

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BREAKFAST WITH ELI MANNING, 2008 SUPER BOWL CHAMPION AND MEMBER OF THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS, AND ADMIRAL STEVEN GALSON, ACTING SURGEON GENERAL SUBJECT: THE OBESITY EPIDEMIC IN THE UNITED STATES MODERATOR: JERRY ZREMSKI, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LOCATION: HOLEMAN LOUNGE, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, WASHINGTON, D.C. TIME: 10:00 A.M. EDT DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2008

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(Note: This event was fed in progress.)

MR. ZREMSKI: (In progress) -- introduce our head table guests and ask them to stand briefly when their names are called.

From your right, Chuck McCutcheon, news editor of Newhouse News Service, which serves the New Orleans Times-Picayune, which is Eli Manning's hometown paper.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yea! (Soft laughter.)

MR. ZREMSKI: Yea! (Chuckles.) Doug Harbrecht, new media director of Kiplinger.com, a past NPC president and lifelong New York Giants fan.

DOUG HARBRECHT: Go, Giants! (Soft laughter.)

MR. ZREMSKI: (Chuckles.) Susan Heavey, health reporter for Reuters; Dr. Dot Richardson, vice chair of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports -- (scattered applause) -- two-time Olympic gold medalist in softball.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Off mike.) (Laughter.)

MR. ZREMSKI: (Chuckles.)

Jeff St. Onge, editor of Bloomberg News and longtime leader of the National Press Club softball team.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Off mike.) (Laughter.)

MR. ZREMSKI: (Chuckles.)

Admiral Steven Galson, acting U.S. surgeon general, who will speak after Eli Manning's speech.

Skipping over the podium, Angela Greiling Keane, the chair of the National Press Club Speakers Committee.

Skipping over our speaker for just one minute, Melissa Charbonneau, vice chair of the Speakers Committee and White House correspondent for CBN News, and the organizer of today's breakfast.

John Burke, chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, president of Trek Bicycle Corporation. (Scattered applause.)

Kelly Wright, Washington correspondent for Fox News Channel; Ken Herman, White House correspondent for Cox Newspapers; and Kevin Roach, executive producer for AP Online Video. (Applause.)

While growing up in the 1970s, I spent every autumn Sunday glued to the television, watching the New York Giants, at least two out of every three games that they played. (Laughter.) And it never got worse than it did in 1978, when the Giants' quarterback, Joe Pisarcik, decided that instead of taking a knee and ending the game to seal a victory over the Eagles, he'd hand the ball to Larry Csonka instead. Csonka fumbled, and Herman Edwards of the Eagles picked up the ball and ran it in for a touchdown, sealing Pisarcik's place in Giant history.

I watched enough of Joe Pisarcik to know Joe Pisarcik. Joe Pisarcik was no friend of mine, and our guest today is no Joe Pisarcik. (Soft laughter.) Eli Manning won the Most Valuable Player Award in this year's Super Bowl, guiding the Giants to an astounding upset over the then-undefeated New England Patriots. He brought the Giants back from behind in the fourth quarter, leading the team down the field with laser-sharp passes and a cool confidence that seems to run in the family.

Indeed, Eli is just the latest great quarterback named Manning. I remember watching his dad, Archie Manning, outperforming the dismal New Orleans Saints team that surrounded him back in the 1970s. And of course Eli's brother Peyton Manning, last year's Super Bowl MVP

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AUDIENCE MEMBER: Go, Colts! (Soft laughter.)

MR. ZREMSKI: -- long ago established himself as one of the greatest quarterbacks of all time.

But Eli Manning is not here today to talk about football. He's here to discuss something much more important: the nation's obesity epidemic. The statistics are staggering. Two out of every three adults in America is overweight. More than half of adults and two-thirds of children in grades nine through 12 don't exercise enough.

And Manning wants us all to do something about it. Drafted in 2006 to serve on the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, Manning is here today on behalf of the president to launch a nationwide six-week fitness challenge. The Super Bowl champion is urging 1 million Americans to get off the sidelines and back in the

game, and after today's breakfast, Mr. Manning will head to the White House to meet with the president to launch this effort.

Today, here at the Press Club, he is joined by several members of the fitness council and by the acting U.S. surgeon general, Steven Galson, who will outline the scope of the child obesity problem here in America.

Given the importance of the topic and my gratitude to the speaker for his Super Bowl performance, this is one handoff that I certainly don't want to fumble. So let me just say let's all welcome Eli Manning to the National Press Club. (Applause.)

MR. MANNING: Thank you, Jerry.

It's great to be here at the National Press Club. I know this is a special year for the club, as you're celebrating your 100th anniversary. I'd have to say 2008 has been a pretty fair year for me also. (Laughter.)

Between winning the Super Bowl last month, getting married next month and having the President's Challenge in between, I'd say I have my hands full. (Laughter.)

Before I get started on the President's Challenge, I'd also like to recognize a few people who've -- just for their hard work and dedication they've put towards getting this challenge started. First off, I'd like to, you know, recognize Acting Surgeon General Admiral Steven Galson again for his hard work. And then I'd like to recognize a few of the other council members who serve with me: first, John Burke, who chairs the council; Dr. Dot Richardson, our vice chair; and some people in the audience -- Denise Austen, you've heard her talking a few times, I think -- (laughter) -- Dr. Lillian Greene-Chamberlain; Dr. Edward Laskowski, I think I said that right, hopefully; Jerry Noyce; and Executive Director Melissa Johnson. (Applause.)

I'd also like to recognize a special friend on the council, and that's Joe Moore of the International Health, Racquet and Sports Club Association. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

I'm here today because the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports is calling on all Americans to join the first national President's Challenge, a six-week program to get a healthier nation. The President's Council goes back to 1956, when the goal was to get kids moving. Over the years it has expanded to sports, exercise and fitness, and really to get the nation -- get this into a healthier nation. It has also expanded to include Americans of all ages, not just kids. Anyone can be a part of this. Many of the nation's top athletes and sports figures have been a part of this council: Arnold Schwarzenegger; Olympians Dorothy Hamill, Florence Griffith-Joyner and Jackie Joyner-Kersey; basketball star Magic Johnson; and NFL legends Lynn Swann and Roger Staubach.

When the president asked me to serve on the council, I was happy to accept. I've been lucky that sports has been an important part of my family. Growing up, my dad always promoted sports because he believed that it built character. It employed leadership, teamwork

and discipline. Today for the first time, the president is calling on all Americans to join the first national President's Challenge.

President George Bush asked me to read this message to you: "I send my greetings to those participating in the 2008 National President's Challenge. Health and fitness are personal responsibilities and should be important goals for our citizens. Regular physical activity, good nutrition and healthy choices can help reduce the risk of many serious health problems such as obesity, asthma and diabetes. By encouraging Americans to exercise for 30 minutes a day, five days a week for six weeks, the President's Challenge is helping children and adults develop the habits necessary for a healthy lifestyle. I appreciate the participants of the President's Challenge for your dedication to physical fitness. Your efforts set a fine example for others and contribute to a healthier future for America. Laura and I send our best wishes."

Whether you're a Super Bowl champ or an armchair quarterback, this is for you. You can do this. Anyone can do this. Here is basically what the challenge is: if you're an adult, 30 minutes of physical activity a day. It can be anything from walking to sports to even gardening, you know, five days a week for six weeks. That's 30 minutes a day, five days a week, for six weeks. For kids, it's 60 minutes of activity a day.

Today in New York City, a group of wounded warriors will launch the challenge with a 30-minute walk to Battery Park.

President's Council member Kirk Bauer is leading the charge. They are disabled veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq. We honor and join them today as we take the challenge off together.

If you have questions about how do you get involved, the easiest way is to log on to Presidentschallenge.org. It's a simple website. It'll describe everything you need to know, but again, the main -- principal concept is 30 minutes of activity a day, five days a week, for six weeks between now and May 15th. The site really tells you everything and gives you ideas of different activities that you can do.

And when you sign up, make sure you put your state in, because we'll be tracking all the people from each state, and whichever state has the most people will win. It's a little challenge we'd like to -- a little competition we'd like to get in. We'll name the winner of that state at the end of the contest.

Different ideas you can do to join. You can join up with a friend. You can join up with co-workers. Ideas for the exercise and the activity is, instead of taking the elevator, take the stairs; ride your bike to school or ride your bike to work; join a sports team. Instead of taking a long lunch break, take a long walk break. There's a lot of different ideas that count towards this activity. The registration ends on April 3rd, so basically you have two weeks to sign up.

I'm going to throw a pass to you, and I hope you take it in. I'm challenging everyone today to join the first National President's Challenge.

I'd like to now turn it over to Admiral -- Acting Surgeon General Admiral Steven Galson. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

ADM. GALSON: Good morning, everybody. I am really, really thrilled to be here.

And you've given me a great opportunity, Eli. I can finally tell my teenagers at home -- and one of them is right here with me today, Victor -- that I took a handoff from Eli Manning. (Laughter.) I didn't fumble. I succeeded in making the point after. And I know enough about football -- probably not enough, but enough to know that making that last point is really, really important. And of course, we can't all be like Eli. We can't all be in the Super Bowl, be champions. But we can all participate in what you've heard about. We can all participate in the National President's Challenge.

The challenge is a wonderful way to take the ball and run with it towards the really achievable goal of having a healthier America, reducing the epidemic of childhood obesity and the epidemic of obesity in this country that threatens our entire public health of this country and is really spreading around the world as well. And that's really why I'm really very happy to have obesity and prevention of obesity being the top priority of the Office of the Surgeon General.

This epidemic is real and it is reaching really scary proportions particularly in our young people. The effects are enormously profound. Today, more than 12.5 million children -- that's 17 percent of all the children in the U.S. in adolescence -- are obese or overweight between the ages of 2 and 19 -- 17 percent.

What's really scary is that this is up from 13 percent in 1999, just over those last eight years. Excess body fat leads to a higher risk for premature death. And I know this is always risky to do during a meal, but I know none of you ate that entire plate of breakfast. It causes Type 2 Diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, arthritis. The list goes on.

We, in the federal government, first identified this as a priority over seven years ago, when the Office of the Surgeon General put out a call to action to prevent childhood obesity. And seven years later, the stakes are still extremely high. And many would argue the stakes are even higher than they were then.

And that's why I'm really thrilled to lead a coordinated federal effort. I'm chairing a Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future initiative. And that is designed to focus on the idea that our children, our youth, are our future. And if we don't invest in thinking about this problem and taking action against it at every level, we're not going to make progress.

So the initiative is really critical. We've got to give visibility to this issue. We all have to talk about it, encouraging collaboration at all levels not just of government. Community

organizations, faith based organizations, every level of our society has acknowledge this problem. Last night, I came back from a couple-day trip in Miami. And I was really, really lucky down there that I got to spend time with Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros, who's the secretary of Health for the State of Florida and one of the three state surgeons general in the United States -- the one from Florida.

Is anybody here from Florida?

(Cheers.)

Yeah. (Laughter.)

The people of Florida and Miami-Dade County and Dr. Viamonte Ros are really dedicated to taking this problem on and figuring out what they can do to improve the diet and the health of the people in Florida.

I visited a middle school in Miami Beach, Nautilus Middle School. Go Sharks, if they're listening to me now. That's their team. And they have installed a fitness center in the middle school that has the state of the art fitness equipment, including Dance Dance Revolution, that we've all seen, other games that enable kids to have fun while they're getting exercise, while they're also participating in team sports. So that was really, really impressive.

I also got a chance in Miami to meet with the surgeon general of the state of Arkansas, Joe Thompson. And Joe Thompson has taken on this issue in the state of Arkansas. And Arkansas has one of the highest levels of childhood obesity in the country. He's taken this on as one of his key missions, and really, really impressive focus. I'm going to be traveling to other places in the country, to North Carolina, to Philadelphia, and I know that I'll hear about the activities taking place in those cities, in those states, that are making a difference here.

A key component of our work to promote physical activity is connected to the work of the President's Council for Physical Fitness. The council was established as the President's Council on Youth Fitness by President Eisenhower after the president learned the reports of -- a really disturbing report indicating that American children were less fit than European youth. He envisioned the council as a catalytic agency that would educate, stimulate, motivate and encourage local communities and all Americans to promote and adopt healthy lifestyles. In 1986, another president, Lyndon Johnson, broadened the council to include the mission of sports and changed the name to the current name, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. He believed that participation in sports, just like we heard from Eli, is really an important part of physical fitness and character development.

Our current president, George W. Bush, signed an executive order in 2002 announcing an reinvigorated council and reaffirming its role in advising and assisting the secretary of Health and Human Services in expanding national awareness about the importance and the health benefits of physical activity and sports.

For 50 years the council has been active. I've participated in council activities and awards when I was in grade school. This original vision to serve as a stimulator and a catalyst is still really, really important today. The council consists of 20 members who are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the president. They work on website promotions. They promote daily physical activity for diseases promotion, prevention, health, vigorous physical activity, stretching, strength training for fitness, and sports participation, as we've heard, including the values of sportsmanship that that brings to our nation.

They collaborate on all levels of government, and some of these collaborations that we've heard about with state physical fitness councils are really, really important. So let's just pause a second and give a round for the volunteer members of the council who are here today. Thank you. (Applause.)

I do want to tell a really quick anecdote, which is, I was in West Virginia last week and getting up in a hotel room -- you've all -- you've been there -- and, you know, thinking where am I going to get my first cup of coffee. And I flipped on the TV and I heard this voice. And you've heard the voice already today. And I turned around, and there is Denise doing calisthenics at 7:00 in the morning. (Laughter.) And I thought, maybe I don't need a cup of coffee, I'll just do a little exercise.

So this is the sort of inspiration that physical activity brings to all of us, and it really shows the importance in our health. So this group of leaders is really active around the country and making a big difference.

We know that too few of us get up and move. Just a quarter of high school students, as you've heard, are moderately physically active for 30 minutes a day. Just a quarter of our high school students.

That's half the time that's recommended. We've got to do better with this.

The National President's Challenge goes beyond the gym. It goes into everyday life with a variety of programs to help you be active. You can build these activities into your day. It doesn't have to be something special, as you've heard. You can stand up and walk while you're on the phone. You can do deep knee bends while brushing your teeth. I would say that's if you're coordinated enough to do that. (Laughter.) You can take stairs instead of going up elevators, and we can all do that. I hope we're all going to do that down 13 flights here, right? We can park further from the office; we can walk the difference. You can get off a bus stop earlier and walk the difference. You can take a long walk instead of eating lunch.

The President's Challenge is really everyone's challenge. It's for young people, but it's also for adults. It's for seniors. It's even for people with disabilities. I've got a small army of more than 153,000 volunteers who are part of the Medical Reserve Corps all around the country. These are volunteers in communities that are standing by to help in emergencies, but they're also there to promote

physical fitness, and I know a lot of those chapters of our Medical Reserve Corps are also taking up the National President's Challenge.

Kids 16 -- 6 through 17 should aim for at least 60 minutes of activity five days a week, and we think this National President's Challenge is going to help that.

You can choose from almost 100 different activities. I'm sorry; housework is apparently not on that anymore, but there are a hundred different activities, so participants can find at least one that they can enjoy. There's something for everybody in this room. There's something that each of you can do. I urge all of you to step up and take this challenge. You can look on the Internet right now -- www.presidentschallenge.org.

So I look forward to seeing you, all of you, online. Let's keep up the great work, and thank you for being here today.
(Applause.)

MR. ZREMSKI: Thank you. We have lots of questions. We're going to start with a bunch of questions about the fitness challenge and obesity -- really, questions for Admiral Galson. Or if you want to pitch in, just come on up, all right? First of all, why do you think that Americans are facing this obesity crisis these days?

ADM. GALSON: Well, there are multiple reasons. And like any public health problem, there isn't one simple cause. There isn't one simple solution.

On the other hand, obesity isn't that challenging to understand. It has to do with the calories that people take in balanced by the calories that they're burning. So what we have is a population of people who are less and less active while they are eating more calories. Calories are plentiful. They're cheap. They're easy to get. Sometimes people don't know what they're eating in restaurants, so they eat, you know, five times as many calories in one meal as they need for the whole day.

So we've got to work on both sides of the problem, both what people are eating, their diet, their nutritional status, and then encouraging physical activity.

MR. ZREMSKI: The federal government has been promoting youth fitness for decades now. Why hasn't the message sunk in?

ADM. GALSON: Well, I think the message has been effective, but the fact is, on the intake side, on the calorie side, it's changed. In other words, there's more fast food. More people are going to fast food than they used to. And on the other side, on the physical activity side, we have a very -- you know, a nation where fitness is important, but at the same time, we have our children spending hours in front of video games. And I'm looking at my son sitting right here.

And I know about the challenge of getting kids off of the screen and out into the backyard to play. I've heard from dozens of people my age: "Well, when I was a kid, my mother would just call down, 'Get out of the house.'" When I was meeting with the governor of

West Virginia last week, he said, "You know, Doctor Galson, what we need is a No Child Left Inside Act, program." (Laughter.) So I don't know if I'll have an initiative like that. (Applause.) But the fact is, kids are not as physically active as they used to -- and that -- I think it's sunk in, but it's got to sink in even more because of changes in technology and diet.

MR. ZREMSKI: What's different about physical education in schools today that has contributed, perhaps, to this problem? Anything?

ADM. GALSON: I don't know if you want to mention that, something with that, but the -- what I've heard is that it's harder for administrators and teachers to schedule physical activity. There are some school districts that don't have breaks to do this. And then the budgets are stressed, so sometimes they don't have the resources to supervise the kids to do activities.

I think in general it's been de-emphasized over several decades. And I think some members of the council are probably more expert on this than I am.

But the bottom line is, we've got to do better. And every single speech that I give and, I hope, the communication that we're all doing is focused on making sure that that turns, that trend turns the other direction: more time at school, more focus on activities that are very effective. MR. ZREMSKI: Is it possible that No Child Left Behind, with its emphasis on testing in the basic subjects, might actually contribute to this problem by taking time away from physical education?

ADM. GALSON: You know, this has come up a few times. And I think what's really important -- and I know we can all agree with this -- is that physical activity helps kids do better. It is directly linked. And when I talked to middle school kids in Miami yesterday, I asked them, you know, do you feel like you can do your homework better, do your problems better, focus on schoolwork, if you get out there and get exercise? They agreed with me to a student. So I think that the link is between our kids doing better and encouraging more physical activity.

MR. ZREMSKI: Many schools are having funding problems when it comes to physical education and funding the teachers for physical education.

How do you recommend countering that?

ADM. GALSON: You know, there are things that we can do to encourage physical activity without funds. A lot of this is leadership. A lot of this is focus and having every teacher and every parent, who's involved with the schools, recognize that this is important. This is important for academic performance. This is important for health. This is important for the strength of our families.

So I think it's a leadership issue. As much as it might -- I recognize there are funding issues. But it's also a leadership issue.

MR. ZREMSKI: Shaquille O'Neal has a well-publicized get-fit program in the schools, which includes a healthy-lunch program. And he's run into some resistance from school districts about this.

Why would that be?

ADM. GALSON: I'm not really familiar with his particular program or how that would be controversial.

The major competition that people have in schools is not enough time for the things that everybody wants to cram in the school day. And that's why this event and highlighting the National President's Challenge and talking about the importance of this for health is so -- is such a high priority.

MR. ZREMSKI: If you could suggest one change outside of exercise for Americans to make to improve their health and well-being, what would it be?

ADM. GALSON: Eat better. Be aware of what you're eating. Be aware of how many calories you need. Be aware of everything in moderation. That's the best word. That's the best advice in diet.

Be wary of fad diets. Really focusing on diet and nutrition is the other side of the coin here, and has to be continued to be talked about.

MR. ZREMSKI: You mentioned that kids don't get outdoors as much as they used to. Is the president's commission considering any initiatives to get kids more outdoor recreational activities, perhaps in national parks or public lands?

ADM. GALSON: Some of the council activities do involve working with parks departments and the Department of the Interior to encourage physical activity outside. And really this is what the National President's Challenge is all about, getting people active. And a lot of those activities will be outside. I'm not familiar with all of the programs that are going on.

I don't know, Denise, if you want to say anything about work specifically on that. Or excuse me, Melissa, I'm looking at Melissa, thinking Denise. Anything you want to say, Melissa, about those activities with the parks department or anything else?

(Cross talk.)

Anyone else want to comment on that on the council, about getting kids outdoors?

(Cross talk.)

MR. ZREMSKI: Okay, Eli, it's your turn.

MR. MANNING: All right.

MR. ZREMSKI: All right.

Tell us what an average day of exercise is for you, during the season and during the offseason.

MR. MANNING: Really the offseason's the most active time for us in our workouts. And you know, it usually consists of about, you know, 45 minutes of running, some type of cardio activity, different types. And then, you know, an hour to an hour-and-a-half of lifting weights.

And you know, I'm fortunate that sports and, you know, my physical fitness is part of my life. It's my work.

It's my job. I have to do it, but I also enjoy doing it. It's a great thing for me. Growing up, you know, if someone told me I had to get 60 minutes of physical activity a day as a kid, I would -- you know, I said, that's easy; that's no problem.

But it's tougher on kids today, especially because they have so many other options. They have the Internet. They have these video games that, you know, I didn't have when I was growing up. We finally got Nintendo at one point, but that was kind of used for when it was raining or at nighttime. You know, you had to drag me in from being outside and playing sports.

And I think, you know, that's important for kids. And it's not just from a health benefit, but just the characteristics that sports builds in your character. And, you know, I just can't -- I can't stress enough the importance of, you know, being active as kids. And that's also the parents' job, to make sure their kids are active, getting them involved in after-school activities; you know, joining sports leagues and anything.

And if you're a group of kids, just finding neighborhood friends and finding a way to make up your own games; it doesn't have to be a sport. It could be a game of tag or hide and go seek or anything. There's so many opportunities and different ways not only to, you know, get physically fit, but to have fun and enjoy being outside.

MR. ZREMSKI: What was it, really, that turned the Giants' season around? (Laughter.)

MR. MANNING: You know, there's a lot of things that helped in turning our season around. I think a lot of it is just getting a lot of our key players back into our offense and defense. We had some injuries, and towards the end of the season, you know, we had a challenge ahead of us. We knew what we had to do, you know, to even make it into the playoffs. We conquered that. And you know, we got our confidence back at the right time. We were playing our best football at the end of the season and we rode that confidence all the way through the playoffs.

MR. ZREMSKI: At what point did it start to sink in with you that you could pull off this miracle run?

MR. MANNING: (Chuckles.) I think after our first playoff, when at Tampa Bay the two previous years we lost in the first round. And as I said, we just -- you know, we were playing good football.

We felt that our defense was playing outstanding; our offense was making plays. We had guys back in key positions and some new young guys who were stepping up and filling in roles. So everything was clicking at the end of the season. And we just -- we knew we were playing well. We kept that same confidence. We kept that same level of play. You know, we felt we were playing better football than anyone else at that time.

MR. ZREMSKI: Now, this comes from a young man named Zachary (sp), who's in the audience today. And he asks -- where's Zachary?

MR. MANNING: There he is.

MR. ZREMSKI: There he is! He asks, how do you think you got out of the blitz during the Super Bowl? (Laughter.)

MR. MANNING: That's a great question, Zachary. (Laughter.) I wish I knew. I really don't know. (Laughter.) And if I did, I don't know if I could reveal my secret. (Laughter.) It was, I guess, all that physical fitness I had going on that would get me out. (Laughter, applause.)

MR. ZREMSKI: Another person in the audience writes: Eli, I'm a father of two boys, and can you comment on the Father-Brother Alliance and how that has played in your success? For example, having a peer as a brother and vice-versa.

MR. MANNING: You know, my family has been very supportive of me, and it's been great to have that support, having someone to talk to, having a father who's been through similar situations I've been through, having a brother who also plays in NFL to talk to. And, you know, during trying times and tough times, after losing playoff games, I'd always have my Dad just to come up and say, you know, "I never even made it to the playoffs, so, you know, you're doing something right." (Laughter.) "Don't, you know, don't worry about that. You're doing things well, and things will turn out. Just keep working hard, keep your confidence going, never change your personality or your work ethic, and, you know, if you're consistent, you're dedicated and you're doing things correctly, things will work out for you."

And that's -- it's been a great supporting cast that I've had from my family and friends, and, you know, that's important. That's important in anything you do, and you have people support you, you have people challenge you, and that's what keeps you going.

MR. ZREMSKI: Do you think there will ever be a Super Bowl battle between you and your brother Peyton?

MR. MANNING: I don't know if (wish upon it ?) or not. I'd like to be back in the Super Bowl again, would be the plus of that, but to face Peyton in this, the -- you know, we faced the Colts two years ago, the first game of the season, and it was almost awkward for Peyton and I because the game -- it got away from -- the focus got away from the Giants versus the Colts and became Peyton versus Eli, which was not the case. It's not what we promote or what we want. You know, the game is much bigger than we are.

And so, he'd also be a tough person to go against. (Light laughter.) They got a pretty good team and he's a pretty good player. So, you know, it would be an interesting, you know, game, and I'd love to be -- have another shot to get back to the Super Bowl. So if it happens that he's the opponent, then I'll accept it. (Laughter.)

MR. ZREMSKI: Do you think that the media magnifies your sibling rivalry with Peyton, or do they portray it accurately? MR. MANNING: I think they magnify anything. They -- you know, they make it seem -- they magnify everything, especially brothers -- (laughter) -- but, you know, they make it seem like it's, you know, me versus him, and it's just not that way. If I was playing defense and I got to sack him, you know, that would be kind of fun, and I -- (laughter) -- I'd like to get a little revenge. He's five years older than me, so he used to pick on me a little bit growing up, and so, you know, I'd like to give him a little extra elbow or late hit every once and a while. (Laughter.)

But it's not that way. Whenever, you know, two quarterbacks face off against each other, it's, you know, it's a quarterback versus the opposing defense. It's never -- that's the great thing about football. It's 11 guys on each side going against each other, and it's a team sport. One person cannot win or lose a game. It's a combination of everybody out there over a long period of time.

MR. ZREMSKI: Anything you'd like to say to Tiki Barber?

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Ohhh.

MR. MANNING: Tough crowd in here. (Laughter.)

No, I've no regrets or no remorse or anything. Tiki and I -- he was a tremendous player for the Giants and, you know, got me out of a lot of jams while we were playing.

MR. ZREMSKI: You talked about the media and its role in your relationship with your brother. Do you think the New York media was fair to you during your first years in New York?

MR. MANNING: (Chuckles.) (Laughter.) I think we have some New York media in here right now. That's -- (laughter) -- I don't know. I think any time you're the quarterback of a professional team, especially in New York, there's going to be tough, tough times. And you know, the way that the media works is, it's kind of all, you know, what have you done for me lately? If you've won the last game and you had a great game, they'll say you're the best in the world, and if you have a bad game and lose, they'll say you're the worst. (Scattered laughter.)

And you know, winning the Super Bowl, I'll have -- it's good, because I got about, you know, five months where they'll praise me and love me -- (laughter) -- and then if we lose the first game, they'll be back and hating me. (Laughter.) So that's just the way it works. (Laughter.)

MR. ZREMSKI: Do you think the SEC is the best conference in the country? And why? (Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah!

MR. MANNING: I think the Southeastern Conference is -- I think, prepares you for the NFL better than any other college conference, just because of the speed of the game; the amount of athletes that come from, you know, that division, that conference that go into the NFL is a great number; and just the complexity that they're getting into -- it's a great conference, a great competitiveness between all the schools. And that's the great thing about college football, is that, you know, so many -- there are so many athletes all over the country now that every team is getting built up and every team is talented and has great athletes and players, where, you know, no matter what, you know, no matter what team you are, what school you go to, you have a chance to beat anybody.

MR. ZREMSKI: Do you ever regret not signing with San Diego?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Not anymore! (Laughter.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Not anymore! MR. ZREMSKI: (Chuckles.)

MR. MANNING: No regrets. You know, kind of my theory is that, you know, once you make a decision, once you believe in something, you never look back, you never doubt yourself, you never think "What if," you make a decision, and if you believe in it, it's what your heart is telling you, then you go at it all the way, and you know that's the right decision to do.

MR. ZREMSKI: There's been a lot talked about regarding Coach Coughlin and his kind of change in approach this season. Could you tell us what you saw of that?

MR. MANNING: You know, again, the media can overplay things also, and that's an example. Our Coach Coughlin is a very intense, fiery guy, and that's because he works extremely hard at what he does. He's very dedicated. He puts in, you know, hours and hours every day, more than anyone else, to prepare his team to win and to play well. And you know, that's just -- you know, when someone is dedicated to something so much and wants something so badly and puts his heart into it, you're definitely going to be an emotional -- and want to win and have that competitive attitude.

And I think, you know, the thing he did this year differently maybe than past is that he tried to let some of the leaders of the team express his voice to the other players.

It's not all -- not everything is just coming from the head coach and coming -- you know, him giving directions and telling everybody what to do. He's talking to the leaders -- you know, the seven to 10 guys, leaders of the team -- and then letting those guys express it, kind of, you know, lead it down into the team, into the locker room, the players. And so not only are you getting coached, you know, by your head coach, and you're getting informed and getting information from the players and the leaders of the team. And so I think this helped everybody just have a better understanding of what we want to do and get the point across better.

MR. ZREMSKI: What are your thoughts on the signing of David Carr as your backup?

MR. MANNING: You know, I guess it's good to always have a good backup. And, you know, David Carr, he's been around. Our quarterback coach, Chris Palmer, he'd played under -- David played under him. So he should, you know, have a good job of understanding the offense in coming in. But again, as a starting quarterback, you hope you don't lose any time and you're out there for all the plays.

MR. ZREMSKI: You have many fans in the military. Have you ever considered going on a USO tour?

MR. MANNING: I've thought about it. It's just all based on finding time. You know, during the season, it's a very stressful and -- you know, not any free time to do anything. And so, you know, I appreciate all the hard work and dedication that our military does for this country and, you know, fighting for this country, and I appreciate all -- everything they do for us.

MR. ZREMSKI: Now, I don't think you want the Redskins to become a consistent winner, but someone in the audience is asking, what do the Redskins need to do to become a consistent winner? (Laughter.)

MR. MANNING: I can't give any advice. (Laughter.) That's a division rival and always a tough opponent for the Giants. So I could give you -- any advice I'd give would be false -- (laughter) -- and it would only hurt (you probably ?). (Laughter.)

MR. ZREMSKI: Compare and contrast the giants ownership with the Redskins ownership. (Laughter.)

MR. MANNING: I won't compare anything. But I can only say great things about the Giants ownership, between the Maras and the Tisches, two great families, a great history of football. And they do things the right way. And that's the great thing about being part of the Giants organization, is they're committed to football. And it's all about football. It's about the team winning games and players given the shot to be on a winning team.

And it's a total commitment coming from not only the players but the organization, the coaches, and that's what's fun to be a part of. And that's why, when you win a championship, it's not just the players, it's everybody. It's the people who are upstairs in the offices, the secretaries, the maintenance people, everybody wins a championship. And that's what's so special.

MR. ZREMSKI: When you were growing up, who were the quarterbacks that you most admired? And what did you learn from watching them?

MR. MANNING: A lot of great quarterbacks. One of them just announced his retirement not too long ago, Brett Favre, who we'll all miss, as football fans or just a sports fan, to watch him play the game. He plays it the right way. He plays with passion, with energy. He looks like a kid out there running around and having fun. And

that's exciting to see. I grew up watching him. He was, you know, a great -- he's always been great to me and my family. And we're definitely going to lose a superstar in the National Football League.

MR. ZREMSKI: Now, I think one of the big differences in the NFL today from when your dad was playing is that the players are bigger, particularly the linemen. And kids who are wanting to become linemen in the NFL often are encouraged to get bigger, gain weight, become more muscular. Do you have any concerns that that message that those kids are getting might conflict with the message you're delivering here today about obesity?

MR. MANNING: If you saw an offensive linemen, if you walked in the room today, he is massive and very big, but it's not -- he's not -- I don't know, he's not fat. He's not, you know, sloppy. He's very well-built; he's just strong. And, you know, it has been a problem. There have been issues for linemen who, when they retire from the game of football, they have problems with their health.

I have a good friend of mine who was an offensive lineman who just retired. And, you know, he was aware of this and concerned and he's lost 60 pounds since retiring a year ago. When he played football, he was 300 pounds. Now he's 240 pounds. And I see him and it's kind of strange. I kind of feel like I can beat him up now. (Laughter.) He used to kind of push me around and pick on me, and now, you know, the tables have turned a little bit.

But it is -- you know, it's still -- these offensive linemen, they are massive. And it is -- you know, they do have to be that size to play at that level just because of the pounding that they take, but they are still physically fit. They get -- you know, they work out just as much as me and get their conditioning in and get their running in along with their weightlifting. But, you know, they do have to eat a lot when they're playing, but they're also burning off a lot of those calories to maintain that weight. But, you know, it's after they retire -- they have to learn they can't continue to eat the same way, and they have to -- you know, they have to work out, you know, without just playing football.

MR. ZREMSKI: In addition to obesity, lots of kids who play football end up suffering traumatic brain injuries. What can the NFL do to help on that problem?

MR. MANNING: You know, that's a concern (along?) the NFL, is concussions and injuries. And you know, the NFL is, you know, spending tons of money in research and technology, trying to get the safest helmets, the safest equipment they can acquire. And it's -- you know, that's just the dangers of playing a contact sport. There is going to be injury.

And you know, you can try to do everything you can to protect that and prevent that, but it's just -- you just hope that in the lower programs in middle school, high school that people are teaching the correct fundamentals of football, of tackling, of protecting yourself, and that everybody's wearing the proper equipment and trying to do everything they can to prevent any accidental injuries from occurring.

MR. ZREMSKI: How much time will you get to spend in New Orleans this offseason? And do you have much planned there?

MR. MANNING: I get to New Orleans. That's where I grew up. That's where my parents live, my oldest brother Cooper and his wife and three kids live. So I get back, you know, every couple of weeks. And you know, during -- I was there about three weeks ago for a long weekend and got to visit with everybody.

So I enjoy getting back to New Orleans. There's still tons of work that needs to be done from the effects of Katrina. And you know, I'll be back at the end of this month for the Zurich Classic in New Orleans -- the golf tournament -- and be down there for that weekend and helping out the city as much as I can.

MR. ZREMSKI: You mentioned that a lot needs to be done still in wake of Katrina. If you could, just elaborate on that and about how you feel about how the progress has gone so far.

MR. MANNING: It's just, yeah, a lot of work needs to be done. The areas that were hit the hardest by Katrina and had the flooding -- some of the images, I'm sure, everybody has seen before -- are still not in good shape. Some of the areas -- nothing's really been done.

And a lot of it, you know, a lot of money has been sent there. A lot of people are still going back there. And if you can go back and, you know, rebuild some of these homes, rebuild some of these areas, it's still a great cause. It's still going on.

And so there is a lot of work that needs to be done. And it is getting better. We are working on it. And you know, I want to thank everybody in these past years who have helped out and contributed to the rebuilding of New Orleans.

MR. ZREMSKI: You know, I think the Saints have a pretty decent quarterback. But someone in the audience asked the question, if you had the chance to go back to New Orleans, would you? (Cross talk, laughter.)

MR. MANNING: I love being up in New York. I love being a part of the Giants organization. And you know, hopefully I'll stay up there as long as they'll have me.

MR. ZREMSKI: What's more exciting, going to the White House to meet the president or going on the David Letterman show? (Laughter.)

MR. MANNING: I'm a big fan of both. (Laughter.)

And I like David Letterman a lot. I watch his show, so it's always fun to go on his show and talk to him. He's very, very funny. The president's also very funny also. (Laughter.) So they do have that in common.

And so it's an honor to be here. I'm excited to go to the White House today and excited that the president has made this such an

important issue for him. And he's taken the time to speak about this and to get this program and -- his challenge, I guess you could say -- the President's Challenge kicked off and get that going.

So I'm very honored to be a part of this and very privileged, and glad that he's taken such an initial response in getting this started.

MR. ZREMSKI: Will you talk to Shockey and Plaxico about joining you in this fitness effort?

MR. MANNING: I'm sure they would, but both those guys -- if you ever saw them, they're about as physically fit as you can get. And it's very important to them. I'd say they'd agree -- you know, they're just two tremendous athletes. I think they agree that playing sports and being active as kids and growing up through the lower school to high school has been the reason they're in the NFL today. And you know, they're, you know, two tremendous athletes and great friends of mine and great to be around.

MR. ZREMSKI: How many times in your life have you seen a receiver catch a pass off the top of his helmet? (Laughter.)

MR. MANNING: I've only seen it one time, and I'm glad it happened that one time. (Laughter, applause.)

MR. ZREMSKI: What were your thoughts in the Super Bowl right before you made the pass to Tyree?

MR. MANNING: As I was getting, you know, pulled, I'm thinking: Oh, this isn't good. This is not good. (Laughter.) You know, what do I do now? (Laughter.) And you know, somehow I got out and I, you know, saw -- I couldn't say I saw David Tyree in the middle of the field, but I saw a white jersey and just tried to give it a shot, and you know, he did the rest. It was a great, tremendous individual effort by him. He's a -- you know, the great thing about David Tyree is, he -- on that Friday practice before the Super Bowl, Plaxico wasn't practicing that week, because he was injured, so David had to step up in his spot. So he got a lot of reps. And he probably had the worst practice in the history of all practices I've ever seen before in my life. He -- you know, I probably threw him, you know, 10 passes that day, and he dropped eight of them. He could not catch a ball. He just -- he caught the drops, but you know, when -- and the Super Bowl came, you know, he made one of the greatest catches of all time and, you know, a big part of us winning that game that day.

MR. ZREMSKI: A lot of recent Super Bowl winners have gone on the next season to not do nearly as well. What do the Giants have to do to repeat?

MR. MANNING: Well, I think the important thing is just remember what got you to the Super Bowl in the first place. You know, remember what you did the off-season before or the mind-set you had or the commitment and dedication and that hunger you had for winning a championship.

And you know, I think that the greatest thing about winning the Super Bowl is that feeling after the game and just that sense of accomplishment. And you know, a lot of guys have had the opposite feeling. After losing a playoff game or not getting into the playoffs, it's the worst feeling in the world. So I don't know why you would want to have the feeling again. I'd much rather have winning that Super Bowl feeling again. I think you can get -- that can be a good addiction to have.

So that's what we're working towards, and we start our off-season program in, you know, about a week and a half. So it'll be great to see everybody again and get back to work and try to have another outstanding season next year.

MR. ZREMSKI: In the run-up to the Super Bowl, a lot of the pundits who follow the game were calling the Patriots the best team ever. They were treating the game as if it was really just something the Patriots were going to win kind of easily. How much of a motivator was that?

MR. MANNING: Well, I think that's something we used to our advantage. And we had been underdogs all through the playoffs. No one expected us to win anything. And that was definitely a motivation for us. We knew that the only people that believed in us were the people in that room or in that bus or in that locker room.

You know, we knew we could win. We knew if we played the best of our ability, we could make it happen. And when you're on a team like that, that has that confidence, that's all you need. You don't need anybody else or anything else to get you motivated or get you that confidence. But you know, that's something we had.

And it was a special group of guys. We'd been through so much together. We've had, you know, bad games, good games. We've had the ups and downs, and we always responded. And it was a team that always seemed to play our best when you're up against the wall, when the challenge was great, you know, when things were tough. That's when we responded and played our best football.

And you know, example is that instead of winning, you know, in Green Bay -- instead of winning in regulation, we missed two field goals because we want to win in overtime. (Laughter.) We like winning a dramatic finish. So that's kind of the way the team worked. And I don't really recommend that way. (Laughter.) That's not really the way to -- a way to play. And it can be stressful at times. But that's a tremendous effort and dedication by our teammates.

MR. ZREMSKI: Okay. We're almost out of time, but before I ask the last question I have a couple of other important matters to take care of. First of all, if I could just ask everyone in the audience to stay in your seats once we're finished here, because Eli has to go to another engagement pretty quickly and we want to make sure he's able to do that. So if you could, just please hold in your seats once we're all done.

Secondly, I'd like to tell everyone about our upcoming luncheons. On March 21st, which is tomorrow, Denis Cortese, the

president and CEO of the Mayo Clinic, will be here. On March 31st, kicking off the celebration of the National Press Club's 100th birthday, Donald A. Ritchie, the U.S. Senate associate historian, will discuss "Scoops, Packs and Clubs: A Centennial Survey of the National Press Club and the Washington Press Corps." And on April 16th, Janet Murguia, president and CEO of the National Council of La Raza, will be joining us.

Next I'd like to present our guests with our gifts, our centennial mug. Each of you gets a centennial mug.

ADM. GALSON: All right.

MR. ZREMSKI: Thank you. And I'd like to thank both of them for appearing here today. And I want to especially thank Eli for signing a football that we're going to be auctioning at our 5K benefitting our minority journalism scholarships later this year. Eli has just been extraordinarily gracious here -- signing autographs, meeting with people -- and we just really, really appreciate it. So thank you. (Cheers, applause.)

Now, the last question often is a little different in tone than some of the earlier questions, just to warn you, so the last question is this.

Do you have any idea how often you might appear in Bill Belichick's video collection? (Laughter.)

MR. MANNING: I do not know.

I'm sure there's a play of David Tyree's catch and a play of the Super Bowl touchdown to Plaxico Burress that won that game. So those are the only that really matter in my book. (Laughter, applause.)

MR. ZREMSKI: I'd like to thank you all for coming today.

Also I'd like to thank National Press Club staff members Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, Jo Anne Booze and Howard Rothman for organizing today's lunch. Also thanks to the NPC library for its research.

The video archive of today's lunch -- breakfast, I should say, is provided by the National Press Club Broadcast Operations Center. Press Club members can also access free transcripts of our events at our website, www.press.org. And non-members may purchase transcripts, audio and videotapes by calling 1-888-343-1940.

For more information about joining the Press Club, contact us at (202) 662-7511. Thank you very much. We're adjourned. (Applause.)

END.