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POLICY COUNSEL

RONALD REAGAN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD PRESENTATION

HONOREE: MR. PAT BOONE

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MR. BOONE: I so greatly appreciate it. I keep flashing back to my earliest days in Nashville, Tennessee growing up when I was, going to be a school teacher, preacher, because in my high school years I was president of the student body I was singing all over Nashville and staying very busy. But I had to think what was I going to study in college? What kind of career do I want? And of course I love singing but I couldn't see that as real good bet for a career. And I remember praying upstairs in the attic of our house, a humble house on Lone Oak Road. I claimed the attic as my room so my brother could have the bed downstairs. I wanted the attic. It was my man cave. We didn't know about man caves then but it was just an unfinished attic and a cot. I could look out the window and I looked up the street around a curve there on Lone Oak Road and I remember praying that God would direct me and use me in some way that was useful in purposeful to him and to others. I didn't know what it would be but I decided that since I was being influenced by Christian teachers and a Christian high school that that would probably be the best way I could count on being able to spend my life. So I started out that way. Now to be here tonight and to be honored by you, an organization that I greatly admire and I'm grateful for, and to have my name in any way associated with this great man is just beyond anything I've ever could have imagined. I was telling him coming here from the airport how much you had enjoyed Love Letters in the Sand and he didn't know this and you may not know this but Love Letters in the Sand was the B side of another record. It was on the other side of a song called Bernadine, my first movie title song. And Johnny Mercer the great songwriter wrote that. And that was the A side. You had to put something on the other side and Randy Wood of Dot Records had had me record this song and he didn't know quite what to do with it. It had been an airplay hit by Bing Crosby years before, another idol of mine. So they put it even in the movie Bernadine. It had nothing to do with the plot just a chance another excuse for me to sing another song. And after Bernadine ran its course on the radio and became a top 10 million selling hit. The DJ's turned it over just to see what was on the other side. And it was Love Letters in the Sand. And as soon as they started playing that the phones lit up and people want to know where they could get that record. It wound up selling almost 5 million copies. And I wish we had known we had to two million sellers on one record. We would've put them out separately. But I just wanted you to know that little bit of trivia.

With your permission, I would like to share some memories. Things that most people have never known kind of insight stuff. things that make this evening and this honor more special than you might have imagined, special to me.

First, my wife and I came to know Ron and Nancy Reagan when our kids were in school together. Now they were 20 to 25 years older than Shirley and I but Ron and Nancy had their kids Ron Junior and Patty at the end I suppose of childbearing capability they didn't have any more after that while Shirley and I had really rushed things having all four of our girls on hand already when I graduated from Columbia University at age 23. Four kids, I was on the cover of

TV Guide with my cap and gown because of the Pat Boone Chevy show on ABC and inside that issue were pictures of Shirley and our four little girls. I should've been jailed or neutered I think. Because poor Shirley we had four kids in 3 ½ years and so we got out of town after I graduated. Moved to California bought a fine house where we still live 53 years later and rode our little girls to the John Thomas Dye School when they got old enough. And that is where and when we met the Reagans with young Ron and Patti who were in classes with several of my daughters. and there were numerous times when after a lovely and lively function involving our kids I would stand with Ron Reagan in front of this roaring fire in the administration building of the very nice little country school and I would hear about his traveling the country delivering what came to be called "the speech" underwritten by GE and electrifying audiences with his deep and passionate understanding of what was wrong with our government and what needed to be done to set it right. And I know his famous statement, "government is not the solution to our problems, government is the problem." And boy is that true. After many chats at school I would, driving home with the girls, say to Shirley, "You know that Ronald Reagan, he ought to run for office. He would make a great congressman, really." His TV show had ended on Death Valley Days sponsored by twenty mule team Borax. And he was not making movies anymore but when he announced that he was running for governor of California, I was immediately on board. But I was almost the only one of his entertainment friends who was. There was no John Wayne there was no Roy Rogers, none of the guys, none of his friends in the rat pack because no one really thought an actor could become governor of California. Eventually during the campaign I was joined in his support by Piper Lauri, Wendell Corey and then old Victor Jory. It was Lauri, Corey, Jory and Boone. It sounded like a bad law firm. And towards the end, Roy Rogers and Wayne did come aboard at the last, of course, he was not only elected but in a big way and he put Pat Brown out of office. And he set about putting his beautifully articulated theories into practice. He turned California around. He defied those rebellious student uprisings on college campuses and generally let folks know there was a professional in charge. And with the help of his kitchen cabinet, a member of that cabinet is here, trained business people and administrators, he demonstrated to the citizens what responsible practical governments could be like. About three years into that first term we shared a deus at a political evening in Palm Springs. And I asked him if governing was what he expected it to be. He said it was a tough job but he mostly enjoyed it and at the hardest part was holding onto his moral guidelines and convictions because so many people in groups that helped elect him and that some naturally expected him to give them things they wanted in return and some of those things were things that Reagan himself couldn't conscientiously grant. So he had those dilemmas. And he gave me an example that I will never forget. He struggled with the issue of abortion. And he knew that in California the liberal bent favored a very liberal permissive stance. He said that he prayed fervently about it asking God for guidance and he finally decided that he opposed abortion except in cases of rape and incest, even when an expected child might be deformed in some way. He came into his office in the morning just before he was to meet the press and state his position. His legal aid, Herb Ellingwood said, "Chief, I want to show you something before you go in there," and he showed Reagan a painting that had come to the office the day before. Reagan told me it wasn't a distinguished or an unusual painting. He didn't consider himself an expert anyway and he asked Herb why he wanted him to see this painting. Herb said, "just thought you'd like to know in light of your decision that this was painted by a man born with no arms." And quietly the governor told me he felt as if God had placed his hand on his shoulder as if to assure him he had made the right call. That was the Ronald Reagan that I knew.

Then came a very dramatic moment during his second term, Shirley and I and several Christian ministers had come to Sacramento to attend a religious rally on a Sunday afternoon and we were invited to the governor's mansion for a visit before we flew back to Los Angeles. Nancy of course the gracious hostess, we had some refreshments, a fun chat with the governor and then just before we left to catch our planes a minister asked if we might have a moment of prayer. Well, sure, Reagan said, and we joined hands in a little circle. And in the midst of that prayer there was a sudden silence, almost awkward. And one of the ministers spoke in a voice we recognized as a prophetic utterance. "My son I am well pleased with you. If you continue to walk uprightly before me you will dwell at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue." Another silence and the prayer concluded and we all of course looked immediately at Reagan. He seemed a little dazed. He said quietly, "Well, that was something." After that I was a Reagan delegate, enthusiastic delegate, from California at the Republican convention in Kansas City in 1976 and I knew he was going to be nominated but instead the convention nominated Gerald Ford. And the next time around Reagan would be 70 years old and it appeared that this prophecy we thought was wrong. After Ford's campaign, we elected a misguided peanut farmer from Georgia. But four years later 70-year-old Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States. I was in Washington, D.C. election night as the results were coming in and I saw Dan Rather and Tom Brokaw reluctantly announcing that it looked like Reagan was winning. I called their home in Pacific Palisades. I had the number still and Ron answered. He told me that he and Nancy had just settled down to watch the returns and I asked if I could be the first to address him as Mr. President. He said, "Well, that may be premature Pat." And I assured him that I had just seen the news announced in D.C. and this is before he had actually heard it. So then I asked him, "Do you remember that afternoon in Sacramento and the word that came in the middle of that little prayer?" He said, "I've thought about that many times in the last two months. That was something."

One more instance, I saw Ronald Reagan do such a courageous thing towards the end of his first term. Still troubled about the whole issue of abortion he determined to make a final deeply thought-out position paper on the whole subject. He wrote a small book called *Abortion and the Conscience of a Nation*. He wrote it himself and had it ready for publication. And as Ed Meese may attest, Mike Deavers, and others pleaded chief, don't do this right now. This is not a wise move regarding the upcoming election. At least wait until after you're elected. Again Reagan said "well, can you guarantee that I will be elected? I think I need to use the bully pulpit while I have it." And that book was published and I have it. And again that was the Ronald Reagan that we know and love.

That book inspired me to mount a pro-life campaign of my own that continues to this day. I have written and recorded songs like *Let Me Live*, the anthem of the unborn child, which was inspired by something in that book. When he said, kind of rhetorically, it is a shame that the one whose life is most irrevocably affected on this matter can't be heard from. And that haunted me and I had what I call a waking vision. Hearing first one and then two and then many hundreds of thousands of children pleading for their own lives at various stages of their development and yet not one had been born yet. And I recorded that song with some children from our church being the voices of the children asking to be able to walk into the sunlight and feel her father's arms around them and feel their mothers love surround them. Be a part of God's creation. Let

them live. And I have held many babies in my arms since then whose young mothers have intended to have abortions and change their minds and hearts after hearing that song which he inspired.

Ron Reagan's life inspired my own forty years of conservative activism. Hundreds of columns for WorldNetDaily, like President Pinocchio, The President without a Country, dealing with the description of the country we don't recognize is no longer a Christian nation perhaps a Muslim nation and we haven't lived up to our morals and it occurred to me that may be like the hero in Edward Everett Hale great novel. He is talking about some other country, not the one that you and I know and love, and so Joe Farah has given me that platform and I have also written a lot of columns for Newsmax, so many appearances in speeches for conservative causes. I'm a member of FOA out there in California, Friends of Abe. And of course I had gotten used to being one of the very few conservatives in the entertainment business, in La La Land, as I like to call it. But now at our last FOA meeting there are almost 2000 members of the entertainment community. That led to another lifetime award from CPAC two years ago, very unusual for an entertainer and I know Ronald Reagan would have applauded. And he would have too when Dick Cheney presented me another lifetime award from Right to Life, they are pro-life champions.

He welcomed Shirley and me to the White House for eight years running with our Easter Seals poster child because I was telethon host for 18 years helping that wonderful organization raise over \$600 million for children with various disabilities, children and adults. And our president then always took pictures with the poster child who was usually on crutches or in a wheelchair and gave presidential jellybeans to him or her as well as a lot of love. Following his example, I have always looked for ways to utilize "celebrity" in campaigns for conservative candidates and causes. Jim Martin, of course, co-founder and one of my heroes, the heroic chairman of 60+ the conservative alternative to the AARP, has repeatedly raised huge funds to support candidates and their races and in the midterm elections of 2010 he enabled me to make seven million robo calls all over America and TV spots as well. We helped elect seventy new conservative congress people to hold the line for constitutional governments. We did that together. Last year we did several million more calls and even my suggestion which was a video email to seniors, largely Christian, imploring them to register and vote since research has shown that about half of those eligible do neither, especially frustrating since obviously that segment of the Republic could win every election if they would just do their constitutional and Christian duty to vote. And I intend to keep pressing this issue for as long as I live because it's more important now than ever.

I too have written and been me making a speech wherever I can. I call it losing liberty and I'm going to sing a song at the end of our program tonight that I had written an answer to the militants atheist Michael Newdow up in Sacramento who is trying to erase the two words "under God" from our pledge of allegiance. He didn't like the fact that his nine-year-old daughter was saying the pledge at school and saying under God being an atheist and he pressed this to the ninth circuit court, the most frequently overturned court in the nation because of their ridiculous decisions and very liberal decisions and so he was pressing that. I met him on Crossfire and we had a little debate, and I said to this guy, "What's your problem? Why do you not want 99% of Americans saying the Pledge of Allegiance as we have since 1954?" "It's unconstitutional." I

said, "Based on what?" he said, "the First Amendment. Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion." I said, "Yeah, go on. What is the rest of that?" "You don't want to say it? I'll say it for you, 'nor restricting the free exercise thereof.' That is the rest of the first amendment." So I had written this song and I'm happy to tell you it went to 15 with a bullet on the Billboard hot 100 singles chart, ironically impeded only by Christmas music that year, and it's called under God and I'm going to sing them for you after a while.

I would like to read just a few words in conclusion from the speech that I've been making whenever I have the opportunity. It is obvious to everyone in this room that our liberties are being taken from us, piece by piece, bit by bit, liberty by liberty. Freedom of religion, speech and the press, we are being taxed into oblivion and this administration has become a de facto dictatorship determined to scrap the Constitution which Obama said in one little bit in his college school record that he has allowed to be seen and known by anybody that he said he felt the Constitution was a flawed document and then in his first campaign said we're going to fundamentally transform America and he set about to do it. He wants to meld us into a socialist one world government. That is the plan and I attribute this unthinkable tragedy and the momentum that it has gained in his administration to two or three things ignorance, flagrant abuse of our freedoms and apathy. And then of course in the speech I go through all three. But then I ask, what can we do? Can lost liberty be regained? And I say emphatically - yes it can. And I call upon every real American to these four things. First of all, care. Be informed, inform yourself about our origins and intentions of our forefathers and then rededicate yourself and your family to being Americans like Jefferson and Madison and Adams and openly exhort your neighbors to do the same. Then act, get involved in local school boards write your representatives and senators and even judges and mayors and governors frequently let them know what you think and that you are watching what they do. Perhaps you can do what my neighbor up the street and I did in 2010. We started the Beverly Hills Tea Party. We have had two big open-air meetings on Sunday afternoons right in front of the big Beverly Hills sign on Santa Monica Boulevard with 500 or more of our neighbors attending with the rabbis and ministers and blacks and whites and Hispanics, Cuban refugees, and even some elected representatives. And we are nonthreatening. The press didn't say anything negative about us and there were no negatives signs or protests. And we were protesting taxation without true representation just like the original Tea Party. And at the very least, for god's sake and Americas future, vote in every election, no matter how inconsequential you may think it is. Countless Americans died to preserve that privilege for us. Don't throw it away as if it had no value to you. And finally and most importantly, pray. Thundering down through the ages come the unrepelled words of the promise God gave to Solomon. If my people who are called by my name, and that is still millions of us in America, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways. I will hear from heaven. I will forgive their sins and I will heal their land, that is 2nd Chronicles 7:14.

I was privileged along with Vonette Bright, Shirley Dobson and a number of others including rabbis and various ministers to be a leader in the group that convinced Ronald Reagan to sign into law, and I didn't know Jim was going to show you a little clip from that day, in perpetuity the National Day of Prayer. That is the first Thursday of May every year. There is a President's prayer breakfast but that is different. But this is the National Day of Prayer, the first Thursday of May on our national calendar. But one day a year, of course, is not enough. You

and I must pray every day privately and publicly that God will restore our liberty, rebuild our national character and that his will will be done on earth and in America as it is in heaven we need to repent personally nationally and cry freedom in his name for as the Bible declares where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. I thank you folks so much for this unforgettable honor.

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