

images — of Washington crossing the stormy Delaware; of the Continental Army in the freezing snow at Valley Forge; of Cornwallis surrendering at Yorktown; and of the refreshing, new world diplomacy that our nation's representatives, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay, brought to the sophisticated councils of Europe.

In celebrating Ratification Day, we celebrate the birth of a nation whose unity and courage was tested in battle; a nation whose diplomatic skill was proven in Paris. Ratification Day symbolizes the culmination of one great effort — to be a united free nation — and the beginning of another — to stay free and united. Maryland and Marylanders have shared in this story, too. Fort McHenry and Antietam are monuments on our soil. So is the memory of our men who have died in subsequent wars on foreign soil and who die today in Vietnam.

For with Ratification of the Treaty of Paris, the United States of America not only assumed its place among the nations of the world but assumed all the burdens and responsibilities of freedom and independence. And I believe we can all agree that our nation has met its responsibilities and carried its burdens with honor; that each generation has produced its share of great men to confront the great and often terrifying events which have challenged our nation.

The fact that it was in this city of Annapolis and in this State House that Ratification occurred has not failed to touch each of us who lives and works here. As our nation and our State each day must face problems that, at the moment, seem insurmountable — our living history provides comfort and confidence. Last year, as I received congratulations upon my inauguration as Maryland's Governor, the fact that I was standing in the room where Jefferson and Washington once stood was not lost on me.

The past is prologue to the future and the history that abounds about us in Annapolis does influence and inspire us. Historic Annapolis, our capital's untiring historical and preservation society, merits the recognition and gratitude of all our citizens for its efforts to save the best architecture of three centuries, and to guide Annapolis's growth so that our proud past is merged with — but not submerged by — our dynamic present.

The Maryland Department of Economic Development deserves special recognition, too, for it originated the first Ratification Day ceremony several years ago. Its members and those of Historic Annapolis are responsible for today's program and it is to their joint credit that we have met to commemorate this historic event.