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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
HOLTON ARMS SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

HOLTON ARMS SCHOOL

10:08 A.M. EDT

Thank you very much.

Mr. Hamilton, Head Master Lewis, Bishop Walker and members of the graduating class, trustees and faculty, fellow parents, students and guests, obviously, it is a very great pleasure to be here at Holton Arms this morning, sometimes known as the "Topsider Capital of the world." (Laughter.)

This is my second commencement exercise this week. Yesterday, I had the great privilege of speaking to the graduating class at West Point, in my dual capacity as President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

This morning, along with Betty and many, many others in this audience, I am here at Holton Arms in an equally important role -- that of a very proud parent. I may have slipped and tumbled coming down those steps in Salzburg last week, but today I can assure you, I am walking on the clouds.

Let me apologize to the members of the graduating class for having to turn my back on both you and your very attractive commencement dresses, but I do have to admit, I am a little surprised to see them. I was told by Susan that the commencement dresses you wore as Juniors last year were such a big hit you were going to wear them again this year. (Laughter.)

I understand that dress was so popular that Head Master Lewis was even given a tie that was made up from one. (Laughter.) He wore it home, and the dog bit him. (Laughter.)

You might also be interested to know that my daughter, Susan, gave me some very specific advice on this speech. She asked me not to talk too long, not to tell any jokes, not to talk about her and not to talk about the way things were when I was your age. (Laughter.) So, in conclusion -- Actually, at graduation, it is hard not to reminisce just a bit, because ceremonies such as this mark the end of an important segment of our lives and the beginning of another.

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As you leave a very secure life here, at Holton Arms, with established goals and patterns and friends of many, many years, most of what you learned will, hopefully, go with you, but you leave the familiar for the unknown. And little of what you will face in the future will be as predictable as the past.

As young women, you are coming of age in an exciting, wonderful time. You have options open to you, until recently they were closed. Several of you will attend formerly all male universities. Some will chose careers once reserved for men only. Others will pioneer in fields opened by our advancing technology, but all of you will have more freedom than ever to pursue new oportunities and new challenges.

From my experience with this class, at least, with many members of it, that is the way you want it. You have been active in exploring the effect of these changes on your lives. You have been diligent in probing your potential, not as women, but, as capable ambitious individuals.

Before American completes its Bicentennial celebration, I hope the Equal Rights Amendment will be part of the United States' Constitution. For, ERA also stands for a new era for women in American, an era of equal rights and responsibilities and rewards. The rough but rewarding task of your generation, of each of you, will be to see that recent progress in equal opportunities becomes regular practice.

Today, as you leave this lovely campus, your dreams seem very personal and private and far removed from any problems or goals that we face as a Nation, but the American dream is truly a giant patchwork of all of our individual aspirations and desires. This dream is held together by the simple hopes of a better life for each of us and for our daughters and for our sons, but it is never enough to hope. We must all participate, if we are to make the United States the kind of a country we want it to be. and ourselves the kind of individuals we would like to be.

There is much that we have done as a people, but much remains to do. There is much we have done and can do as individuals, and that is where each of you is so vitally important. We have been to the moon and reached for the stars. Now, we must use that technology to improve life on Earth. We need scientists and sociologists and technicians, from this year's graduating class, to help in that effort.

We have harnessed nuclear power for destruction. Now, we must expand its use for peace. We need physicists, doctors and executives to help in this effort. We have linked the world together by electronics. Now, we must communicate our common needs and common goals. We need teachers and journalists and information specialists to help in this area.

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We have preserved a unique form of government for nearly 200 years. Now, we must keep it workable for future generations. We need lawyers and legislators and political scientists to help. We have created a largely urban industrialized society. Now, we must find energy to keep it running. We need administrators and engineers and chemists to help.

Best of all, we live in a Nation where our dreams are limited only by our imagination and our willingness to work. Now, let us put that willingness and that imagination to work in solving the problems facing America and in creating a Nation in which self-fulfillment is a way of life.

The fact that you have completed your years here at Holton Arms and are graduating today says something about your personal willingness and your dedication and your motivation. Whatever form your participation in the future takes, I leave these thoughts with you. Always be open to new ideas and challenged by distant horizons. Always consider achievement and excellence as ample rewards for whatever career you choose or role in life you select. Always be receptive to love and capable of responding in kind, and always remember that you carry with you, wherever you go, the devotion of your family and the affection of your friends.

Our hearts and our hopes for the future go with you today. May God bless each of you. Thank you very much.

END

(AT 10:22 A.M. EDT)