

George Bush

Proclamation 6253 – National Doctors Day, 1991

February 21, 1991

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation by President George Bush

More than the application of science and technology, medicine is a special calling, and those who have chosen this vocation in order to serve their fellowman understand the tremendous responsibility it entails. Referring to the work of physicians, Dr. Elmer Hess, a former president of the American Medical Association, once wrote: "There is no greater reward in our profession than the knowledge that God has entrusted us with the physical care of His people. The Almighty has reserved for Himself the power to create life, but He has assigned to a few of us the responsibility of keeping in good repair the bodies in which this life is sustained." Accordingly, reverence for human life and individual dignity is both the hallmark of a good physician and the key to truly beneficial advances in medicine.

The day-to-day work of healing conducted by physicians throughout the United States has been shaped, in large part, by great pioneers in medical research. Many of those pioneers have been Americans. Indeed, today we gratefully remember physicians such as Dr. Daniel Hale Williams and Dr. Charles Drew, who not only advanced their respective fields but also brought great honor and pride to their fellow Black Americans. We pay tribute to doctors such as Albert Sabin and Jonas Salk, whose vaccines for poliomyelitis helped to overcome one of the world's most dread childhood diseases. We also recall the far-reaching humanitarian efforts of Americans such as Dr. Thomas Dooley, as well as the forward-looking labors of pioneers such as members of the National Institutes of Health, who are helping to lead the Nation's fight against AIDS, cancer, and other life-threatening diseases. These and other celebrated American physicians have enabled mankind to make significant strides in the ongoing struggle against disease.

However, in addition to the doctors whose name we easily recognize, there are countless others who carry on the quiet work of healing each day in communities throughout the United States — indeed, throughout the world. Common to the

experience of each of them, from the specialist in research to the general practitioner, are hard work, stress, and sacrifice. All those Americans who serve as licensed physicians have engaged in years of study and training, often at great financial cost. Most endure long and unpredictable hours, and many must cope with the conflicting demands of work and family life.

As we recognize our Nation's physicians for their leadership in the prevention and treatment of illness and injury, it is fitting that we pay special tribute to those who serve as members of the Armed Forces and Reserves and are now deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm. Whether they carry the tools of healing into the heat of battle or stand duty at medical facilities in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere, these dedicated physicians — along with thousands of nurses and other medical personnel — are vital to the success of our mission. We salute them for their courage and sacrifice, and we pray for their safety. We also pray for all those who come in need of their care. In honor of America's physicians, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 366 (Public Law 101-473), has designated March 30, 1991, as "National Doctors Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 30, 1991, as National Doctors Day. I encourage all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Citation: John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database).