

The original documents are located in Box D16, folder “Caledonia High School Commencement Address, June 1962” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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2. thoroughly enjoy commencement. It is a pleasure to finish projects but it is always ^{interesting} to begin ^{new ones}. (2)

Commencement - The word itself indicates a beginning rather than an ending. The degree you receive tonight is a license to tackle new challenges + opportunities across a broad spectrum.

Commencement Address
Columbia H. S.
1962



If one is a PESSIMIST Today There is evidence that we as individuals + our Nation face serious problems + awesome responsibilities. The sky is not all clear. There are some ^{ominous} storm clouds Today and there will be others Tomorrow.

1). Right now - our men in the Army, Navy, Air Force + Marines are:

- a). Patrolling the wall in Berlin.
- b). Instructing, supplying, transporting + accompanying Viet Namese + Thailand forces in the jungle jungles + rice paddies.



2) Today all our citizens are paying the heaviest tax burden in our Nation's history. ⁽⁴⁾

3) ^{Today} Our farmers are confronted with ever increasing problems of financing. ^{The acquisition of land & equipment} The cost price squeeze ^{is worsening} ~~marketing~~ changes & the threat of increased rather than decreasing government intervention.

4) ^{Right now} Investors ^{large & small} who have put their savings in stock & securities have suffered serious economic losses with the wide fluctuations in the stock market.



5) Businessmen at all levels are faced with ^⑤ increased competition at home & abroad.

6) The workman, with apprehension, sees the threat of automation - machines replacing men in the production process.

7) Our national leaders are concerned with our apparent inability to substantially reduce unemployment & eliminate underemployment or chronic economic distress in some geographic areas.

8) All Americans view with alarm the broad challenge of the materialistic, aesthetic dictatorship in the Kremlin.



①

Despite such difficulties, some temporary +
some of long duration, I am an OPTIMIST,
about the future of AMERICA + YOUR opportunities
to make your way successfully + happily.

Let us not be fearful of the ^{omynous} ~~dark~~ clouds.

Let us have faith + Trust in America.



Our nations & our people have moved to
higher & higher plateaus. Certainly in a
relative or comparative sense we have
achieved an all time pinnacle

In my lifetime, even within my memory, we
as citizens of this great land, have been
confronted with equally serious stresses & strains.

a). There was the "call to arms" in W.W.I
W.W.II
Korea

b). There were the trials & tribulations of the Depression
in the 1930's

c). There was the challenge of Hitler in Germany
Mussolini in Italy.

These were days that "tried men's souls."
This was no time for sunshine soldiers & summer patriots.
Yes there were personal tragedies but our people & the Nation responded.
~~So TODAY we move to higher plateaus & are at the pinnacle.~~



Why has ^{America had} this steady climb from 13 poor struggling ^{colonies} states, why have we come from obscurity to the peak in less than 200 years?
To the greatest nation in world history

Because in America we have:

- 1). The finest form of Government ever drafted.
- 2). The finest educational system in the history of man.
- 3). Citizens constructively working on the problems of the day.
- 4). A deep & abiding faith in moral, spiritual & religious values.



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History of Education in America is the constructive ⁽¹³⁾
story of training our People to meet the NEEDS
of our times. This is the true test

Our educational system in the U.S. has
produced to mention a few: Thomas Edison
Henry Ford
O. & W. Wright
Dr. Jonas Salk
Col. John Glenn.

Most importantly, however, Education in America
has ^{traditionally} turned out Citizens who are qualified to meet
the Problems of our Times. & ^{with your knowledge & training} You are the best
evidence of the high calibre of America's educational system.



America has come from the depths of poverty & slavery to the Promised Land.

3) Citizens constructively working at solving the problems of the Day.

In the past 30 days - I have flown to San Francisco

Chicago
Detroit
Birmingham
Des Moines
Calcutta

19,000 miles

1) San Francisco - defense seminar

Industry & military - better weapons, faster
at less cost.

2) Chicago - political meeting.

How citizens can actively participate in the
political party of their choice.

Politics & Politicians - put blood in the veins &
the breath of life in the still bones of a constitutional system

What
Gandhi



3). Detroit - service club convention

How citizens & their local civic organizations can make a greater contribution to the welfare of their communities.

4). Stockholm - conference of representatives

How free nations of the Western World can better organize themselves economically & politically to meet the challenge of the Soviet Union & its satellites.

5). Caledonia - a meeting of citizens to pay tribute to the youth of America as they embark on new careers.



(16)

These meetings are only typical of what
145 million Americans are doing & have done to
make our civilization what it is today.

We must WORK even though progress is slow
& sometimes discouraging.



A deep & abiding FAITH in moral, spiritual (17)
& religious values!

CIA - interview.



Congratulations to you all, good luck, & Godspeed, in a
generation & land that holds brighter promise than any that
ever confronted humankind