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UA3/9/5 Veterans Day ROTC Ceremony

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DR. GARY A. RANSDELL
PRESIDENT OF WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
VETERANS DAY ROTC CEREMONY
NOVEMBER 11, 2003

ON MAY 6, 2002, AT THE DEDICATION OF THE GUTHRIE TOWER AND PLAZA, I ENVISIONED THE TOWER BECOMING A SYMBOL OF WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY. ON THAT DAY, I WAS PROUD THAT WESTERN WOULD HAVE AN ENDURING MEMORIAL TO BRAVE VETERANS LIKE SERGEANT FIRST CLASS ROBERT GUTHRIE, WHO GAVE HIS LIFE IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM DURING THE KOREAN WAR. IN RECENT MONTHS, THIS MEMORIAL HAS TAKEN ON ADDDED SIGNIFICANCE AS OUR AMERICAN TROOPS, SOME OF WHOM ARE WKU ROTC ALUMNI, HAVE ANSWERED THE CALL TO DUTY IN BOTH AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ. I AM PROUD TO STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY TO REMEMBER AND HONOR THOSE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN, AND GENERATIONS OF BRAVE AMERICANS WHO ANSWERED THEIR COUNTRY'S CALL TO SERVE.

THE BOWLING GREEN/WARREN COUNTY COMMUNITY HAS A GLORIOUS HISTORY OF PATRIOTISM AND SERVICE. THE ROTC CADETS ASSEMBLED HERE TODAY WILL SOMEDAY RETURN TO THE HILL AS VETERANS. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, THEY WILL MAKE US PROUD THROUGH THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE AND THEIR PASSION FOR THE AMERICAN IDEALS OF FREEDOM AND LIBERTY. I EXTEND MY GRATITUDE TO THE ROTC CADETS FOR
CHOOSING TO CONTINUE THE TRADITION OF COURAGE AND LEADERSHIP ON WHICH THIS NATION WAS FOUNDED. WE MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT THE GIFT OF FREEDOM IS GUARANTEED ONLY AS LONG AS PEOPLE LIKE ROBERT GUTHRIE AND THESE CADETS ARE WILLING TO DEFEND IT ON OUR BEHALF.

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY SAID AT HIS INAUGURATION, "LET EVERY NATION KNOW, 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, TO ASSURE THE SURVIVAL AND SUCCESS OF LIBERTY "

IT IS FITTING THAT WE GATHER AT THIS SPOT, ON THIS DAY, TO HONOR THE MANY MEN AND WOMEN WHO VOLUNTEERED, SERVED, FOUGHT, AND DIED TO CARRY OUT PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S PROMISE OF 1961. LIBERTY HAS SURVIVED AND FLOURISHED IN THE WORLD, AND WE THANK OUR VETERANS FOR THAT.

AT THIS TIME, I AM PLEASED TO INTRODUCE SOMEONE ELSE WHO HAS ANSWERED HIS COUNTRY'S CALL TO PUBLIC SERVICE.

CONGRESSMAN RON LEWIS HAS REPRESENTED THE PEOPLE OF KENTUCKY'S 2ND DISTRICT IN CONGRESS SINCE 1994, FOLLOWING HIS VICTORY IN A SPECIAL ELECTION TO FILL THE SEAT HELD BY THE LATE WILLIAM NATCHE OF BOWLING GREEN. HE HAS EARNED A SEAT ON THE PRESTIGIOUS WAYS AND
MEANS COMMITTEE AND ALSO SERVES ON THE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE AND ITS SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY

WITH HIS HOME NEAR FORT KNOX, KENTUCKY, CONGRESSMAN LEWIS HAS ADVOCATED A STRONG, QUALITY NATIONAL DEFENSE AND HAS WORKED IN CONGRESS TO ENHANCE FORT KNOX'S POSITION AS A PREMIER TRAINING SITE FOR ARMORED TROOPS.

I AM PLEASED THAT HE COULD JOIN US TODAY AS WE HONOR THOSE WHO SERVE OUR COUNTRY AND HAVE SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES SO THAT WE MAY HAVE FREEDOM.

CONGRESSMAN LEWIS WAS HERE AT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GENEROUS GIFT OF THE GUTHRIE FAMILY THAT MADE THIS LANDMARK POSSIBLE, AND HE WAS PRESENT AT ITS DEDICATION. I AM PLEASED TO WELCOME HIM HERE NOW.

PLEASE WELCOME CONGRESSMAN RON LEWIS.