -- for joy. I welcome this trend.

Thank you for the examples of excellence you have set. You inspire all of us to do more.

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