

The original documents are located in Box 2, folder “1976/06/07 - Central High School Graduation, Grand Rapids, Michigan” of the Frances K. Pullen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Final Draft

Revised, Central High School Graduation Remarks

It is truly an honor for me to return to my own high school after 40 years. That seems a very long time ago. The class of 1936 and the class of 1976 are many years ago and many changes apart. But I believe each class of graduates and parents have similar emotions and expectations on graduation day.

I've shared this day with my four children, and I understand what a sad-happy day this is for all of you. For graduates, this marks an end to a very special time in your lives. You will always remember the friends and the fun, but you are looking today toward new adventures.

Today you begin to take more control of your own life and to pursue your own special dreams. That's both exciting and a little scary.

As your parents and friends watch you start the adventure of more education or a job, they share your excitement. As all parents do, they want good things for you.

I'm sure every mother in this audience remembers the

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first day you went off to school. The same mixture of high hopes and just a little pain are somewhat the same today.

We really can do little more than encourage you to follow your own dreams and to assure you of our support. To trust and believe in yourself is the best advice we can give. We do hope you will grow as individuals and continue to learn more about the world around you.

What makes America special is that each individual can make his own personal promises about what he wants to do with his life.

When we talk about the American dream, we really are talking about the collection of all our dreams. Your expectations will be matched by surprises and disappointments. But I've found the true excitement and challenge of life is to expect the unexpected.

As I watched my children graduate, I wanted each of them to have the strength to accept challenges and the courage to overcome defeats. My hopes for them are the same for you today and all young people---may you have laughter, friends and joy. May you live up to the best in yourselves.

In this Bicentennial year, may you use the liberty America gives us to make the world a better place.

Similar to Draft Used

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Today you begin to take more control of your own lives and to pursue your own special dreams. Whether you continue your education or start a job, you will make your own decisions. That's both exciting and a little scary.

As your parents and friends launch you on this adventure, they share your excitement. As all parents do, they want good things for you.

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We really can do little more than encourage you to follow your own dreams and to assure you of our support. We hope you will continue to grow as individuals and to learn more about the world around you.

I think of the lines from the poet George Santayana: "It is not wisdom to be only wise, and on the inward vision close the eyes, but it is wisdom to believe the heart." To trust and believe in yourself really is the best advice we can give.

You are unique---with talent, energy and ideas only you can give to your community and to your country. What makes America special is that each individual can make and keep his own promises to himself.

When we talk about the American dream, we really are talking about the collection of all our dreams. Your expectations will be matched by surprises and disappointments. But the excitement and challenge of life is to expect and accept the unexpected. I've found that so important in my life.

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In this year of our Bicentennial, may you use the liberty American gives us to make the world a better place.

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Central High School Graduation Remarks

It is truly an honor for me to return to my own high school after 40 years. That seems a very long time ago. (Although you and I studied in the same building, many things have changed at Central High School.) The class of 1936 and the class of 1976 are ^{many} ~~more than~~ years ^{and} ~~apart,~~ because of many events and changes ^{apart.} ~~in the world.~~

^{your} The subjects you studied, the clothes you wear and ^{future:} ~~the jobs you will~~ have are different from those of my generation. But I believe each class of graduates and parents have similar emotions and expectations on graduation day.

I've shared this day with my four children, and I know what a sad-happy day this is for all ~~of you~~. For graduates, this marks an end to a very special time in your lives. You will always remember the friends and the fun, but you are looking today for new adventures. Today is more a beginning than an end. ^{Today you begin} to take more control of your own lives and to pursue your own special dreams.

Whether you continue your education or start a job,

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you will make your own decisions. That's both exciting and a little scary. (Your life will never be as structured and predictable as it has been in the past. There will be fewer required courses and more electives.)

As your parents and friends launch you on this adventure, I ~~know~~ they share your excitement. As all parents do, they want good things for you.

I'm sure every mother in this audience remembers the first day you went off to school. The same mixture of high hopes and just a little pain are somewhat the same today.

We really can do little more than encourage you to follow your own dreams and to let you know we will back you up. We ~~all~~ hope you will continue to grow as individuals and to ^{learn more} keep educating yourself about the world around you.

I think of the lines from the poet George Santáyana: "It is not wisdom to be only wise, and on the inward vision close the eyes, but it is wisdom to believe the heart." To trust and believe in yourself really is the best advice we can give.

You are unique with ~~some~~ talent and energy ^{and ideas} only you can give to your community and to your country.

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What makes America special is that each individual can make and keep his own promises to himself.

When we talk about the American dream, we really are talking about the collection of all our dreams. You graduate with many expectations, and no doubt will encounter disappointments and surprises. But what makes America exciting is that all of us can expect the unexpected. I've found that in my own life and my friends.

You begin with your own hopes and talents and what happens will not always be as you plan. But if you do believe your heart and discipline yourself to be the best you can be, I believe you will find many rewards.

(I think of the parable of the talents in the Bible and of the man who used his one talent well. What is important in our lives is not what we have in the way of intelligence and talent, but what we do with these gifts.)

As I watched each of my children graduate, I wanted each of them to have the strength to accept the challenges and the courage to overcome the disappointments. My hopes for them are the same for you today and all young people-- may you have laughter, friends and hope and may you live up to the best in yourselves.

Awake

out

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In this year of our Bicentennial, may you
use the liberty America gives us to make our
world a better place.

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Central High School Graduation Remarks

It is truly an honor for me to return to my ~~own~~ own high school after 40 years for your graduation. That seems a very long time ago, and although ~~Central High~~ you and I studied in the same building, many things have changed in this city and in the country. ~~But~~

The ~~the~~ subjects you studied, the clothes you wear and the country you live in are all very different from the class of 1936. But each class ^{I believe} and parents of graduates has many similar emotions and expectations on graduation day.

I've shared this day with my four children, and I know what a sad-happy day it is for all of you. For graduates, this marks an end to very special time in your ~~life~~ lives---the friends you've made and the fun you've had will be remembered for many years to come. But today is more a beginning than an end. Today you begin to take more control of your own lives and to pursue your own special dreams.

Whether you continue your education or start a job,

you will be making your own choices. That's both exciting and a little scary. Your life will never again be as structured and predictable as it has been during your school years. Fewer decisions will be made for you, and more choices will be ~~yours~~ yours.

As your parents and friends launch you on this adventure, I know they share your excitement. As all ~~the~~ parents do, they want good things for you.

I'm sure every mother in this audience thinks about the first day ~~she~~ her ~~only~~ child went off to school. That same mixture of high ~~and~~ hopes and just a little pain are somewhat the same today.

Those of us ~~we~~ who are older ~~and~~ really can do little more than encourage you to follow your own ~~path~~ dreams. We all hope that ~~you~~ you will continue to grow and learn.

I think of the lines from the poet George Santayana: "It is not wisdom to be only ~~a~~ wise, and ~~only~~ on the inward vision close the eyes, but it is wisdom to believe the heart." That theme of "to your own self be ~~the~~ true" is really the best advice we have.

You are ~~not~~ unique without another duplicate in the world. You have something that only you can give to your community ~~and~~ and to your country.

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As I watched my children graduate, I wanted each of them

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In this year of our Bicentennial, may you use the liberty American gives us to make the world a better place.

rough draft

Central High School Graduation Remarks

It is truly an honor to come back to my own high school after 40 years for your graduation exercises. I know what a special day this is because I've shared it with my four children. This really is a sad-happy day for parents, because we look at our ~~children~~ grown-up children and remember other days.

I wonder if there is a mother in this audience who doesn't think today about the first ^{day} ~~time~~ her child went to school. We send you off to school just as we send you off today---with high hopes and just a little pain.

~~Graduation from high school marks the end of~~

Graduation in a way is like going off to the first grade, but this time will be going off on your own. Perhaps you will continue your formal education or begin your life's work, but whatever your path, you will be more in control of your own life. That's an exciting prospect.

You have your own special hopes and ~~dreams~~ expectations.

I am happy to share this special day in your lives. I am closer to how the parents and friends of the graduates feel today than perhaps the class of 1976. This is a sad-happy day for parents. A parent looks at the high school graduate and sees a little boy or girl the first time on a ~~bike~~ bicycle or remembers watching that small figure walk ~~in~~ into the classroom for the first time ~~for~~ so many years ago.

Now here you are today---~~beginningxxxxxxbeginning~~ ~~in~~ on the threshold of another beginning. ~~The~~ Graduation is ~~unlikexxxxxxx~~ in a way like going to the first grade, but this time you will be on your own---perhaps a job, more education, life more ~~is~~ under your own control. It is both exciting and a little frightening, and there is so little to say as you begin this adventure.

I think about my own graduation 40years ago---how time does fly. Although much has changed in this country, each generation brings to its task a new perspective.

You carry within yourself the potential for personal growth...for exploring new frontiers for seeking out

To me, ~~the~~ America remains the most exciting country in the world, because each individual can become the best of what he wants to be.

We talk about the American dream, and that ~~a~~ really is a collection of all our ~~a~~ dreams. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ You~~x~~ start out ~~many~~ today with many expectations, and no doubt ~~w~~ you will encounter disappointments ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ and surprises. But what really is exciting in our country is that each of us can expect the unexpected. You begin~~g~~ ~~y~~ with your own talents and hopes, and what happens will not always be as your plan. But if you do believe your heart and ~~work~~ discipline yourself to be the best you can be---I believe you will find many rewards.

I think of the parable of the ~~talents~~ talents in the Bible, and of the man who used his one talent well. What is important in all our lives is not ~~is~~ what we have been given in the way of intelligence and talent---but what we do with these gifts.

As I ~~was~~ saw each of my children graduate, I ~~was~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ wanted a good life for them---with friends, family, work to give them a place...love, surprises and I hoped they would have the strength to accept the challenges and

and the grace to accept their blessings. My hopes
for them are the same as I have for you today and
for all young people---good work, ~~good~~ good friends
and unexpected tests of their courage and their abilities.
To each of you---the same.

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Tough Draft // Sheila thought BF could not handle!

Revised Remarks, Central High School Graduation

It is truly an honor for me to return to my own high school after 40 years. That seems a very long time ago. The class of 1963 and the class of 1976 are many years and many changes apart.

Your studies, ^{hopes} ~~clothes~~ and future jobs are different from those of my generation. But I believe each class of graduates and parents have similar emotions and expectations on graduation day.

I've shared this day with my four children, ~~and~~ and I understand ~~what~~ a sad-happy day this is for all of you. For graduates, this ends a very special time in your lives. You will always remember the friends and the fun, but you are looking today for new adventures.

Today you begin to take more control of your own lives and to pursue your own special dreams. Whether you continue your education or start a job, you will make your own decisions. That's both exciting and a little scary.

As your parents and friends launch you on this adventure, they share your excitement. As all parents do, they want good things for you.

I'm sure every ^{and father} mother in this audience ~~remembers~~ remembers the first ⁶ day you went off to school. The same mixture

of high hopes and just a little pain are somewhat the same today.

(It's hard to know what words will help guide you---and which ones you are prepared to accept.

(Each generation finds ~~its~~ its own joys and reacts to its own pains. Your goals ~~and~~ and hopes for yourself^{res} and your country are ~~is~~ different from those of your parents.

(I believe 1976 is a grand time to be young. The Nation has a worklist of problems to be solved, but it has ~~the~~ many resources to do so. Your talent, imagination and hard work can help.

(We are just emerging from a turbulent period, and this is a time of reevaluation. After a period of extreme doubt and agitation, there is a danger of settling into complacency. I hope your generation helps keep America from becoming ~~self~~ self-satisfied.

(Despite important gains in ~~achieving~~ achieving equal rights and responsibilities for ~~blank~~ women and racial minorities, inequities and injustices remain.)

(Despite our technological achievements, we still face an energy crisis.

(The failures of past generations always fall to the young, but be encouraged by America's triumphs and by

the personal achievements of those you admire.

I wish for you today what I wished for my children on their graduation days---may you be the best you can be and may you leave the world around you a better place.

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