

The original documents are located in Box 20, “11/14/75 - Remarks at the Observance of the 50th Anniversary of North Carolina Central University, Durham, North Carolina” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

NOVEMBER 14, 1975

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.

THANK YOU, GOVERNOR HOLSHAUSER

DR. WHITING (Phonetic - WHITE - ING) (NCCU Chancellor)

DR. FRIDAY (President, N. C. School System)

REV. COUSIN

STUDENTS, FACULTY AND GUESTS

I DEEPLY APPRECIATE THE HONOR YOU HAVE GRANTED ME
TODAY AND LET ME THANK YOU ALL MOST SINCERELY FOR MAKING ME
A PART OF THE DISTINGUISHED FAMILY OF NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL
UNIVERSITY. THANKS TO YOUR WARMTH, YOUR SPIRIT AND
YOUR ENTHUSIASM -- THIS IS ONE EAGLE WHO IS REALLY
FLYING HIGH!

BUT I JUST WONDER IF, IN YOUR GENEROSITY,
YOU REALIZE WHAT A BUSY DAY YOU HAVE MADE FOR ME ON
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22ND. NORMALLY, I WOULD SPEND
IT ROOTING FOR THE MICHIGAN WOLVERINES TO BEAT OHIO STATE.
BUT THIS YEAR, AS AN N.C.C.U. ALUMNUS, YOU CAN BET THAT
I'LL ALSO BE ROOTING FOR THE EAGLES TO BEAT A & T.

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE AND A DISTINCT HONOR FOR ME
TO BE WITH YOU AS YOU OBSERVE THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY YEAR
OF THE FOUNDING OF NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY AS A
STATE-SUPPORTED LIBERAL ARTS INSTITUTION. YOUR UNIVERSITY
THUS BECAME THE FIRST STATE-SUPPORTED LIBERAL ARTS SCHOOL FOR
BLACKS IN THE NATION.

SINCE THEN, GRADUATES OF NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL

HAVE MADE A MARK IN ALMOST EVERY WALK OF AMERICAN LIFE.

I AM SURE THAT THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE NOW STUDENTS WILL

ULTIMATELY DO THE SAME. THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE --

WHETHER IN THE CLASS-ROOM, ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD OR

IN POLITICS -- IS NO STRANGER TO YOUR ALUMNI AND STUDENTS.

NAMES LIKE MAYNARD JACKSON, MAYOR OF ATLANTA . . .

RONALD BARBEE, FIRST BLACK REPUBLICAN SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE

IN THE STATE . . . AARON SPAULDING, A MEMBER OF MY STAFF

AT THE WHITE HOUSE . . . HIGH HURDLER LEE CALHOUN,

TWO-TIME OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL WINNER, WHO IS PRESENTLY

HEAD TRACK COACH AT YALE UNIVERSITY . . .

CHARLES FOSTER, WORLD PREMIER HURDLER. . . RONNIE RAY,

WHO WON TWO GOLD MEDALS AT THE 1975 PAN AMERICAN GAMES

IN MEXICO CITY AND WHO CURRENTLY HOLDS THE 400-METER

WORLD RECORD. . . AND CERTAINLY NOT LAST IN ANY COMPETITION,

YOUR VERY POPULAR TRACK COACH, DR. LEROY T. WALKER,

WHO WILL COACH OUR 1976 OLYMPIC TRACK AND FIELD TEAM.

AT THIS TIME, OUR NATION IS ALSO CELEBRATING AN
ANNIVERSARY -- THE AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL. AS WE REFLECT
ON THESE 200 YEARS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE ALMOST ANY
AMERICAN ENDEAVOR WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING THE GREAT
CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACKS TO OUR SOCIETY.

MUSIC, ART, CULTURE, SCIENCE, MEDICINE, SPORTS --

N.C.C.U. ALUMNI ARE ALL THERE.

DESPITE THE BURDENS. . . DESPITE THE ADDED

DIFFICULTIES. . . BLACKS HAVE ENTERED ALL TYPES OF AMERICAN

COMPETITION AND COME OUT NATIONAL CHAMPIONS -- INDEED,

NATIONAL HEROES.

THERE IS A LESSON FOR ALL OF US IN THE HISTORY OF

AMERICAN BLACKS AND THAT LESSON IS THIS: TO DEVELOP TO

OUR MAXIMUM THE WILL, THE DESIRE TO COMPETE, TO EXCEL.

THAT IS WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT: TO ACHIEVE, TO REACH A

WORTHY GOAL. AND BLACKS - IN INCREASING NUMBER -

HAVE ATTAINED MANY WORTHY GOALS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.

THE WHOLE THRUST OF HUMANITY IS ONE OF PROGRESS.

IT HAS TAKEN THOUSANDS OF YEARS BUT TODAY WE HAVE GAINED

UNPARALLELED MASTERY OVER THE MATERIAL WORLD. AT THE SAME

TIME, THE NATIONS AND SOCIETIES OF THE WORLD ARE BECOMING

MORE AND MORE INTER-DEPENDENT. LET ME OFFER ANOTHER WORD

FOR INTER-DEPENDENCE -- NEIGHBORLINESS.

WE ARE LIVING AT A TIME WHEN MANY OF THE CURRENTS
OF HISTORY ARE COMING TOGETHER. THE WORLD IS RECOGNIZING
SLOWLY BUT SURELY THE NECESSITY TO HARMONIZE OUR
CIVILIZATION.

I AM AN OPTIMIST. I BELIEVE WE MAY YET ATTAIN

MAN'S GREATEST GOALS AND NOBLEST ASPIRATIONS.

YOU MAY LIVE TO SEE THE DAY WHEN WE ARE NOT MERELY MASTERS

OF THE MATERIAL WORLD BUT ALL LIVING TOGETHER IN HARMONY

WITH IT.

COMPETITION IS THE ENERGY OF PROGRESS. IT IS A

FORCE WHICH PROPELS THE HUMAN MACHINE TO NEW HEIGHTS AND

GREATER DISTANCES. AND IT BRINGS US TOGETHER ON THE

SAME FIELD -- WHETHER IT BE IN THE STADIUM OR THE CLASSROOMS

OF N.C.C.U. OR IN BUSINESS OR LIFE.

I BELIEVE THAT COMPETITION BREEDS HARMONY, NOT DIVISION.

IT IS THE LACK OF COMPETITION WHICH BREEDS DIVISION BECAUSE

PEOPLE THEN FEEL THEY DO NOT HAVE A CHANCE -- THAT SOCIETY

OR THE WORLD IS DENYING THEM OPPORTUNITY.

INEQUALITY, INJUSTICE, LACK OF COMPETITION

ARE GRADUALLY BEING REMOVED FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE.

I SUPPORT THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT JUST AS I SUPPORTED

A NEW AND BROADER EXTENSION OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT.

MUCH MORE REMAINS TO BE DONE.

I HOPE AND WORK FOR THE DAY WHEN COMPETITION }--

OPPORTUNITY }-- FOR ALL AMERICANS WILL BE EQUAL AND FAIR --

WITHOUT RACE OR RELIGION OR SEX EVER A FACTOR.

I HOPE AND WORK FOR THE DAY WHEN THE HUMAN MIND

AND SPIRIT ARE NO LONGER SHACKLED BY IGNORANCE AND

PREJUDICE, WHEN ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE BROTHERS

AND SISTERS.

YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY HERE AT N.C.C.U. TO

BREAK MORE SHACKLES AND JOIN IN AMERICA'S COMPETITIVE LIFE

THROUGH A GOOD EDUCATION.

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY.

IT MAY NEVER PASS YOUR WAY AGAIN.

I KNOW THAT YOUR OWN DR. HELEN EDMONDS,
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND A FORMER ALTERNATE
DELEGATE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AND OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS
ARE HELPING YOU TO PREPARE FOR LIFE'S COMPETITION.
DR. EDMONDS MET WITH ME SHORTLY AFTER I ASSUMED THE
PRESIDENCY AND ELOQUENTLY TOLD ME SOME OF THE CONCERNS AND
ASPIRATIONS OF BLACKS AND OF WOMEN.

AS PRESIDENT OF ALL THE PEOPLE, THESE CONCERNS

ARE MY CONCERNS. THESE ASPIRATIONS ARE MY ASPIRATIONS.

I WILL DO ALL I CAN TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE THEM.

BUT MY REAL MESSAGE TODAY AIMS AT THE EVEN GREATER AND NOBLER

GOAL FOR WHICH WE STRIVE: THE COMMUNION OF AMERICANS,

OUR COMING TOGETHER TO FACE A COMMON DESTINY AS ONE PEOPLE

AND ONE NATION.

THIS GOAL IS TRULY WORTHY OF ALL AMERICANS.

THANK YOU.

END OF TEXT