UNITED STATES SENATE

OFFICE OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

WASHINGTON, D. C.

BOB DOLE

KANSAS

November 23, 1994

Dear Heather,

Thank you for your lovely note and photograph, and, as promised, enclosed is a signed reprint of my remarks on the Senate Floor on October 4th. It was a distinct pleasure meeting you, and I have heard about the wonderful response you have already received as Miss America.

In my view, there is no greater calling than service to others, and you are setting a wonderful example. As the New Testament, in Galatians, reads "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men."

My very best wishes to you and your family throughout the holidays and in the New Year.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

BOB DOLE

Ms. Heather Whitestone

The Miss America Pageant

1325 Boardwalk

Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401

Congressional Record

United States of America

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 103d CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 140 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1994 No. 142

Senate

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW MISS AMERICA

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the remarkable personal odyssey and achievement of the new Miss America, Heather Whitestone.

Miss Whitestone hails from Alabama. She is very much like the other contestants smart and talented.

But the new Miss America also uses a hearing aid. She is the first Miss America with a disability.

Miss Whitestone lost most of her hearing when she was 18 months old. Today, she supplements her very limited hearing by reading lips and using sign language.

But her disability has not held her back, because she and her family have not let it. Miss Whitestone spent 6 years in speech therapy just to learn how to say her name.

Echoing Helen Keller, Miss Whitestone has been quoted as saying, "The most handicapped (person) in the world is a negative thinker." As a child, her mother would tell her that the last four letters of "American" spell "I can."

Anyone who saw Miss Whitestone on television Saturday night saw proof of her mother's wisdom. She gave a moving ballet performance, dancing by sensing the vibrations of the music.

Mr. President, for over 25 years this Nation has pursued a national policy based on ability, not disability; on inclusion; rather than exclusion. It is a policy that has not always been well understood or popular. But it is the right thing, and the crowning of the new Miss America shows it works for people with disabilities and for all Americans. We are better and richer for the contributions of people like Heather Whitestone.

Over the next year, Miss Whitestone plans to reach out to young people, including those with disabilities, to let them know that anything is possible. I know she will bring unique credibility to that message.

Mr. President, every Miss America has a demanding schedule, often traveling 20,000 miles a month to make speeches and for other appearances. It will not be easy for Miss Whitestone. But she has shown she has the right stuff, and we wish her the best of luck and God's speed.

(Handwritten) To Heather Whitestone with warm regards

(Signature) BOB DOLE

(Handwritten) Heather- It was a great pleasure meeting you, and I'm glad to hear things are going so well.

Best. (initialed)

R. ALEXANDER VACHON, Ph.D.

Legislative Assistant

Senator Bob Dole

Kansas

141 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, D. C. 20510

(202) 224-6521

(202) 224-7811 (TDD)