

DONALD B. MARRON

Thank you very much Arthur. Marvelous comments. And now, I reintroduce to you Rabbi Schneier, who will present the award to our next Honoree.

RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER

Distinguished guests, Senator Pell, Ambassador Walters, your Excellencies, you Graces, Arthur Ross spoke about conscience, and this reminds me of a story that both Dr. Read, Angie Duke, and Father Campion experienced during our fact-finding mission to Ireland, Northern Ireland in 1970, at the very beginning of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation. We did not wish to remain silent. We wanted to do our share to help end the bloodshed. And so, we travelled as a team to London, to Dublin, to Belfast--and in Belfast, we heard this story. A department store was attacked by a group of demonstrators, and they were ready to launch the attack when the owner of the department store came out and said, "There must be a mistake. I'm a Jew. Why do you attack my store?" And the leader of the demonstrators said, "Are you a Catholic Jew, or a Protestant Jew?" (laughter) Now, as I look into the audience tonight, we don't take sides. We do take sides for human dignity, religious freedom, and for every man and woman to practice his or her faith according to his or her conscience. And this has been the history of our foundation from its inception. Miracle of miracles, who would have thought when

Frank Dorn, and David Read, and Harold Bosley, and Thurston Davis and I first started that first mile journey that twenty-two years later the Appeal of Conscience Foundation would honor one of the distinguished sons of the Peoples Republic of China. Who would have thought then, in 1965, that last year, my friend Ambassador Dubinin of the Soviet Union would be with us prior to going to the airport to fly to Rekyevik in order to participate in the summit meeting. We live in very exciting times. We are, thank God, closer to an agreement between Moscow and Washington of eliminating these immediate nuclear weapons, and China and Washington are closer tonight they have been at any time since the revolution that created the People's Republic in 1949. And this can be achieved through patience and perseverance. And I must tell you friends, that it is our firm conviction that religious communities in every country have a role to play in bringing about mutual understanding and better cooperation. And it is the leaders of those communities and countries who understand what religious forces can do, and take advantage of, realize the important contribution that believers can make to peace and international understanding. Obviously, I do not speak of the fanatics. I speak about people who believe in God, who believe in humanity, who believe in civilization, just as Arthur Ross and Dr. Rong Yiren, and all of you who are here this evening. And, this has been the basic task of the foundation: To convince leaders all over the world to utilize the greatest asset we have--men and women who believe in God, and who want to preserve this world in peace. And so, it was an

unusual privilege in February of this year, when I addressed the forum in Moscow of religious leaders, and it was an unusual privilege when the inter-faith Appeal of Conscience Foundation arrived first on the scene in Bei Shing, in 1980, when the now Ambassador of China, Ambassador Hun Chi was director of the USA office, as our initial contact. Churches and temples were closed during the cultural revolution. What a horrible mistake. But we saw them reopened, slowly and gradually. Then, when we returned in '83 and '86, we entered into contacts and relationships with the People's Republic of China. And, I'm delighted to tell you that last year, for the first time, we have two Chinese scholars studying religious life in United under our auspices--an eclectic table at Georgetown University, at Salt Lake City, with the Mormon community, at Princeton, Harvard, Yeshiva University, in order for them to understand what religious life is all about in America. And, I'm so pleased to tell you that right here, we have our Chinese scholar from the Academy of Social Sciences, who is spending a year with us, Professor Jau, a leading authority of Christianity and Judaism, spending his studies at Harvard University under our fellowship and scholarship. Miracle of miracles, the changes are taking place, and religious communities can certainly contribute to these changes. And, this is why we are particularly honored that Dr. Rong Yiren, the first citizen of the People's Republic of China to receive this distinguished award. I met Dr. Rong Yiren in his magnificent office. And, I am sure Dr. Hammer had occasion to do likewise. And Mr.

here is a man who has never forgotten his roots, has never forgotten his nation, has served as Vice Mayor of Shanghai, as Vice Chairman of the National Federation of Industry and Commerce, hold now the most outstanding and prestigious office as a Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress. And, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to read to you a message from the Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China, Wan Li, addressed to our guest of honor: "Greatly pleased to learn that you have the honor to earn the 1987 Appeal of Conscience Award, and I hereby extend to you my warmest congratulations." And this is from the Vice Premier representing the Chinese government: "You have long been noted for your rich experience in economic work. For the past eight years, or more, since China opened to the outside world, you have done a tremendous amount of work in developing foreign economic and technological cooperation, thus making contributions to the Socialist modernization of the nation. I feel happy from the bottom of my heart, and wish you new success in your future endeavors." And from Vice Premier Hale's: "Dr. Rong Yiren, for the positive role in promoting mutual understanding and enhancing friendship between nations throughout the world, and Dr. Rong, this is what the appeal of Conscience is all about. We want to build a better world, for all of us. And, the only side we take is the side for human survival, for peace and human survival. And, as we enter the twenty-first century, we say, "To life, and not to death." That is our objective. And, if we utilize that God-fearing element, that spark of the divinity in all of us,

then we will be able to succeed in all our endeavors. When we offered you the award, and we spoke in the office, you said to me, "Rabbi Schneier, I am not a religious man." And if you recall my answer to you, I said that prayer and religion without action, without doing, are hollow, meaningless, and empty. You believe in shortcuts. You do it your way. You do it through deed, through action, in building a better world. For this we salute you tonight. And so, we say to your beloved wife, that wonderful childhood sweetheart--we had the pleasure at Don Marron's the other night, having a leisurely dinner with Dr. and Mrs. Rong, and I had the pleasure of sitting next to Mrs. Rong, and as a Rabbi, I'm always interested in the past, and family and background, so, I wanted to know how did you meet your husband? And, would you believe it, it was a marriage arranged in heaven. The two families got together, and a fourteen-year-old and a nineteen-year-old made it, not through the modern way, but through a match-maker, an introduction. And they have been blessed with a wonderful son, four daughters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. And you see many, many members of that wonderful family here, committed to their ancestors, to their roots. And so, we say to you (and I wish I could speak Chinese as well as I do Hungarian, but maybe the day will come)--we say Shay Shay, for being an inspiration, and we say Jen Kon Chung Cho, which means good health and long life with your wonderful family. God bless you. (applause) I will ask our dedicated Chairman, my dear friend, Ambassador Duke to join me. I would also like Mrs. Arthur Ross to please rise, and

Mrs. Rong to please rise, and let us first give an applause to both ladies. (applause) It must be very exciting to live with two such great men of dedication, inspiration, and talent. May it continue for years to come. God bless you both. Now, this glass is a Steuben glass, and, Ambassador Walters, this afternoon told me he has gotten so many different awards, but he loves the Appeal of Conscience Award best. No bronze plaques, no citations, it's a beautiful inscription with the inscription: "More things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of." And so, we present this award to you, Dr. Rong. Enjoy it in good health--long life with your wonderful family. (applause) May I just for one minute call upon all the past recipients to join me in saluting Arthur and Dr. Rong Yiren. Will you just step forward. All the past recipients, Carroll and Milton Petrie, Dr. Hammer, Paul Volcker, Angey. Dr. Ross, where are you? John Mosler, Chairman of our Advisory Counsel. What is exciting is that not only do these men do these men and this wonderful lady received their award, but they're with us and they're here tonight, and therefore, we want to salute all of you, and we salute you again as rich builders for peace and international understanding, and may I recommend that you read Dr. Hammer's book. Paul Volcker is about ready to publish, I'm sure, and Carroll and Milton, their humanitarian service, and John Mosler, you're always safe with good old John, and Angie Duke, our dedicated Chairman who has given, I would say, his entire life to our nation. (applause)