

STATEMENT BY ROBERT MORGAN  
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION  
FREEDOM PARK  
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA  
MAY 20, 1975

I AM HONORED TODAY ~~TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY~~  
TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS HISTORIC OCCASION COMMEMORATING  
THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MECKLENBURG DECLARATION  
OF INDEPENDENCE.

AS A YOUNGSTER IN GRADE SCHOOL I WAS TOLD  
ABOUT THE EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED HERE ON MAY 20, 1775  
AND LIKE ALL OF YOU I WAS PROUD THAT AS A NORTH  
CAROLINIAN I COULD BE HEIR TO A SMALL PART OF THIS  
HERITAGE. HOWEVER, NEVER IN MY WILDEST DREAMS DID  
I EVER IMAGINE THAT MANY YEARS LATER—ON MAY 20, 1975  
I WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY AND HIGH HONOR TO SHARE  
THIS PLATFORM WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
AND HELP FOCUS THE EYES OF THE NATION AND THE WORLD  
ON THE COURAGEOUS DEEDS OF THOSE WHO GATHERED HERE  
200 YEARS AGO TO DENOUNCE A TYRANNICAL GOVERNMENT AND  
DECLARE THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM IT.

I AM GRATEFUL TO THE PEOPLE OF MECKLENBURG  
COUNTY FOR INVITING ME AND TO YOU, PRESIDENT FORD,  
FOR ASKING ME TO ACCOMPANY YOU HERE. I PERSONALLY AM  
DELIGHTED THAT YOU HAVE HONORED US BY YOUR PRESENCE (AND  
I MUST ADMIT IN ALL CANDOR THAT I AM MUCH MORE PLEASED

TO SEE YOU IN NORTH CAROLINA TODAY THAN I WAS ABOUT  
A YEAR AGO WHEN I WAS SEEKING A SEAT IN THE UNITED  
STATES SENATE AGAINST THE CANDIDATE OF YOUR PARTY.)

NORTH CAROLINIANS, WHILE ALWAYS RESPECTING  
LEGAL AUTHORITY, HAVE AT THE SAME TIME ALWAYS CHERISHED  
LIBERTY AND REBELLED AGAINST TYRANNY AS EVIDENCED BY  
THE DECLARATION WE COMMEMORATE TODAY, THE HALIFAX RESOLVES,  
AND NORTH CAROLINA'S RELUCTANCE TO RATIFY THE  
CONSTITUTION UNTIL A BILL OF RIGHTS HAD BEEN INCLUDED.  
THE STRONGEST VOICES OF THE REVOLUTION WERE THOSE OF  
NORTH CAROLINIANS AND OF THIS FACT WE MAY ALL BE PROUD.

WE IN THIS STATE, FORTUNATELY, HAVE NOT LOST  
THE VISION OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS, MR. PRESIDENT, AND  
THE LOVE AND RESPECT FOR FREEDOM I KNOW YOU SHARE.

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AN ADMIRER OF FORMER  
PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY AND THE WORDS OF HIS INAUGURAL  
SPEECH STILL RING IN MY EARS. "LET EVERY NATION KNOW,"  
HE SAID, "WHETHER IT WISHES US WELL OR ILL, THAT WE  
SHALL PAY ANY PRICE, BEAR ANY BURDEN, MEET ANY HARDSHIP,  
SUPPORT ANY FRIEND, OPPOSE ANY FOE, IN ORDER TO ASSURE  
THE SURVIVAL AND THE SUCCESS OF LIBERTY. THIS MUCH WE  
PLEDGE — AND MORE."

I WAS AFRAID WE HAD FORGOTTEN THAT PLEDGE,  
MR. PRESIDENT. I WAS AFRAID WE HAD LOST THAT  
DETERMINATION, MR. PRESIDENT, UNTIL <sup>courage</sup> YOUR ACTION LAST  
WEEK TO RECOVER THE AMERICAN SHIP SEIZED ON THE HIGH  
SEAS AND TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO OUR TIRED NATIONAL  
SPIRIT.

YOU HAVE MADE THOSE WORDS OF JOHN KENNEDY  
LIVE AGAIN AND I THINK IT APPROPRIATE THAT WE TAKE  
NOTE OF THAT FACT TODAY AS WE COMMEMORATE THIS EVENT  
WHICH HELPED GIVE LIFE TO THE REVOLUTION AND SET US  
ON THE COURSE WHICH WE HAVE PROUDLY FOLLOWED FOR  
SOME 200 YEARS.

And if I may add Mr President  
we are <sup>also</sup> grateful to you also for  
revitalizing those stirring words inscribed  
on the statute of liberty

"Give me your tired  
your poor  
and your huddled masses  
be free

When you intended our bond  
of fellowship and assistance to those  
who find refugees. <sup>May we as</sup> your demonstrators  
compassionate Americans never <sup>not</sup> forget <sup>to</sup> the world  
that