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(Unedited Transcript)

Thank you. I'd like to thank Alan and Leila and their colleagues at Eisenhower, for bringing us together. Unfortunately, these events are all too rare these days.

I was personally delighted at the sharp exchange between John Carr and Reverend McDonald and Gaddy. Anger, tension, that's good, except we're in an age where we think we have to suppress these emotions, that we can glide across tough issues that have to be negotiated. I must confess that reverends McDonald and Gaddy were fairly persuasive, so that I just sent off yet another check to Barry Lynn (phonetic).

(Laughter.)

You know, the speakers we've heard over the last couple of days have spoken eloquently about the issues that should be included in a progressive agenda. Ideals that Geno embraced and really pushed, whether it was a renewed faith in government, the bridge between the classes, and particularly, listening to white ethnic communities, the real challenge of developing leadership, forging new coalitions, highlighting the issue of poverty, race, and inequality. Organizing at the grassroots, rebuilding solidarity among progressives and like-minded folks. And perhaps even more importantly, speaking out, having the courage to state one's opinions.

Now, we have been privileged, all of us that have been here, to hear the statements and the questions and the discussions. But what about those in Arizona? Or Alabama, or Colorado, or New Hampshire? Indiana, or even Ohio, where Marcy Kaptur operates? They don't have that opportunity. They rarely hear outspoken people whom they can admire, discussing the progressive issues, dealing with issues of poverty, speaking frankly about race and inequality. They need to hear that.

And I was amazed just recently, two weeks ago when I was in Denver, giving a keynote address to the program nonprofit manager at Regis University, and had asked to speak to the activists in town. It was an extraordinary collection of young people of all colors, in their twenties, really agitating to do good work. But they had never met with each other. They weren't talking to each other, and they certainly weren't talking to the foundations. And only a few folks at Regis were mentoring them or keeping them together.

I daresay even with our great progressive allies, that's true in almost every community in this country. They're not getting together, they're not discussing the same issues. So we need to rebuild this informal network of good people who want to see social change in this country spreading, in effect, with Geno's legacy.

We need to send speakers out to all parts of the country, in a controlled way. Somebody - - maybe the Eisenhower Foundation, maybe it's a couple universities or other organizations -- ought to be operating a speakers bureau. The Democratic think tanks couldn't care less, and they're not speaking for those out there, necessarily.

So the dialogue has to happen. It is not happening. And no one, or very few, are convening people around the issues that we all care about.

I just want to mention a couple of issues that have not been talked about very much. The first is that a number of the speakers talked about Geno's love of putting a moral coloring to public policy in the issues he cared about, poverty. And that in fact, he was not about programs. Therefore, we should just think in terms of a moral framework for what we want to do in the future.

I couldn't disagree more with that. That framework is important, but one of the reasons is that Democrats and progressives are in trouble is they have not produced specifics on what they want to do which appeals to the people.

You recall the Kerry campaign. Every issue that came up from health to the war, he said, "I got a plan." Well, we never heard what that plan was. We never heard the details. So I suggest that we have got to have a plan with specifics in it. Now, Stu Eizenstat began to carve out a few specifics and I thought that was good. But I think we have got to pull together what should be an affordable housing plan for this country, whether it's implemented for years from now, or 15 years from now. What we have today is a "no plan." It is the worst public housing policy that we could have, dependent on low income housing income tax credits. That's doing nothing to really build low income housing. We don't care about public housing, except letting it rot. We are not thinking much ahead. And that's got to be true in a number of areas. So I think we have got to be forward-looking, we've got to plan for the future, and we've got to allocate the responsibility for building these particular programs to various organizations around.

I think as progressives, we ought to not delude ourselves that everything the Republicans do is terrible, and that all that Democrats have done is terrific. I mean, no one mentioned that in a strange way, the Carter presidential campaign really set us off on federal-bashing, a precedent that was followed by almost every political leader of both parties since. Which has not helped us at all. It has weakened, undermined the spirit of government.

We have to be realistic about the Clinton administration's non-programs for urban development and anti-poverty. Other than the low income tax credit for working poor, we almost had an urban program that depended upon empowerment zones -- which proved to be illusory and not very effective. We have Title Six and public housing, or Hope Six which I -- mind you, has been at disaster. We've had nothing very much in terms of anti-poverty programs.

So we have to be realistic. Not "Everything Democrats do because they're Democrats" are going to meet the expectations that a Geno Baroni would have had.

Geno, as everybody mentioned, really reached out to the working class, to white ethnic communities. And, I might say, to lower income folks from black, Latino, Indian, and Asian-American communities. Gary Younge probably said it best -- Gary Younge from the "Guardian," that you heard yesterday. Class is the biggest American taboo. We don't like to talk about it.

But it's there, and if you recall when John Edwards campaigned, he talked about two Americas, and immediately was put down by the not-so-great senator from Connecticut, Joe Lieberman, who said, "Oh, that's lousy. That's fomenting class warfare." And his views were suppressed during the Kerry campaign.

Well, there is class warfare. There's five percent against 95 percent, and it seems to me that if we accentuate the differences, the 95 percent can win. So I don't think we ought to hesitate to address the problems of class in this country, the bread-and-butter issues that affect working Americans, low income, working class, middle class, even upper-middle-class. That has got to be stated right out front, and we've got to speak to the communities on that basis.

It is very difficult though to get people to speak out with courage. You know, if you look at our nonprofit community, both foundations and operating nonprofits, we see the issue of class being more widespread than ever. You don't have to read Theodore Scotchball (phonetic) of Harvard to know that nonprofit organizations have become upperclass in nature. There's been a transformation of nonprofits from membership-led, grassroots organizations to professionally-run nonprofit organizations. Professionals are dominating these groups. So there's a need to "democratize." How do you invigorate the grassroots membership, who are now members because they pay dues, and aren't really involved? And if you look at foundations, the most elitist institutions in this country, 73,000 of them, you see that as a lead institutions, they're increasingly getting the responsibility by default for the abdication of government from responsibility for the social safety net.

We have entrusted Marie Antoinette of philanthropy to care for our poor, our starving, our homeless, and our folks at risk. And as, in fact, the foundations get huge with the transfer of billions, trillions of dollars, we're going to have the Gates Foundation, the Waltons Foundations, and the Buffet Foundations, with almost a hundred billion dollars, using public funds, tax funds, to make public decisions, without a public process, by two or three family members.

And if that's not overwhelming in class distinction, I don't know what is.

Well, Geno's life really reflected the issue of leadership. We all moan today, Where is Geno? Where is Paul Wellstone? Among corporate people, where is John Filer (phonetic)? In philanthropy, where is Paul Ilvasocker (phonetic)? Where is Kingman Brewster, the great president of Yale who fought for civil rights openly? Where are the John Gardners who collected 100 corporate CEOs to fight for welfare reform in the Nixon days?

These leaders are nowhere to be seen. Today's leaders are -- at least I can speak a little for the nonprofit sector -- absent. We lost a lot of fine people over the last 15 years. People of commitment, zeal, passion, wanting to make change. They haven't been replaced by commensurate quality or dedication.

So we have a crisis of leadership, and I submit that we have a crisis of leadership in the philanthropic world. There isn't one -- I've said this before publicly -- there isn't one leader among all the major foundations in this country; people who write, think, are passionate about what they do; can lead others. We have got to fill that gap and we have got to begin developing leadership, as Geno would have done.

Somebody said before that mentoring is crucial, and that is true, and that is something that Geno did as well as anybody that I've ever run across. And you ought to look at Marcy Kaptur, and all the folks that he raised and groomed, to know that.

Marcy mentioned an example of the head of a -- I think it was a Catholic hospital, who went into political leaders, and was afraid to state what their problem was, they needed money and they needed support. And that is true. When you think about the Gingrich contract with or on America, when you think about the issue of the repeal of the estate tax, when you think of some of the budget issues, where were the nonprofits? Nowhere. It was what we call the "silence of the nonprofit lambs." Nowhere to be seen.

And yet, nonprofits have an enormous potential for legislative activity, for lobbying. About one and a half percent of all nonprofits at the local, state, and national levels actually exercise their legal right to lobby. And that at an average of \$8,000. And when you think of the billions of dollars that corporate America spends on lobbying, you know how much nonprofits are at a disadvantage. So how do you raise leadership? How do you develop it? How do we socialize our young people to be so gutless? To think only of themselves, to be one-issue focus, not to be able to join coalitions? And I don't know what the answer to that is, but clearly, universities and colleges are not fulfilling their mission. They can do a heck of a better job. Most universities and colleges stand for little or nothing, their CEOs reduced to being fundraisers, their involvement in community very little or totally absent.

And we've seen some of the excesses of some university presidents and hierarchies. The American University scandal, which you've read about. And which ended terribly. We've got a president who literally stole money from the University in benefits and commendation, while students couldn't afford the tuition and professors were getting a minimal increase, getting paid off \$4.7 million to leave.

You heard yesterday from someone about the Georgetown students -- I'm happy to say, and I think Father Drinan and I are proud of them -- who organized a living wage coalition over a three-year period to get the lowest income employees decent wages and benefits. They won, but if truth be told -- and E.J. unfortunately missed the boat on that one -- they won not because of administration's support, but in spite of it. They won because they were willing to go on a hunger strike for nine days, drinking just water. And eventually the administration capitulated.

The administration should have been supporting civic engagement of our kids. That's how they can become leaders. That gives them the experience to go out in the communities, become political, whatever the party, whatever their partisanship.

And I'm happy to say, they're now barnstorming the country, meeting with students in all campuses to argue for a living wage. Now those are students who are to be championed, who are to be given a pat on the back instead of saying, "Gee, you know, you're lucky you won that one."

The same thing with the folks at Regis, another fellow Jesuit University out in Denver. They are really mentoring young activists, and encouraging them -- at least those in the nonprofit program -- to go out and become active.

And you wonder, why shouldn't they in fact urge every student to register and vote? That should be said in every classroom. Certainly at the graduate level in public policy, where I am. Why shouldn't there be a voting booth or two on every college campus in the country? If the Democrats want to get some more votes, that's a good place to get them.

Unfortunately, many of our academic centers are not doing a particularly good job. We're training budget analysts, technicians, low-vision managers instead of leaders, people with a sense of politics and coalition building, and advocacy.

And you know, when you think about Geno, who was for sustainability and development in the neighborhoods, we have to remember that he was not only championing CDCs, doing buildings, and mortar, and bricks. He was also championing advocacy. That is, taking on public policy issues. Challenging institutions about their performance. And we have to remember that that's really important. Geno was about advocacy as well as physical rebuilding.

Now, how can in fact we come away from here with what Geno always felt, was that talk by itself leads to nothing, but talk that leads to action is the way to go? There are several ways. Joe McNeeley, years ago when he was a member of the neighborhood coalition, suggested a National Endowment for Neighborhoods, remember that, Joe?

Well, we can call it what we want. It can be a National Endowment for Communities. It can be a National Endowment for Cities and -- whatever. It is time to resurrect that, because quite honestly there is no money now that used to be for building the capacity of grassroots organizations in rural and urban areas. And that should be a legislative agenda. It may not pass three years from now, could pass 10 years from now, or six years from now, and we ought to take a cue from Republicans who after the Goldwater defeat got together and said, "How are we gonna build agendas 30 years from now?" An endowment for neighborhoods is one way.

Opening-level jobs -- and as many of you know, particularly who work at universities -- in the nonprofit area are scarce. Students with big loans can't afford to take 20,000, \$25,000 salaries, and no benefits. And nonprofits, under tremendous budget pressures, often can't pay more. Well, as I say to some of my Jesuit friends at Georgetown -- who don't like to hear this, but the only way to do it is by artificially inseminating the field.

And that is that we've got to subsidize opening-level jobs for two or three years, too capable young people, not only in school or graduating school, but out of school, with mentoring nonprofits across the country at the state, local, and national level. And those ought to be done, and we can call them the Baroni fellowships, some of them, and it can be done by foundations nationally, it can be done locally, it can be done regionally, but foundations thus far have refused to invest their money in young people. That is one of the best ways we could get terrific young people nurtured into the grassroots, getting leadership jobs in the future.

In addition, there should be several Baroni centers in academic settings in this country. And there's no reason why Georgetown or Regis, or some of the others -- my alma mater, Princeton -- shouldn't have those, to remind people of what Geno stood for. And it seems to me, with some of the foundations, particularly Catholic foundations, there ought to be money for that. So we ought to be able to do that.

Now Geno would have loved these conversations, and he would have chided us I think to walk away with a serious thought about how to move on, but also to continue those conversations. I think it would be disrespectful to him and to the Eisenhower Foundation

if we were to drop this conversation. I think the dialogue has to continue. We've got to take steps for action, and one final thing, a story about Geno, and philanthropy.

No one associates Geno with any concern about foundations, but as one of the founders of the watchdog group over foundations, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, I was proud to be a co-creator with whom? Geno Baroni. He was one of the co-creators. And I remember him when we went to our first meeting of the major foundations, to raise money, and he said beforehand, "Shall I wear my collar?"

And we all said, "Yeah, you got to wear your collar, right."

And he got up there sometime during this meeting of the top heads of all the major foundations and did his crazy Joe McNeeley drawing of squares, and arrows, and circles, and the foundations there were absolutely entranced, but totally mystified. Two of them actually gave us a substantial money, for the times, and enabled us to get NCRP off the ground, it still exists, and a couple of the foundation people called me up afterward and said, "You know, I don't know what Geno said, but he sure said it with passion and conviction, and it really had an impact on us."

So one of the challenges we have in 0288trying to get sustenance for neighborhood groups, for CDCs, for advocacy, is a force in the foundation world that has not changed one iota in the last 40 years -- the priorities are the same. They're hesitant to fund advocacy, they don't like to fund local grassroots organizations, even though when you look at the history of nonprofits in this country, nonprofit advocacy has been the source of every major social and institutional change in this country, every one of them. You can even go back to the rural populism folks, you can go back to Social Security, the Granges, the GI Bill, all that has been nonprofit activity. So there needs to be some renewed pressure, both by faith-based organizations and secular nonprofits, to put the heat on philanthropy, and to join the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, for trying to get a bigger piece of the pie, going to the constituencies that deserve them most.

Anyway, I look forward to joining everybody here in a move to some sort of action, whatever it be, because I think that's what Geno would have wanted. Thank you.