

EMBARGO FOR RELEASE
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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED TO THE
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES AT HOLTON-ARMS SCHOOL

It is a great pleasure to be here at Holton-Arms this morning. You might be interested to know that my daughter, Susan, gave me some 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 . . . so, in conclusion --

Actually, at a graduation, it's hard not to reminisce just a little, because ceremonies such as this one mark the end of an important segment of our lives -- and the beginning of another.

As you leave a secure way of life here at Holton-Arms, with established goals and patterns and friends of many years, most of what you have 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 time. You have options now open to you that until recently were closed. Several of you will attend formerly all male universities. Some will choose careers once reserved for men only. Others will pioneer in fields opened up by our advancing technology. But all of you will have more freedom than ever to pursue new opportunities and new challenges.

From my experience with this class -- at least with some members of it -- that's 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 America completes its bicentennial celebration, I hope the Equal Rights Amendment will be part of the U.S. Constitution. For E.R.A. also stands for a new era for women in America -- 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 opportunity 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 as a Nation face.

But the American dream is truly a giant patchwork of all 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 sons.

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But it is never enough to hope. We must all participate if we are to make the United States the kind of 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's where each of you is so important.

We have been to the moon and reached for the stars; now we must use this technology to improve life on Earth. We need scientists and sociologists and technicians from this year's graduating class to help in the effort.

We have harnessed nuclear power for destruction; now we must expand its uses for peace. We need physicists and doctors and executives to help in this effort.

We have linked the world together by electronics; now we must communicate our common needs and goals. We need teachers and journalists and information specialists to help.

We have preserved a unique form of Government for nearly two hundred 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 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 four 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 reward 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 affection of your friends.

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

Thank you.

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