

**Miss Washington Pageant
After Pageant Celebration
July 5, 2014
(As prepared)**

A big congratulations to our new Miss Washington, Kailee Dunn.

Given all of her talents I am confident she will make our state proud over the next year. Thank you too to all of the contestants who competed from across our great state.

Everyone who has taken part, including the judges and volunteers, has put in many, many hours to bring this incredible event to what we saw tonight. Of course we'd also like to thank Reina Almon, our Miss Washington 2013, for her outstanding year of service.

I know Reina did many things over the course of her reign, but one that I am particularly pleased with is the partnership she entered into with the Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking. This partnership gave her an opportunity to travel to schools across the state and talk about all of the thousands of messages that are bombard our youth each day in relation to alcohol and the impact these ads are having on encouraging use of among young people. Reina also spent her year visiting children's and veterans hospitals, volunteering with non-profit organizations and appearing at various charity events.

She and all of our past Miss Washingtons have shown that this scholarship pageant isn't really about beauty; it is about being a good ambassador and a positive role model for our young people. It's about making a difference in our communities and showing us all that success isn't always about money and friends but about making a lasting and positive impression on everyone you ever meet.

Back when I was growing up – in the 50s and 60s – America was a much different place with open discrimination toward people of color, different attitudes toward women, great fears of the growing threat of communism and an ongoing Cold War. Civil rights issues were put in the forefront of our national political debate. Protests against the Vietnam War were commonplace. Whole movements were started that never existed before. People learned how to stand up and stand their ground on many issues that were important to them.

What all that lead to is a renewed sense of purpose and a value for our freedom. Isn't it great that the Miss America Pageant has grown with our nation? Yesterday we celebrated the passing of 238 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. We celebrate that America is still, after all of these years, a place where we value not only our individual

freedoms but the right for everyone no matter who they are to stand up, speak freely and having equal freedom to strike their place in the world.

Those who take part such as our Miss Washington pageant have all been selected by their communities because of their potential to move on to become Miss America and represent the diverse and free country that we are. We can all be very proud of the Miss Washington pageant and all who have been a part of it.

Thank you.