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Remarks by Mr. James P. Grant  
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
at the gathering in remembrance of  
Danny Kaye

New York  
21 October 1987



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Danny Kaye Remembrance . Remarks by Mr. James P. Grant, E

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Детский Фонд Организации Объединенных Наций 联合国儿童基金会 منظمة الأمم المتحدة للطفولة

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New York - 21 October 1987

What a remarkably warm gathering has come together to honour Danny Kaye tonight. The diversity of this distinguished group is but a sampling of the broad spectrum of humanity whose hearts he touched. Many whom he touched are here this evening; many are not. From among those who are unable to be here with us, I would like to read this telegram:

From the Bethesda Medical Center, the Whitehouse

Dear friends,

The President and I send our love and warmest wishes to Sylvia, Dena and everyone attending this special tribute to our friend, Danny Kaye.

What an inspiration he was to not only those he touched with his talent, but the thousands of parents and children of the world for whom he worked tirelessly through UNICEF. His commitment to our most precious resource - our children - will never be forgotten. We miss you Danny, but your influence is still felt world-wide.

Sincerely, Nancy Reagan.

We are all saddened that he is missing from our midst, but it would be virtually impossible to meet for this purpose without sharing some excitement and happiness, as the very thought of Danny Kaye brings a sense of wonderment, and smiles, and the most noble of sentiments.

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I know that all of you are aware of Danny Kaye's tireless and inspiring work on behalf of children as United Nations Ambassador at-large to the World's Children. He set a pattern and a standard of commitment which has since been emulated, not only by our Goodwill Ambassadors such as Liv Ullmann, Peter Ustinov, and Harry Belafonte, but also by millions of volunteers in every country who give of themselves to carry UNICEF's message and to reach out to help bring smiles to children.

Danny Kaye devoted his amazing talents and his boundless energy toward bringing joy to the saddest of children, and in the very act of doing so he attracted broad and caring attention to their plight. In addition, he was an actor, a comedian, a dancer, a singer, a commercial pilot, a symphony conductor, a world class chef, and perhaps above all, a man of great compassion and talent for healing - all of which he brought to UNICEF. His identification with UNICEF was so strong that for many, over the past 34 years, if you said Danny Kaye, you said UNICEF. When UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965, Danny Kaye was among those who went to Oslo to accept it.

Writing on UNICEF's 40th Anniversary just last year, Danny said:

"I believe deeply that children are more powerful than oil, more beautiful than rivers, more precious than any other natural resource a country can have. I feel that the most rewarding thing I have ever done in my life is to be associated with UNICEF. As long as I have the energy and the time, I will continue to devote myself to making a child healthier and happier somewhere in the world."

We see now that his work of spreading health and happiness to the children of the world continues even beyond his own lifetime. Besides the legacy of his films and recordings, there is the effect he has had on generations. He had the ability to inspire hope, and that hope lives on. He has left a better world because he was who he was, and we all - at the United Nations, and at its agency for children: UNICEF - owe him our gratitude.

And now, knowing how much Danny loved children, we have a very special representation of the world's children in the form of the United Nations International School Chorus. 85 students of the Senior House of the school - who come from 22 different countries - will sing a tribute to Danny written especially for this evening, with lyrics by Robert Marcel, to music by Mozart. They will be accompanied by Andre Gribou and Richard Donald Smith, and conducted by Roberta Marcel.

JPG ROLE IN DANNY KAYE MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

- 6:20 As the Executive Director of UNICEF, I would like to welcome to this ceremony in remembrance of Danny Kaye, Mrs. Sylvia Fine Kaye and their daughter Dena, the many distinguished guests from the diplomatic community and from the entertainment world, and the many people who have gathered tonight to honour this great man. Before anyone says anything this evening, we thought you might like to be reminded of Danny's magic.
- 6:34 And now I would like to introduce the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.
- 7:07 JPG statement on Danny Kaye and UNICEF, and introduction of UNIS Senior House Choir.