



**President Ronald Reagan's remarks at the  
Presentation Ceremony for the President's Volunteer Action Awards  
April 13, 1983 at the White House**

**NOTE:**

The President spoke at 1:03 p.m. in the East Room at the White House following a luncheon honoring the **Presidential Volunteer Action Award** recipients.

Following the President's remarks, Thomas W. Pauken, Director of ACTION, read the citations for each award, and the President presented each recipient with a **Presidential Medal of Volunteer Community Service**.

The 1983 Presidential Award recipients included 5 individual honorees and 15 volunteer organizations.

**INDIVIDUAL HONOREES:**

1. Thomas W. Dibblee, Jr. (Santa Barbara, Calif.)
2. Frank Ferree (Harlingen, Tex.)
3. **Dr. Joseph Nguyen-Trung Hieu** (Chicago, Ill.)
4. Audrie Megregian (Cocoa Beach, Fla.)
5. Elizabeth O'Donnell (Chicago, Ill.)





## PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY SERVICE:



## AWARDS FOR ORGANIZATIONS:

Alcoholics Anonymous (New York, N.Y.)  
Esther R. Schaeffer (Great Falls, Va.)  
Friends of Handicapped Readers (Jackson, Miss.)  
Hispanic Women's Council (Los Angeles, Calif.)  
Honeywell Corp. (Minneapolis, Minn.)  
Infant Hearing Assessment Program Volunteers (Concord, Calif.)  
Jeremiah Milbank (New York, N.Y.)  
King County AFL-CIO Union Retirees Resources Division (Seattle, Wash.)  
Little Town Players (Bedford, Va.)  
Lupe Anguiano (Staten Island, N.Y.)  
Mayor's Task Force, Frito-Lay, Inc. (Dallas, Tex.)  
Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (Fair Oaks, Calif.)  
Operation California, Inc. (Beverly Hills, Calif.)  
Oregon Food Share (Portland, Oreg.)  
Volunteer Illini Projects (Urbana, Ill.)



## PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN'S REMARKS:

*Thank you very much. Thank you. That's a reversal of what should be going on. I should be applauding all of you.*

*Well, a warm welcome to you all.*

*I don't know how many of you stayed up the other night to watch the Academy Awards. I broke a rule and stayed up past midnight. They never called my name. [Laughter] But at this luncheon today, we're holding our own version of the Academy Awards for volunteer action. And the difference is that for today's awards, the American people are the winners. And that's because, thanks to the efforts and endeavors of our recipients, America's a better and a more generous land.*

*And we're finally starting to recognize the importance of our volunteers. I'm pleased to announce today that the theme of the 1984 Pasadena Tournament of Roses parade will be "A Salute to the Volunteer." So let me congratulate Don Judson, the volunteer president of the tournament, for letting me make that announcement.*

*The historian, Daniel Boorstin, has explained how this continent was settled. And although he may not have realized it, he also explained the motivation behind our award winners. He wrote, "Groups moving westward organized into communities in order to conquer great distances, to help one another drag their wagons uphill or across streams, and for a hundred other purposes. They dared not wait for government to establish its machinery. If the services that elsewhere were performed by government were to be performed at all, it would have to be by private initiative."*

*Well, this frontier spirit made them a strong and a self-reliant people. And that's the attitude of our winners. They don't make excuses; they make headway. And I wish we had time so I could explain in detail what each of our 20 recipients has accomplished and what each has given to the Nation. They are marvelous, inspiring, and unselfish stories. For example, the retired members of King County Labor Council in Seattle, Washington, provide assistance to low-income elderly in the area. They repair plumbing and electrical wiring, replace faulty steps, patch leaking roofs. In fact, while they're here, I wonder -- I've got a leak problem myself. [Laughter]*

*Another recipient is Chicago's Dr. Hieu, who has helped over a thousand Indochinese refugees in Illinois learn English, adjust to our culture, and find employment. Now, these new Americans couldn't have had a better example of what being an American means than Dr. Hieu, in helping them.*





*Candy Lightner founded MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, after one of her own twin daughters was killed in an auto accident caused by a drunk driver. I know the award that we're bestowing today can't match the fulfillment that the members of MADD must feel in having saved lives, nor should it. But the award is the Nation's way of recognizing your humanitarian contributions and all of our recipients' contributions.*

*I'm told there's a German saying: "Two chambers hath the heart, there dwelling live joy and pain apart." Well, our recipients today know both the chambers. Yes, you know the pain of the world, and that's what motivates you, but you also know the joy of helping and the deep sense of fulfillment that flows from such voluntary giving. By your generous, unselfish deeds, you dwell in all our hearts. These awards are a token of our gratitude.*

*Before I present the awards, however, let me thank the National Center for Citizen Involvement and ACTION Advisory Council, as well as the corporate and foundation sponsors for helping to make these honors possible. Bill Verity is sitting there at my table and was the head for a year of the task force that I think did a great deal to inspire and reinvigorate what has been for so many years a tradition of America, and that is, doing things in a neighborly way, not expecting officialdom to come in and do it for you, and appreciate it.*

*And there's another fellow there that I'd just like to have him stand for a second after I tell something. Over a year ago in Chicago I visited a school, and it was a very unusual school. It was a school that was supposed to close its doors. But its principal lived in the school and refused to give up. And I visited that school down in one of the hardest-hit areas of south Chicago and saw these young people in that school and their spirit and their pride, even though the plaster was peeling off the walls. And it was impossible to believe how they could keep it going. The teachers were giving themselves to the point that when lunchtime came, they were handing out and serving the food in addition to teaching their classes and all. And I was so carried away with what I had seen and the determination of all of them to keep this school opened, that I made a phone call before I left Chicago to Clem Stone -- one phone call. And a little less than a year later, I revisited that school -- no broken plaster, a board of governors that read like the Who's Who of the City of Chicago. And Clem Stone, after one phone call, had set them up. They have a scholarship fund. Every graduate of that school last year moved on to college.*

*Clem, just let them see you for a second. He's lived in fear ever since, because he thinks I might make another phone call -- [laughter] -- and this time it would have to do with the deficit. [Laughter]*

*Well, now, if Governor George Romney and Tom Pauken would come up here and please help in assisting in the handing out of these awards.*

*All right. I'll relinquish this to you and -- I've got a chalk mark over here.*

