

The original documents are located in Box 16, “9/20/75 - Remarks at the Dedication of the Firestone Fieldhouse at Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

FIRESTONE FIELDHOUSE DEDICATION

SEPTEMBER 20, 1975

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- THANK YOU, BILL
- My good FRIENDS,
AMBASSADOR AND
MRS FIRESTONE
- CONGRESSMAN BARRY GOLDWATER
- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

- 1 -

THANK YOU, DR. BANOWSKY, AMBASSADOR AND

MRS. FIRESTONE, DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC DELEGATES, SPECIAL

GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

- 2 -

TODAY YOU HAVE CONFERRED UPON ME THE HONORARY
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LAWS, AND GRANTED ME THE STATUS OF AN
HONORARY ALUMNUS OF PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY. THESE HONORS
ARE DEEPLY APPRECIATED, AS IS YOUR WARM WELCOME TO
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

I'VE REALLY BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO VISITING THE
CAMPUS HERE AT MALIBU. AS SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW, I LIKE
SKIING AND SWIMMING -- AND HERE IN MALIBU, ONE OF THE BIG
THINGS IS SURFING, WHICH COMBINES A LITTLE OF BOTH.
SKIING WHEN YOU DO IT RIGHT -- AND SWIMMING WHEN YOU DO
IT WRONG.

BUT I NEVER REALIZED HOW POPULAR SURFING
REALLY IS UNTIL JUST BEFORE THE PROGRAM, WHEN I ASKED
PRESIDENT BILL BANOWSKY HOW MANY MINUTES HE WANTED ME
TO SPEAK. AND BILL JUST SAID, "MR. PRESIDENT --
HANG TEN!"

LAST MAY, WHEN MY WIFE BETTY RETURNED FROM HER TRIP TO THIS BEAUTIFUL STATE, SHE GAVE ME A VERY ENTHUSIASTIC REPORT OF HER VISIT TO PEPPERDINE'S INNER-CITY LOS ANGELES CAMPUS.

- 6 -

PEPPERDINE'S RAPID GROWTH FROM A SMALL COLLEGE IN
SOUTHWEST LOS ANGELES TO A MULTI-CAMPUS UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN
A SUCCESS STORY IN THE BEST HOLLYWOOD TRADITION.

- 7 -

I AM IMPRESSED WITH YOUR DISTINGUISHED FACULTY,
WITH YOUR DYNAMIC STUDENT BODY AND WITH YOUR BALANCED
BUDGET OF \$35-MILLION DOLLARS.

THEN AGAIN, COMING FROM WASHINGTON, I'M
IMPRESSED WITH A BALANCED BUDGET OF ANY SIZE.

- 8 -

LET ME ALSO ADD A SPECIAL WORD OF PRAISE FOR YOUR
PRESIDENT, DR. BILL BANOWSKY. BILL'S GREAT CAPACITY FOR
LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN A GUIDING FORCE IN PEPPERDINE'S
PHENOMENAL PROGRESS AND PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE.

HE IS THE MAN MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS "MALIBU
MIRACLE" CAMPUS. IT REPRESENTS A TESTAMENT TO HIS
SKILL AND HIS DILIGENCE.

- 10 -

TODAY WE GATHER TO DEDICATE THIS IMPRESSIVE
STRUCTURE -- THE FIRESTONE FIELDHOUSE, MADE POSSIBLE BY
THE GENEROSITY AND THE COMMITMENT OF MY GOOD FRIENDS,
LEONARD AND BARBARA FIRESTONE.

- 11 -

I JOIN WITH YOU IN SALUTING THESE TWO VERY FINE
AMERICANS, AND ADMIRING THIS FINE BUILDING: THEIR
PROUD GIFT TO PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY.

FIRESTONE FIELDHOUSE STANDS AS A SPLENDID

CENTERPIECE FOR THIS CAMPUS. IT SYMBOLIZES THE VITALITY,

THE EXUBERANCE AND THE STRENGTH OF PEPPERDINE'S STUDENTS --

INDEED, OF STUDENTS EVERYWHERE.

- 13 -

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY IS A SYMBOL ITSELF. IT IS

AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF THOSE VOLUNTARILY-SUPPORTED

INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO AMERICA'S

GREATNESS AND TO WORLD PROGRESS.

SUCH GREAT UNIVERSITIES AS PARIS, OXFORD AND
PADUA -- DATING FROM THE MIDDLE AGES -- HAVE A RICH
HERITAGE AS INSTITUTIONS OF INDEPENDENT EDUCATION.

- 15 -

AMERICA PROUDLY CELEBRATES ITS 200TH BIRTHDAY

NEXT YEAR. BUT WE WOULD HAVE TO REACH BACK STILL ANOTHER
CENTURY TO MARK THE FOUNDING OF HARVARD COLLEGE IN
MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY OR WILLIAM AND MARY IN VIRGINIA
OR ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE IN MARYLAND.

THIRTEEN OTHER GREAT AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES WERE
FOUNDED BEFORE THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. AND ALL SHARE
IN THE DISTINGUISHED TRADITIONS OF PRIVATE HIGHER
EDUCATION.

- 17 -

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES EXEMPLIFY

THE COMMITMENT OF THEIR BENEFACTORS TO THE AMERICAN FREE

ENTERPRISE SYSTEM -- AND, IN A SENSE, TO FREEDOM ITSELF.

- 18 -

YOU KNOW -- AND I KNOW -- THAT IT IS THE
VITALITY AND COMPETITION OF FREE ENTERPRISE THAT MADE
AMERICA GREAT. IT IS THE WEALTH OF FREE ENTERPRISE THAT
HAS DONE SO MUCH TO HELP UNDERDEVELOPED NATIONS THROUGHOUT
THE WORLD.

IT IS THE STRENGTH OF FREE ENTERPRISE THAT HAS GIVEN THE
GREATEST CHALLENGE TO COMMUNISM AND STATISM, AND EVERY
OTHER DOGMA WHICH WOULD CRUSH INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM.

THE INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES HAVE
PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN AMERICA'S HISTORY. THEY
REPRESENT A SOUND INVESTMENT IN AMERICA'S FUTURE.

THANKS TO THE VISION AND DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT
OF PRIVATE CITIZENS AND ORGANIZATIONS, THERE ARE NOW MORE
THAN 1,500 INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN
AMERICA, WITH A COMBINED ENROLLMENT OF MORE THAN TWO
MILLION STUDENTS.

TODAY, AS IN THE PAST, THESE INSTITUTIONS SERVE
AS A GREAT RESERVOIR OF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP: IN THE ARTS
AND SCIENCES, IN LAW AND MEDICINE AND RELIGION, AND IN
BUSINESS AND IN GOVERNMENT.

TWENTY-FOUR PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES WERE
EDUCATED IN PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, AS WERE
287 SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES SERVING IN THE PRESENT
CONGRESS.

- 24 -

MORE THAN 40 PERCENT OF THE BOARD CHAIRMEN AND
PRESIDENTS OF THE NATION'S 100 LARGEST CORPORATIONS TODAY
WERE EDUCATED AT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS.

THE NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING WRITERS, MUSICIANS,
JUDGES, TEACHERS, PHYSICIANS, SCIENTISTS, MINISTERS
AND SCHOLARS PRODUCED BY THESE INSTITUTIONS IS ALMOST
BEYOND COUNTING.

MY OWN BACKGROUND INCLUDED TWO EXPERIENCES IN
HIGHER EDUCATION. ONE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN;
THE OTHER, AT YALE UNIVERSITY. ONE PUBLIC; THE OTHER
PRIVATE. I VALUE WHAT I LEARNED FROM BOTH. I AM ALL
FOR AN OPEN MARKETPLACE FOR IDEAS AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS BOTH COMPLIMENT AND COMPETE

WITH PUBLIC EDUCATION IN AMERICA -- AND MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

HAVE ENJOYED THE DIVERSITY OF BENEFITS THIS DUAL SYSTEM HAS

PRODUCED.

I BELIEVE THAT EVERY AMERICAN WHO HAS A DESIRE TO

LEARN SHOULD BE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO LEARN.

TODAY, CALIFORNIA'S INDEPENDENT FOUR YEAR COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES HAVE AN OUTSTANDING RECORD OF PROVIDING SUCH
OPPORTUNITIES. THEY HAVE ENROLLED A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF
BLACK STUDENTS THAN ANY PUBLIC SECTOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN
THE STATE.

FURTHER, INDEPENDENT FOUR YEAR COLLEGES RANK VERY HIGH IN THE PERCENTAGE OF MEXICAN - AMERICANS ENROLLED. AND THEY PROVIDE MORE STUDENTS WITH MORE SCHOLARSHIPS THAN ANY PUBLIC SEGMENT OF CALIFORNIA EDUCATION. THEY HAVE PROVEN BY THEIR OWN EXAMPLE THAT THE ROAD TO QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION NEED NOT BE A NARROW ONE, TRAVELLED ONLY BY A SELECT FEW.

AS ARISTOTLE SAID CENTURIES AGO, "ALL WHO HAVE
MEDITATED ON THE ART OF GOVERNING MANKIND HAVE BEEN CONVINCED
THAT THE FATE OF POLITICAL COMMUNITIES DEPENDS ON THE
EDUCATION OF YOUTH."

BUT TODAY, ONE SEGMENT OF AMERICA'S EDUCATIONAL
CAPACITY IS IN TROUBLE. THE INSTITUTIONS OF PRIVATE EDUCATION
IN THE UNITED STATES ARE BEING BATTERED AND BUFFETED IN WAYS
THAT MAY ULTIMATELY JEOPARDIZE THEIR SURVIVAL

WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THE TERM "PRIVATE EDUCATION"
IS MISLEADING, BECAUSE THESE INSTITUTIONS, THOUGH PRIVATELY-
ENDOWED, SERVE IMPORTANT PUBLIC FUNCTIONS -- AND AT GREAT
SAVINGS TO THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER.

CALIFORNIA, FOR EXAMPLE, NOW COUNTS ABOUT 100

INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WITHIN ITS BORDERS.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THESE INSTITUTIONS CARRY THIRTY PERCENT

OF THE STATE'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION WORKLOAD.

EACH YEAR, THEY PROVIDE -- WITH ALMOST NO COST TO
THE TAXPAYER -- MORE THAN ONE BILLION DOLLARS IN EDUCATIONAL,
RESEARCH, AND RELATED SERVICES HERE IN CALIFORNIA ALONE .

IN RETURN, THESE INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR STUDENTS
RECEIVE LESS THAN THREE PERCENT OF THE TOTAL STATE FUNDS SPENT
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA.

IT IS THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,
SUCH AS LEONARD FIRESTONE, MARGARET MARTIN BROCK,
FRANK SEAVER, AND SO MANY OTHERS WHO HAVE HELPED PEPPERDINE
BUILD THIS MAGNIFICENT CAMPUS , THAT INDEPENDENT EDUCATION
SURVIVES AND GROWS HERE IN CALIFORNIA AND THROUGHOUT AMERICA.

CALIFORNIA'S INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS HAVE AMASSED 2.5
BILLION DOLLARS IN CAPITAL ASSETS AND ENDOWMENTS. EACH YEAR,
THEY ATTRACT AN ADDITIONAL 400 MILLION DOLLARS FROM PRIVATE,
NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOURSES.

IF THESE INSTITUTIONS SHOULD SUDDENLY CLOSE, SHIFTING THE BURDEN FROM PRIVATE DONORS TO PUBLIC TAXPAYERS, THE TAX LOAD WOULD BE HEAVY INDEED. AMERICA AND AMERICAN TAXPAYERS WOULD SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES. WE MUST NOT ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN.

IN RECENT YEARS, THE CONGRESS HAS CONSIDERED A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD DISCOURAGE PRIVATE CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THESE INSTITUTIONS. FORTUNATELY, MOST HAVE BEEN REJECTED THUS FAR, BUT THERE IS A PERSISTENCE IN THESE PROPOSALS WHICH MUST BE CONSTANTLY MONITORED AND REBUFFED.

TODAY, LET ME REPEAT WHAT I HAVE SAID TO MANY
EDUCATORS WHO HAVE VISITED ME IN WASHINGTON. I APPROVE,
SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THE PRINCIPLE OF VOLUNTARY GIVING TO HELP
FINANCE HIGHER EDUCATION.

I WILL OPPOSE ANY LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL WHICH
DISCOURAGES SUCH SUPPORT, INCLUDING THOSE WHICH WOULD LIMIT
CHARITABLE TAX DEDUCTIONS, DISALLOW THE FULL VALUE OF
APPRECIATED ASSETS OR EXCLUDE ESTATE TAX DEDUCTIONS.

THE FIRESTONE FIELDHOUSE, AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER FACILITIES WHICH GRACE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE CAMPUSES ACROSS AMERICA, TESTIFY IN CONCRETE WAYS TO THE WISDOM OF THESE EXISTING TAX POLICIES.

THESE FACILITIES WILL BE BUILT -- EITHER WITH PRIVATE
CAPITAL OR WITH TAXPAYERS MONEY -- BUT THEY MUST AND THEY WILL
BE BUILT. I WILL DO ALL THAT I CAN TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF
PRIVATE FUNDS FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD.

TODAY, WE HAVE ALL BEEN PART OF A PROUD AND FULFILLING
MOMENT IN PEPPERDINE'S HISTORY. STUDENTS, FACULTY, FRIENDS
AND COMMUNITY HAVE ALL JOINED TOGETHER IN THIS CELEBRATION OF
ACHIEVEMENT. IT IS A GOOD FEELING AND ONE THAT SHOULD BE
EXPERIENCED AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.

IN SOME CIRCLES IT IS CONSIDERED VERY SMART, VERY
"IN", TO BE CYNICAL AND DISDAINFUL OF THE BASIC MOTIVATIONS THAT
HAVE INSPIRED AND SUSTAINED MANKIND THROUGH THE CENTURIES.

A LOVE OF FAMILY, A LOVE OF COUNTRY, A LOVE OF LABOR, A
LOVE OF LEARNING, A LOVE OF GOD. THESE VALUES ARE NOT
OUTDATED AND FROM THE SPIRIT I HAVE FELT HERE TODAY, I'M
SURE YOU AGREE.

I KNOW THIS TO BE THE SPIRIT OF PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY --

ITS FOUNDER, ITS FACULTY AND ITS STUDENTS. IT IS A WORTHY

SPIRIT. A SPIRIT TO WHICH DANIEL WEBSTER GAVE EXPRESSION

WHEN HE WROTE: "IF WE WORK UPON MARBLE, IT WILL PERISH.

IF WE WORK UPON BRASS, TIME WILL EFFACE IT. IF WE REAR
TEMPLES, THEY WILL CRUMBLE INTO DUST. BUT IF WE WORK
UPON MEN'S IMMORTAL MINDS, IF WE IMBUE THEM WITH HIGH
PRINCIPLES, WITH THE JUST FEAR OF GOD AND LOVE OF THEIR
FELLOW-MEN, WE ENGRAVE ON THOSE TABLETS SOMETHING WHICH NO
TIME CAN EFFACE, AND WHICH WILL BRIGHTEN TO ALL ETERNITY."

THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME SHARE TODAY WITH YOU.

END OF TEXT