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[FloridaMarlins23January2004#5compare#3.doc](#)

Photo Opportunity with the 2003 World Series Champion Florida Marlins
Friday, January 23, 2004
Draft #5

- Welcome to the White House. It's an honor to host the World Champion Florida Marlins. Congratulations on your success. You have earned the right to be called champs, and you have created lasting memories for fans throughout the state of Florida. And I've heard a lot of bragging from one of your biggest fans – your Governor.
- On Pudge Rodriguez's [present] first day with the team, he told us that 2003 would be the Year of the Marlin. There were times last season when Pudge's prediction wasn't looking very good. You got off to a slow start ... made the playoffs as a wild card ... fell behind in playoff series ... and yet you came back to become World Series champs. Pudge was right – 2003 turned out to be the Year of the Marlin, and everyone in the Marlins organization can be proud.

Acknowledgments

- Governor Jeb Bush (R-FL)
- Congressman Porter Goss (R-FL)
- Congressman Mark Foley (R-FL)
- Congressman Howard Coble (R-NC) (Note: He knows Manager Jack McKeon.)
- Mayor Manny Diaz, City of Miami (I)
- Jeff Loria, Owner, Florida Marlins, and wife, Sivia [SIV-ee-ah]
- David Samson, President, Florida Marlins, and wife Cindi
- Larry Beinfest [BINE-fest], General Manager, Florida Marlins
- Jack McKeon, Manager, Florida Marlins
- Ozzie Guillen [GEE-un], Manager, Chicago White Sox; and former third base coach, Florida Marlins
- Andre Dawson, Special Advisor, Florida Marlins; and eight-time All-Star and Gold Glove winner
- Tony Perez, advisor, Florida Marlins; and Hall of Fame member and seven-time All-Star
- Florida Marlins team members, coaches, their families, and front office staff
- Pitching Coach Wayne Rosenthal, former Ranger (played for you in 1991 and six games in 1992)

- First Base Coach Perry Hill, former Rangers coach (1992-1994) (from Bedford, Texas)
- Pitcher Chad Fox (from Westfield, Texas)
- You turned your season around and became champs for a few basic reasons: You used every ounce of your talent, you played as a team, and you were determined to win. This team had two Gold Glove winners. You fielded a solid lineup, from Juan Pierre [present] at the top to Alex Gonzales [not present] at the bottom. And you relied on a strong crop of young pitchers – Brad Penny [present], the D-Train [not present], and a Texan who saved his best pitching for the World Series: Josh Beckett [present].
- To win the World Series, every member of this team set high standards on the diamond – and now that you’re champs, you have a responsibility to meet those standards away from the field as well. Millions of kids in America grow up wanting to play like the Florida Marlins, and they are watching the way you conduct yourselves all the time. It’s important for you, and for all professional athletes, to set the right example for children in this country.
- I have confidence that you will uphold your duties as champions, because I have seen your character in the dedication to your community you have already shown:
 - The Marlins management contributes to Florida’s “Adopt-A-Classroom” program, which helps local teachers purchase extra supplies to make learning more fun for students. The Marlins are also continuing the strong tradition of big leaguers supporting youth baseball – including through the Josh Beckett Youth Baseball tournament, which will be played for the fifth time this year.
 - For more than two years, A.J. Burnett [present] has worked with the Florida Division of the Center for Missing and Exploited Children. He volunteers his time to tape ads and host events that show children how to be safer and publicize information about abducted children. A.J.’s work is getting results: More than 30 children featured on his “Play It Safe” days at Marlins games have been rescued.

- Juan Pierre [present] organized “Pierre’s Pack” to introduce underprivileged children to the game of baseball. Every month he treats a group of kids to box seats, tee-shirts, and a bus to Pro Player Stadium to watch a Marlins game.
- I appreciate the good and hopeful work you are doing in your communities, and I respect your excellence on the field. You are bringing thrills to your fans, and inspiration to young people everywhere. Congratulations on being World Series champs, and good luck this season.

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