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COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS - SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL  
June 14, 1962

I wish I could thank every one of you 244 graduates personally for the privilege of speaking to you tonight. It is an auspicious day for *each of* you ~~at~~---at the same time happy and poignant---and I'm so very pleased to be sharing it with you.

My faith in the high caliber and many talents that you are taking with you into the colleges, technical schools, industries, and households throughout this mighty nation is enforced by the reputation that the class of 1962 has made for itself. Your academic achievements in particular are outstanding, and I know you must be justly proud of them. In various extra-curriculars, this class has been active and successful. I was especially pleased to know of the new memorial trophy, given in the memory of Arthur W. Krause, who was principal of South High School when I graduated <sup>in 1931</sup> and who later became superintendent of schools. *for R.R.*

I know that throughout the years the recipients of this trophy will realize and appreciate the great honor that has been bestowed on them.

It has been many years since I was sitting as one among the graduating class of South High on a similar occasion. It was not so



long ago, however, that I cannot remember the thrill of anticipation as well as the pangs of sadness that must accompany an event that is both an ending and a beginning. I know you all feel, as I felt, that at last the time has come to get out and do something with yourselves and with the world you live in. This day, June 14th, is a particularly appropriate time to be mindful of the challenges that await you, for it is Flag Day <sup>in America.</sup>

I need not remind you of the great need America has of your talents and your ambitions and the great trust she is putting in you to use them wisely.

Thirty-one years ago your speaker of this evening was one of 232 seniors in the graduating class of 1931. For me and my classmates that occasion was the culmination of many happy and stimulating experiences which resulted in very real friendships that have endured throughout the years. It was the cut-off date for many, both as spectators and participants, who had cheered and fought for Trojan victories and the glory of the red and blue. It was the completion of our academic training under the guidance and leadership of a wonderful faculty, teachers who



patiently prodded us along the all-important path of scholarship.

Happy as we were to receive our diplomas, there was an undertone of

sadness for all had learned to revere and respect our alma mater.

*The Class of 1962, I am positive, has & will  
have similar feelings this evening & in the future.*



*It is a grand occasion for the graduates, the faculty, <sup>2</sup>parents + friends.*

*We all realize*  
I thoroughly enjoy commencements. It is a pleasure to finish projects

but it is always interesting to begin new ones. *That is happening here tonight*

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



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

*Let me mention a few*

- 1). Right now -- our men in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines are:
  - a). Patrolling the wall in Berlin.
  - b). Instructing, supplying, transporting and accompanying VietNameese and Thailand forces in the rugged jungles and rice paddies in Southeast Asia.



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

3). <sup>2nd 1962</sup> Our farmers are confronted with ever increasing problems of financing, the acquisition of land and equipment, the cost price squeeze is worsening, and the threat of increased rather than decreasing government intervention. *is on the threshold*

4). Right now investors large and small who have put their savings in stocks and securities have suffered serious economic losses with the wide fluctuations in the stock market.



- 5). Businessmen at all levels are faced with increased competition at home and abroad.
  
- 6). The workingman, 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 and eliminate underemployment or chronic economic distress in some geographical areas.
  
- 8). All Americans view with alarm the broad challenge of the materialistic, atheistic dictatorship in the Kremlin.



Despite such difficulties, some temporary and some of long duration, I am

an OPTIMIST about the future of AMERICA and YOUR opportunities to make

your way successfully and happily.

*I say with all the emphasis at my command*  
Let us not be fearful of the ominous clouds.

Let us have faith and trust in America.



*I am an OPTIMIST because of personal experience + because  
the recent history of America. I believe in the  
statement that is carved in marble on the Archives -  
What is past is prologue.*

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

- a). There was the "call to arms" in World War I  
World War II  
Korea
- b). There were the trials and tribulations of the Depression in the 1930s.
- c). There was the challenge <sup>to liberty</sup> of Hitler in Germany  
Mussolini in Italy.

These were the days that "tried mens souls."

This was no time for sunshine soldiers and summer patriots.

Yes, there were personal tragedies but our people and the Nation responded successfully. Our nation and our people have moved to higher and higher plateaus. Certainly on a relative or comparative basis we have achieved an all-time pinnacle.



*We should ask ourselves*

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

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 and abiding faith in moral, spiritual and religious values.



Let me explain what I mean in each instance:

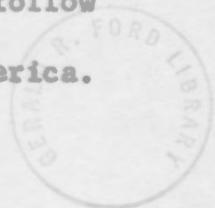
I. Our Government is the finest because it is based on:

a.) The DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. Our Declaration of Independence was a revolutionary document in 1776 and it is a revolutionary document in 1962.

The golden text in this historic document explains "That to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

In these words Thomas Jefferson assured his generation and those to follow that totalitarianism never could take root within the United States of America.

The governed were always to be in control of the government.



b.) The CONSTITUTION

Written in 1787 the United States Constitution has provided the basis for our liberties for 173 years. If we were to seek the reasons for its success we would undoubtedly find it in the division of powers between the states and the central government and the separation of power among the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary Branches of the Federal Government.

Fearful then, as we are now, of autocratic or one-party rule, the fathers of the Constitution so divided the powers of government among many persons that as long as the Constitution prevails the will of the majority will likewise prevail.



c.) THE BILL OF RIGHTS

Because majorities have the potential power of being as autocratic and unreasonable as individual dictatorships, one of the first acts of the Congress and the states under the Constitution was to adopt the American Bill of Rights.

These first Ten Amendments, restricting the power of the government, protect the rights of the most humble individual against the authority of the most powerful official in order to preserve that human dignity which is the God-given heritage of every man.



II. We have the finest education system because it is and has been based on the needs of our times.

EDUCATION - The history of education in America runs the gamut from:

- 1). The one room school house with a single teacher to the vast school facilities with the finest equipment and most highly trained and specialized teaching staffs.
- 2). Rudimentary courses in "reading, writing & arithmetic" to a curriculum that covers the vast unknowns in the atmosphere, the depths of the seas, and the day-to-day living in the world today.
- 3). A few small colleges privately endowed to the huge publicly supported universities such as the University of Michigan and Michigan State University.



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

Our educational system in the United States has produced, to mention a few:

Thomas Edison

Henry Ford

Orville and Wilbur 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. YOU with your knowledge and training are the best evidence of the high calibre of America's educational system.



III. Our Citizens constructively work at solving the problems of the DAY.

*let me relate  
a few personal  
experiences to make  
the point.*

In the past 30 days -- I have flown to

- San Francisco
- Chicago
- Detroit
- Stockholm 18,000 miles
- Des Moines
- Caledonia
- Grand Rapids*

- 1). San Francisco - defense seminar

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

- 2). Chicago - political meeting

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

Politics and Politicians - put blood in the veins and the breath of life in the still bones of a Constitutional system.



3). Detroit - service club convention

How citizens and 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 and politically to meet the challenge of the Soviet Union and its satellites.

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



These meetings are only typical of what 185 million Americans are doing and have done to make our civilization what it is today.

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



A deep and abiding FAITH in moral, spiritual and religious values.

(C I A - interview)

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

