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COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS--WISCONSIN STATE U.--JUNE 3, 1966

I LOVE YOUR TOWN AND I AM HAPPY TO BE HERE. IT IS THE KIND OF PLACE THAT SPEAKS TO ME OF ALL AMERICA. WHAT COULD BE MORE AMERICAN THAN A SLOGAN LIKE "OSHKOSH, B' GOSH" OR "WE COVER THE WORLD." SOME PEOPLE CALL THEM COVERALLS; SOME, OVERALLS. TO ME, EITHER WORD SAYS OSHKOSH AND THE ^{very} BEST OF AMERICA.

THIS IS A GREAT ^{growing} STATE UNIVERSITY, AND YOU ARE ASSEMBLED HERE TOGETHER FOR THE LAST TIME. NOT ONE OF YOU KNOWS FOR SURE JUST WHERE YOU WILL BE A YEAR FROM NOW AT THIS VERY HOUR.

^{my} THESE COMMENTS ~~OF MINE~~ ^{will} MAY BE THE LAST WORDS YOU WILL HEAR AT THIS ^{fine} INSTITUTION. WHAT EVERYONE IS MOST INTERESTED IN, HOWEVER, ARE YOUR WORDS AND YOUR THOUGHTS AND YOUR GOALS AS YOU LEAVE AND AS YOU TRAVEL ON.

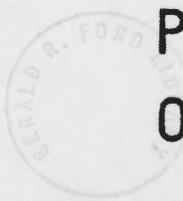


MY THEME TODAY ~~IS A FAMILIAR ONE. IT~~ IS SIMPLY ~~THAT~~,
IN AN AGE WHEN SO MUCH IS SAID OF "TOGETHERNESS,"
APARTNESS DESERVES INCREASINGLY AN EMPHASIS OF ITS OWN.
NO ONE CAN DENY THAT "TOGETHERNESS" -- UNITY -- IS
REQUIRED FOR STRENGTH AND SURVIVAL, FOR THAT OF INDIVI-
DUALS, THE COMMUNITY, AND THE NATION. THE SEEMINGLY
CHAOTIC EVENTS ERUPTING IN THE WORLD ABOUT US MAKE THIS
PARTICULARLY CLEAR. BUT IS IT NOT TRUE ALSO, THAT APART-
NESS OF THE RIGHT KIND, THAT IS, PLACING AN EQUAL EMPHASIS
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL, IS REQUIRED FOR
FULFILLMENT AND FOR PROGRESS?

THE GREAT PROBLEMS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY INDIVIDUAL
PROBLEMS. THE GREAT DECISIONS MUST, THEREFORE, INITIALLY
BE INDIVIDUAL DECISIONS. SENSITIVITY, APPRECIATION AND

COMPREHENSION ARE ALWAYS, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, QUALITIES AND FUNCTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE. THE ASSEMBLY LINES OF MODERN EDUCATION, AS WELL AS THOSE OF MODERN INDUSTRY, AND JUST CONCEIVABLY THOSE OF MODERN POLITICS, ARE QUITE CAPABLE OF SWEEPING US PAST OPPORTUNITIES LIFE OFFERS US AS INDIVIDUALS FOR MAKING OUR OWN CLEAR-HEADED, QUIET DECISIONS AS TO THE COURSE WE WISH TO FOLLOW.

I HOPE THAT IN THIS RESPECT YOU WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY COLOR ME REPUBLICAN. ^{*although I am proud to be one.*} RESPECT FOR AND EMPHASIS UPON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IS NOT A PARTISAN NOR EVEN A POLITICAL CONSIDERATION. IT HAS BEEN THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION AND OF EMPHASIS BY THE GREATEST OF THE PHILOSOPHERS. IT HAS BEEN THE INTELLECTUAL REQUIREMENT OF THE GREATEST OF THE TEACHERS THROUGHOUT THE AGES.



IT HAS BEEN THE RECURRENT THEME AND THE PREACHMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE CLOTH OF ALL FAITHS SINCE THE DAWNING OF TIME--FOR WE ARE INDEED CREATED IN HIS SOLE AND INDIVIDUAL IMAGE AND LIKENESS.

LET ME AT THIS POINT REASSURE YOU THAT, PERHAPS IN A DEPARTURE FROM THE TRADITION OF COMMENCEMENT ADDRESSES, IT IS NOT MY INTENTION TO DEPLORE, TO DISCOURAGE, OR TO DESPAIR. I DO NOT BELIEVE, DESPITE THE ENORMITY OF THE PROBLEMS WE FACE, THAT THEY ARE INSOLUBLE. I DO NOT FOR A SINGLE SECOND BELIEVE THAT YOUR GENERATION IS EITHER INCAPABLE OF FINDING THE SOLUTIONS TO MANY OF THEM OR UNWILLING TO FACE THE NECESSITY TO DO SO. I CANNOT AGREE, I HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO AGREE, WITH THOSE WHO PERIODICALLY LOOK ABOUT THEM AND VIEW THIS AS THE WORST OF ALL



POSSIBLE WORLDS. NOR AM I WILLING TO CONCEDE THAT MY GENERATION, AND THOSE WHICH PRECEDED MINE, HAVE DONE AS BAD A JOB OF IT AS MANY ^{dolefully} PROCLAIM.

^{for example} THE HEALTH OF OUR PEOPLE HAS BEEN IMMEASURABLY ENHANCED ~~BOTH~~ ^{the gains of} THROUGH MEDICAL ^{pioneers in the laboratory and with the patient} ACHIEVEMENT, AND ~~LEGISLATIVE ACTION~~. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND METHODS HAVE BEEN IMPROVED BEYOND ALL THE EXPECTATIONS OF FIFTY YEARS AGO, THROUGH THE CONCERTED ACTION OF EDUCATORS, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS AND ENLIGHTENED HOLDERS OF ELECTED OFFICE. WORKING CONDITIONS AND RETIREMENT AND PENSION PROVISIONS HAVE BEEN IMPROVED TREMENDOUSLY THROUGH THE CLOSE COOPERATION OF MANAGEMENT, LABOR AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. CIVIL RIGHTS--AND CIVIL LIBERTIES--HAVE, THROUGH VIGOROUS BIPARTISAN DETERMINATION IN THE CONGRESS AND IN OUR STATE

LEGISLATURES, BEEN MULTIPLIED AND STRENGTHENED REMARKABLY IN THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS ALONE.

THAT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE IS UNDENIABLE, BUT THAT GREAT OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN TO BE SEIZED IS CRYSTAL CLEAR. TO SUGGEST OR TO MAINTAIN THAT, IN THIS AWESOME NUCLEAR AGE, THERE CAN BE NEITHER HOPE NOR CONFIDENCE IS POPPY-
COCK. OUR DAYS ARE NO LONGER THAN THOSE OF OUR FORE-
FATHERS, OUR NIGHTS ARE NO DARKER. AND IF THERE IS AN ADVANTAGE THAT IS OURS IT LIES IN THE FACT THAT THEY STOOD SO TALL BEFORE US, STRODE SO CONFIDENTLY AND MAINTAINED SO WELL FOR US THIS ^{Republic} ~~DEMOCRACY~~ IN WHICH WE LIVE.

I MUST CONFESS THAT I FIND MYSELF IN THE POSITION OF THE MAN WHO, AFTER LISTENING AT LENGTH TO SOME OF THE WEIGHTIEST MINDS OF HIS GENERATION DESPAIR AS TO THE

FUTURE, REMARKED INNOCENTLY. "I TOO AM TRYING TO BE PHILOSOPHICAL ABOUT THIS WORLD OF OURS, BUT I GUESS I JUST DON'T KNOW HOW. CHEERFULNESS KEEPS CREEPING IN."

FOR ME, CHEERFULNESS KEEPS CREEPING IN FOR MANY REASONS:

- BECAUSE OF THE YOUNG AND VIGOROUS STRENGTH AND HOPE YOU HERE TODAY REPRESENT,
- BECAUSE OF THE INFINITE HUMAN, NATURAL AND INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES OUR NATION POSSESSES,
- BECAUSE WE ARE NOW, AS WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN, "INVOLVED IN MANKIND."

WE ARE DETERMINED TO HOLD AND JUSTIFY OUR PLACE OF HONOR IN THE FAMILY OF NATIONS. OUR PLACE OF STRENGTH AND RESPECT IN THE CIVILIZED HISTORY OF MAN.

WHEN I SPEAK, HOWEVER, OF THE OPPORTUNITY BEFORE YOU

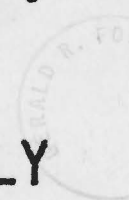
FOR PERSONAL SATISFACTION, SUBSTANTIAL ACHIEVEMENT, AND TOTAL FULFILLMENT, I THINK WITH EQUAL WEIGHT OF AN OBLIGATION THAT IS PECULIARLY AND UNDENIABLY YOURS AS MEMBERS OF A HIGHLY FAVORED AND GREATLY BLESSED SEGMENT OF OUR SOCIETY--THAT OF THE EDUCATED MAN AND WOMAN.

AS A MEMBER OF THE CONGRESS, TO BE SURE, BUT EQUALLY AS A HUSBAND AND A FATHER AND A WORKING CITIZEN, I SEE YOUR OPPORTUNITY AND OBLIGATION INEXTRICABLY COUPLED IN THREE SPECIFIC AREAS OF DUTY: THE DUTY TO THINK, THE DUTY TO VOTE, THE DUTY TO ACT.

OF THESE THREE, THE MOST IMPORTANT AND THE MOST DIFFICULT IS THAT OF THE DUTY TO THINK. FOR, DESPITE THE ACADEMIC AND INTELLECTUAL ADVANTAGES THAT HAVE BEEN YOURS, THE PROCESS OF THINKING AS AN INDIVIDUAL, IN

TOTAL INDEPENDENCE OF OUTSIDE INFLUENCE AND PRESSURE, IS
PERHAPS THE MOST DEMANDING THAT ANY MAN OR WOMAN FACES.

IN THE WORLD OF POLITICS TODAY, AT A TIME WHEN
POLITICS IS AND WILL EVERMORE BE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS,
YOU ARE CHARGED AS INDIVIDUALS BY BOTH CONSCIENCE AND
CIRCUMSTANCE WITH THE DUTY TO THINK. THIS IS THE DUTY
TO EXAMINE ISSUES IN THE GREATEST POSSIBLE DETAIL, TO
QUESTION THE OBVIOUS--BOTH THE OBVIOUS DOGMA AND THE
OBVIOUS PROCLAIMERS OF IT--TO ASK YOURSELF, QUITE BY
YOURSELF, ^① WHETHER THIS ISSUE OR THAT IS A VALID ONE,
^② WHETHER THIS CANDIDATE OR THAT IS THE PREFERABLE ONE,
^③ WHETHER THIS VIEWPOINT OR THAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE ONE,
^{2 urge} ~~AND~~ IN THIS PROCESS TO RESIST THE PRESSURE AND THE
PROPAGANDA OF PREFABRICATED INFLUENCE--JUST POSSIBLY
EVEN THAT OF YOUR CLOSEST ASSOCIATES AND FRIENDS.



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IS ALWAYS DRAMATICALLY ILLUSTRATED BY HIS USE OF THE THINKING-MAN'S FILTER. ONLY BY ITS INDIVIDUAL AND COLDLY (OR WARMLY) INTELLECTUAL USE CAN YOU ARRIVE AT OPINIONS AND DECISIONS THAT ARE WORTHY OF AN INQUIRING MIND.

IN TANDEM WITH THIS DUTY TO THINK, THERE OF COURSE COMES YOUR DUTY TO VOTE. THIS, | ESPECIALLY NOW, | IS A DUTY WHICH, IF NOT FULFILLED, CAN REPRESENT DISASTER FOR YOU AND YOURS, BUT WHICH, IF EXERCISED CAN REPRESENT NOT ONLY SATISFACTION BUT, | I DARE TO SAY IT, | SALVATION.

EDMUND BURKE'S DICTUM STILL VIBRATES WITH TRUTH: "ALL THAT IS REQUIRED FOR THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL IS THAT GOOD MEN SHALL DO NOTHING."

There is also the appropriate quote from the great Italian poet, Dante, "The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in a period of great moral crisis do nothing."

DO YOU CLASSIFY YOURSELF AS A LIBERAL, A CONSERVATIVE,

OR AS A MODERATE WALKER-DOWN-THE-MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD? —

Insert ^{will} HAVE YOU ASKED YOURSELF THIS IN CONSIDERATION OF EACH
OF THE POLITICAL ISSUES OF OUR TIME? WILL YOU ASK
YOURSELF THIS — ^{will you} [IN AN HONEST SEARCH FOR A RATIONAL ANSWER] —
AS YOU PREPARE TO CAST YOUR ~~FUTURE~~ VOTES, BOTH ON ISSUES
AND FOR OR AGAINST INDIVIDUALS? WILL YOU, FOR EXAMPLE,
IF A LIBERAL, ^{will you} BE PREPARED TO SHARE THE ^{vehement} BLIND PARTISANSHIP
WHICH CHARACTERIZES SOME OF ^{those at that far out fringe of the political spectrum} OUR ALLEGED LIBERALS? WILL
YOU, AS A PRIDEFUL MODERATE, BE SATISFIED TO WALK
DELICATELY DOWN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD, FEARFUL OF RISK
AT EITHER HAND AND HOPEFUL THAT SOMEHOW YOUR NEAR-
NEUTRAL POSITION WILL, BY ITSELF, REPRESENT YOUR BEST
THOUGHT AND YOUR BEST VOTE?

THERE ARE MANY CITIZENS AND VOTERS NOWADAYS, AS IN

DECADES PAST, WHO EXPECT OF THEIR POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES AND LEADERS THE VISION TO SEE THINGS, THE JUDGMENT TO SEE THROUGH THINGS, THE FAITH TO SEE THINGS THROUGH-- ~~WITH WHAT~~ ^{THIS} IS OBVIOUSLY AN IMPOSSIBLE IDEALISM. AT THE VERY SAME TIME, THEY EXPECT AND DEMAND INFINITELY LESS OF THEMSELVES, FULLY CONTENT TO THINK BRIEFLY, IF AT ALL, TO VOTE QUICKLY, IF AT ALL, AND TO EXPECT MIRACLES. ^{from the White House to the Court House,}

CONVERSELY, THERE ARE POLITICIANS AND INDIVIDUALS, WHO DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS LOOK EXPECTANTLY TO THE ELECTORATE ALONE FOR GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION, QUITE UNWILLING TO RISK AN INDIVIDUAL OPINION OR CONVICTION FOR FEAR OF EXTINCTION AT THE POLLS.

IT IS REQUIRED, YOU SEE, NOT ALONE OF YOU BUT OF OUR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN ALL PARTIES, THAT THE IMPORTANCE

OF INDIVIDUAL THOUGHT AND TRULY INDIVIDUAL VOTING BE
PARAMOUNT, | EVER DOMINATING GROUP AND PARTY AND OTHER
PRESSURE, WHETHER OF A POLITICAL OR INTELLECTUAL OR
ECONOMIC KIND.

WHEN, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE COME BEFORE THE CONGRESS
SUCH ISSUES OF A COMPLEX AND PERPLEXING NATURE AS
FOREIGN AID, FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION, REAPPORTIONMENT
OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS, UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE,
APPROPRIATIONS MEASURES AMOUNTING TO BILLIONS UPON
BILLIONS OF DOLLARS THAT WILL EFFECT THE FUTURE OF
EVERY FAMILY IN THE NATION, THERE IS REQUIRED OF EACH
MEMBER OF THE CONGRESS THE MOST INTENT, THE MOST
INDEPENDENT, THE BEST THOUGHT HE CAN POSSIBLY BRING TO
THE MEASURE. THERE IS REQUIRED EQUALLY THEREFORE, ~~A~~

~~PRIOR~~, THE FINEST POSSIBLE REPRESENTATION IN THE CONGRESS THAT YOU, BY YOUR BALLOTS, CAN PRODUCE.

FINALLY, LET ME SUGGEST THAT YOU HAVE THE DUTY TO ACT CONTINUINGLY IN EXTENSION AND FULFILLMENT OF YOUR THINKING AND IN JUSTIFICATION OF YOUR VOTE. TODAY'S PROBLEMS WILL BE SOLVED ONLY BY CONTINUING THOUGHT AND POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC ACTION ON THE PART OF SUCH AS YOU. THEY WILL BE SOLVED ONLY BY THOSE WHO, HAVING USED THEIR GOD-GIVEN RESOURCES OF THE MIND AND THEIR FREEDOM-BORN GIFT OF THE VOTE, ARE WILLING TO WORK WITH UNFLAGGING INTEREST AND ZEAL TO REALIZE THEIR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE DREAMS.

TO THE IMAGE OF THE THINKING-MAN'S FILTER, LET ME ADD THAT OF THE DISTILLATION OF THOUGHT CALLED WISDOM, WHICH

MUST BE ITS INEVITABLE PRODUCT. THIS REQUIRES OF YOU, AS IT HAS REQUIRED INCREASINGLY OF EACH GENERATION, THAT IN ONE RESPECT YOU BE CONSERVATIVE AND DRAW FROM THE PAST THE VERY BEST IT HAS TO OFFER FOR APPLICATION TO TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S NEEDS. IT REQUIRES OF YOU SIMILARLY THAT YOU CHALLENGE BOTH THE OBVIOUS AND THE DEVIOUS, BE PREPARED TO ENTERTAIN NEW IDEAS AS THEY PROVE TO YOU TO BE TRUE IDEAS, AND TO DEMAND THAT BOTH THE PROVEN AND THE PROMISING BE IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVELY FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD.

IN THIS EFFORT YOU WILL ENCOUNTER AREAS AND FORCES OF MOMENTARY DISCOURAGEMENT. THERE ARE STILL THOSE AMONG US IN PUBLIC LIFE AND IN PRIVATE LIFE WHO ARE CARRYING ON ARDENT LOVE AFFAIRS WITH THE PAST AND WHO CANNOT

looking backward when we must look forward.

BE MOVED FROM ~~THIS~~, TO ~~THEM~~, HAPPY EXERCISE. THIS IS PURE
BOURBONISM--NOT THE KIND YOU DRINK, BUT THE KIND YOU
THINK--~~IF YOU ARE NOT CAREFUL.~~

THE OTHER PRINCIPAL FACTOR AND FORCE IN OPPOSITION
TO YOU IS THAT OF THE ^{radical} MILITANT LEFT, WHICH BELIEVES THAT
INCREASED RELIANCE UPON GOVERNMENT PATERNALISM AND THE
SECURITY IT PROMISES IS NOT ONLY THE WAVE, BUT THE MAGIC
WAND OF THE FUTURE. ^{Can a} ~~NO~~ THINKING MAN OR WOMAN ~~CAN~~

RATIONALLY ACCEPT ANY SUCH VIEWS, SUCH PHILOSOPHIES,
Let me remind you a government big enough to give us everything we want is a government big enough to take from us everything we have.
SUCH FALSE PANACEAS? ¹ ~~CONTINUED AND UNDILUTED EXTREMISM~~
~~IN POLITICAL THOUGHT, AS IN INDIVIDUAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY,~~
~~CAN BRING NOTHING BUT DISAPPOINTMENT AND DISASTER.~~


I URGE UPON YOU, THEREFORE, A QUIET CONSIDERATION OF
THE POSITION AND THE POWER OF THE GENUINE MODERATE IN

OUR SOCIETY. THIS IS A POSITION AND A POWER RESPECTED THROUGH THE AGES BY THOSE WHO THINK, BY THOSE WHO ARE QUITE WILLING TO HEAR AND TO ASSESS THE ARGUMENTS OF ^{those} ~~THE~~ *at either end of the political spectrum* ~~BOURBON AND OF THE AVANT-GARDE~~, BUT WHO THEN AND ONLY THEN, WITH A FIERCE INDIVIDUAL PRIDE OF MIND, DETERMINE FOR THEMSELVES WHAT THE NEXT BEST MOVE SHOULD BE.

THE DUTY TO THINK, THE DUTY TO VOTE, THE DUTY TO ACT-- THESE REPRESENT YOUR OPPORTUNITY AND YOUR OBLIGATION AS GRADUATES OF THIS UNIVERSITY AND CITIZENS IN THIS SOCIETY. FAILURE TO SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY AND TO ACCEPT THIS OBLIGATION WILL RESULT INEVITABLY IN YOUR LEAVING NOTHING BUT YOUR SEAT-PRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME. MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISINTEGRATION AND DESTRUCTION OF ALL THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN US OF BEAUTY AND

GOODNESS BY THOSE WHO HAVE WALKED BEFORE.

I AM TOLD BY SOME THAT THE ALARMS AND FEARS OF THIS
AWESOME NUCLEAR AGE⁽¹⁾ HAVE DISCOURAGED COUNTLESS OF OUR
YOUNG PEOPLE,⁽²⁾ HAVE CAUSED THEIR HOPES AND DREAMS TO WILT,
AND⁽³⁾ HAVE LEFT THEM DESPONDENT AND CYNICAL AS TO ANY
FULFILLMENT WHATSOEVER IN THE YEARS TO COME. I DO NOT
BELIEVE THIS FOR A MOMENT, NOR DO YOU. IF I DID, I
WOULD HAVE BECOME DESPONDENT AND CYNICAL AND WOULD LONG
SINCE HAVE CEASED TO LABOR IN THE POLITICAL VINEYARD FOR
THOSE THINGS IN WHICH I DO SO TRULY BELIEVE.



I AM NOT IN THE LEAST DISCOURAGED. I REFUSE TO DESPAIR.
AND I SAY TO YOU FONDLY, BUT FLATLY, THAT YOU HAVE NO
REASON TO DO SO EITHER. IN EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY'S
SUPERB PHRASING. "I KNOW, BUT I DO NOT APPROVE AND I

AM NOT RESIGNED."

IT WAS IN THE YEAR 1785, WE ARE TOLD, THAT A REMARKABLE METEOROLOGICAL PHENOMENON OCCURRED WHICH ONE DAY AT HIGH NOON BLACKED OUT THE SUN OVER A LARGE PART OF NEW ENGLAND, LEAVING THE AREA IN A DARKNESS AS DEEP AS THAT OF MIDNIGHT. SO SUDDEN AND SO UNUSUAL WAS THE OCCURRENCE THAT CHICKENS WENT TO ROOST, BATS BEGAN TO FLY AND THE POPULACE IN MANY PLACES RAN PANIC-STRICKEN THROUGH THE STREETS, BELIEVING THE END OF THE WORLD TO BE AT HAND.

IN THAT HOUR IN HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, THE ^{state} LEGISLATURE WAS IN SESSION AND AN IMMEDIATE MOTION OF ADJOURNMENT WAS MADE, BUT THERE AROSE TO CHALLENGE THE MOTION ONE ABRAHAM DAVENPORT, A GREAT YANKEE CITIZEN, AN INTIMATE FRIEND OF GEORGE WASHINGTON'S. SAID DAVENPORT, "EITHER

THE END OF THE WORLD IS HERE OR IT IS NOT. IF IT IS NOT, THERE IS NO NEED FOR ADJOURNMENT. IF IT IS, I CHOOSE TO BE FOUND DOING MY DUTY. I WISH, THEREFORE, THAT CANDLES MAY BE BROUGHT."

THROUGH THE AGES, THE DOING OF ONE'S DUTY HAS ALWAYS SEEMED A FORMIDABLE AND HARSH REQUIREMENT. IT CAN BE THIS, OF COURSE. BUT, EQUALLY FOR YOU NOW, THE DOING OF YOUR DUTY AS A THINKING INDIVIDUAL WILL NOT ONLY ASSURE THE PRESERVATION OF THIS NATION AND OF FREEDOM BUT WILL, I SUGGEST, BRING TO YOU THE GREATEST JOY AND FULFILLMENT AS A PERSON THAT YOU ARE EVER LIKELY TO KNOW.

---END---



B. Rotun

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS -- WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY -- JUNE 3, 1966

I love your town and I am happy to be here. It is the kind of place that speaks to me of all America. What could be more American than a slogan like "Oshkosh, B'Gosh" or "We Cover the World." Some people call them coveralls; some, overalls. To me, either word says Oshkosh and the very best of America.

This is a great growing state university, and you are assembled here together for the last time. Not one of you knows for sure just where you will be a year from now at this very hour.

My comments may well be the last words you will hear at this fine institution. What everyone is most interested in, however, are your words and your thoughts and your goals as you leave and as you travel on.

My theme today is simple. In an age when so much is said of "togetherness," apartness deserves increasingly an emphasis of its own. No one can deny that "togetherness" -- unity -- is required for strength and survival, for that of individuals, the community, and the nation. The seemingly chaotic events erupting in the world about us make this particularly clear. But ^{is} ~~it~~ it not true also, that apartness of the right kind, that is, placing an equal emphasis on the importance of the individual, is required for fulfillment and for progress?

The great problems are fundamentally individual problems. The great decisions must, therefore, initially be individual decisions. Sensitivity, appreciation and comprehension are always, in the first instance, qualities and functions of individual experience. The assembly



lines of modern education, as well as those of modern industry, and just conceivably those of modern politics, are quite capable of sweeping us past opportunities life offers us as individuals for making our own clear-headed, quiet decisions as to the course we wish to follow.

I hope that in this respect you will not automatically color me Republican, although I am proud to be one. Respect for and emphasis upon the importance of the individual is not a partisan nor even a political consideration. It has been the focus of attention and of emphasis by the greatest of the philosophers. It has been the intellectual requirement of the greatest of the teachers throughout the ages. It has been the recurrent theme and the preachment of members of the cloth of all faiths since the dawning of time -- for we are indeed created in His sole and individual image and likeness.

Let me at this point reassure you that, perhaps in a departure from the tradition of commencement addresses, it is not my intention to deplore, to discourage, or to despair. I do not believe, despite the enormity of the problems we face, that they are insoluble. I do not for a single second believe that your generation is either incapable of finding the solutions to many of them or unwilling to face the necessity to do so. I cannot agree, I have never been able to agree, with those who periodically look about them and view this as the worst of all possible worlds. Nor am I willing to concede that my generation, and those which preceded mine, have done as bad a job of it as many dolefully proclaim.

For example, the health of our people has been immeasurably en-



hanced through the genius of medical pioneers in the laboratories and with the patient. Educational facilities and methods have been improved beyond all the expectations of fifty years ago, through the concerted action of educators, public administrators and enlightened holders of elected office. Working conditions and retirement and pension provisions have been improved tremendously through the close cooperation of management, labor and political leadership. Civil rights -- and civil liberties -- have, through vigorous bipartisan determination in the Congress and in our State legislatures, been multiplied and strengthened remarkably in the past fifteen years alone.

That much remains to be done is undeniable, but that great opportunities remain to be seized is crystal clear. To suggest or to maintain that, in this awesome nuclear age, there can be neither hope nor confidence is poppycock. Our days are no longer than those of our forefathers, our nights are no darker. And if there is an advantage that is ours it lies in the fact that they stood so tall before us, strode so confidently and maintained so well for us this Republic in which we live.

I must confess that I find myself in the position of the man who, after listening at length to some of the weightiest minds of his generation despair as to the future, remarked innocently, "I too am trying to be philosophical about this world of ours, but I guess I just don't know how. Cheerfulness keeps creeping in."

For me, cheerfulness keeps creeping in for many reasons:

-- Because of the young and vigorous strength and hope you here today represent,

-- because of the infinite human, natural and industrial resources our nation possesses,



-- because we are now, as we have always been, "involved in mankind."

We are determined to hold and justify our place of honor in the family of nations. Our place of strength and respect in the civilized history of man.

When I speak, however, of the opportunity before you for personal satisfaction, substantial achievement, and total fulfillment, I think with equal weight of an obligation that is peculiarly and undeniably yours as members of a highly favored and greatly blessed segment of our society -- that of the educated man and woman.

As a member of the Congress, to be sure, but equally as a husband and a father and a working citizen, I see your opportunity and obligation inextricably coupled in three specific areas of duty: the duty to think, the duty to vote, the duty to act.

Of these three, the most important and the most difficult is that of the duty to think. For, despite the academic and intellectual advantages that have been yours, the process of thinking as an individual, in total independence of outside influence and pressure, is perhaps the most demanding that any man or woman faces.

In the world of politics today, at a time when politics is and will evermore be everybody's business, you are charged as individuals by both conscience and circumstance with the duty to think. This is the duty to examine issues in the greatest possible detail, to question the obvious -- both the obvious dogma and the obvious proclaimers of it -- to ask yourself, quite by yourself, (1) whether this issue ^{or} that is a valid one, (2) whether this candidate or that is the preferable one, (3) whether this viewpoint or that is an acceptable one. I urge in




this process to resist the pressure and the propaganda of prefabricated influence -- just possibly even that of your closest associates and friends.

The importance of the individual is always dramatically illustrated by his use of the thinking-man's filter. Only by its individual and coldly (or warmly) intellectual use can you arrive at opinions and decisions that are worthy of an inquiring mind.

In tandem with this duty to think, there of course comes your duty to vote. This, especially now, is a duty which, if not fulfilled, can represent disaster for you and yours, but which, if exercised can represent not only satisfaction but, I dare to say it, salvation. Edmund Burke's dictum still vibrates with truth: "All that is required for the triumph of evil is that good men shall do nothing." There is also the appropriate quote from the great Italian poet, Dante, "The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in a period of great moral crisis do nothing."

Do you classify yourself as a liberal, a conservative, or as a moderate walker-down-the-middle-of-the-road? Will you ask yourself this in consideration of each of the political issues of our time, as you prepare to cast your votes on issues and for or against individuals? If a liberal, will you be prepared to share the vehement partisanship which characterizes some of those at that far-out fringe of the political spectrum? Will you, as a prideful moderate, be satisfied to walk delicately down the middle of the road, fearful of risk at either hand and hopeful that somehow your near-neutral position will, by itself, represent your best thought and your best vote?



There are many citizens and voters nowadays, as in decades past, who expect of their political representatives and leaders the vision to see things, the judgment to see through things, the faith to see things through -- this is obviously an impossible idealism. At the very same time, they expect and demand infinitely less of themselves, fully content to think briefly, if at all, to vote quickly, if at all, and to expect miracles from the White House to the Court House.

Conversely, there are politicians and individuals, who down through the years look expectantly to the electorate alone for guidance and direction, quite unwilling to risk an individual opinion or conviction for fear of extinction at the polls.

It is required, you see, not alone of you but of our political leadership in all parties, that the importance of individual thought and truly individual voting be paramount, ever dominating group and party and other pressure, whether of a political or intellectual or economic kind.

When, for example, there come before the Congress such issues of a complex and perplexing nature as foreign aid, federal aid to education, reapportionment of Congressional districts, unemployment insurance, appropriations measures amounting to billions upon billions of dollars that will effect the future of every family in the nation, there is required of each member of the Congress the most intent, the most independent, the best thought he can possibly bring to the measure. There is required equally therefore, the finest possible representation in the Congress that you, by your ballots, can produce.

Finally, let me suggest that you have the duty to act continually

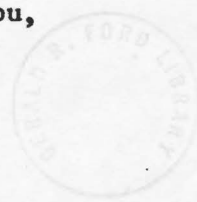


in extension and fulfillment of your thinking and in justification of your vote. Today's problems will be solved only by continuing thought and political, social, and economic action on the part of such as you. They will be solved only by those who, having used their God-given resources of the mind and their freedom-born gift of the vote, are willing to work with unflagging interest and zeal to realize their individual and collective dreams.

To the image of the thinking-man's filter, let me add that of the distillation of thought called wisdom, which must be its inevitable product. This requires of you, as it has required increasingly of each generation, that in one respect you be conservative and draw from the past the very best it has to offer for application to today's and tomorrow's needs. It requires of you similarly that you challenge both the obvious and the devious, be prepared to entertain new ideas as they prove to you to be true ideas, and to demand that both the proven and the promising be implemented effectively for the public good.

In this effort you will encounter areas and forces of momentary discouragement. There are still those among us in public life and in private life who are carrying on ardent love affairs with the past and who cannot be moved from looking backward when we must look forward. This is pure Bourbonism -- not the kind you drink, but the kind you think.

The other principal factor and force in opposition to you is that of the radical, militant ^{LEFT} ~~^~~, which believes that increased reliance upon government paternalism and the security it promises is not only the wave, but the magic wand of the future. Can a thinking man or woman rationally accept any such ~~views~~, such philosophies, such panaceas? Let me remind you,



a government big enough to give us everything we want is a government big enough to take from us everything we have.

I urge upon you, therefore, a quiet consideration of the position and the power of the genuine moderate in our society. This is a position and a power respected through the ages by those who think, by those who are quite willing to hear and to assess the arguments of those at either end of the political spectrum, but who then and only then, with a fierce individual pride of mind, determine for themselves what the next best move should be.

The duty to think, the duty to vote, the duty to act -- these represent your opportunity and your obligation as graduates of this university and citizens in this society. Failure to seize this opportunity and to accept this obligation will result inevitably in your leaving nothing but your seat-prints on the sands of time. More importantly, it will contribute to the disintegration and destruction of all that has been given us of beauty and goodness by those who have walked before.

I am told by some that the alarms and fears of this awesome nuclear age (1) have discouraged countless of our young people, (2) have caused their hopes and dreams to wilt, and (3) have left them despondent and cynical as to any fulfillment whatsoever in the years to come. I do not believe this for a moment, nor do you. If I did, I would have become despondent and cynical and would long since have ceased to labor in the political vineyard for those things in which I do so truly believe.

I am not in the least discouraged. I refuse to despair. And I say to you fondly, but flatly, that you have no reason to do so either. In Edna St. Vincent Millay's superb phrasing, "I know, but I do not approve

and I am not resigned."

It was in the year 1785, we are told, that a remarkable meteorological phenomenon occurred which one day at high noon blacked out the sun over a large part of New England, leaving the area in a darkness as deep as that of midnight. So sudden and so unusual was the occurrence that chickens went to roost, bats began to fly and the populace in many places ran panic-stricken through the streets, believing the end of the world to be at hand.

In that hour in Hartford, Connecticut, the State legislature was in session and an immediate motion of adjournment was made, but there arose to challenge the motion one Abraham Davenport, a great Yankee citizen, an intimate friend of George Washington. Said Davenport, "Either the end of the world is here or it is not. If it is not, there is no need for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought."

Through the ages, the doing of one's duty has always seemed a formidable and harsh requirement. It can be this, of course. But, equally for you now, the doing of your duty as a thinking individual will not only assure the preservation of this nation and of freedom but will, I suggest, bring to you the greatest joy and fulfillment as a person that you are ever likely to know.

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