

**The original documents are located in Box 27, folder “June 6, 1975 - J.E.B. Stuart High School Commencement Address” of the Stanley Scott Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

J. E. B. STUART HIGH SCHOOL  
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS  
FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 1975, 8 P. M.  
WOLF TRAP FARM PARK



BY: THE HONORABLE STANLEY S. SCOTT  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20500

WOULD YOU BELIEVE I GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL  
TWENTY FOUR YEARS AGO?

DON'T ANSWER -- I CAN TELL RIGHT AWAY YOU DO BELIEVE IT.

WELL, SEE? THAT'S ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WE HAVE.

I CAN REMEMBER SITTING THERE WITH THE 1951 GRADUATING  
CLASS OF PALMER MEMORIAL -- HOPING THAT THE KINDLY OLD  
FELLA UP THERE ON THE STAGE WOULD HURRY UP WITH WHATEVER  
HE WAS TRYING TO TELL US SO I COULD GET ON WITH THE  
IMPORTANT THINGS: LIKE SEEING MY GIRL, RAPPING WITH THE  
GUYS, AND GETTING TO THE BEACH PARTY.

I'D GUESS THE OLD GUY WAS PROBABLY ABOUT MY AGE TODAY.  
AND, IN A WAY, I FELT SORRY FOR HIM. HE WAS SO OUT OF TOUCH  
WITH WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE HEADS OF HIS AUDIENCE, IT  
WAS PATHETIC.

I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING HE SAID. ALL I COULD GUESS IS  
THAT IT MUST HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT TO HIM.



THAT'S FAIR ENOUGH, WHEN YOU THINK OF THE ODDS. SO THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO DO. THAT WAY, I CAN ALWAYS GO HOME AND TELL THE KIDS THAT ONE PERSON IN THE CROWD HUNG ON MY EVERY WORD.

ME.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME IS INDIVIDUALISM: THE WILL TO DO YOUR THING.

I THINK YOU ONLY HAVE YOURSELF TO BLAME IF EVERYTHING GOES TO POT -- NO PUN INTENDED. I THINK THAT NO MATTER WHAT THE ODDS, GOD GAVE US EVERYTHING WE NEED, IN OURSELVES, TO COPE WITH WHATEVER LIFE HANDS US.

A FRIEND OF MINE WHO IS A VERY BIG THINKER IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RESOURCES WAS IMPRESSING ME ONE NIGHT RECENTLY WITH HIS GRASP OF THE HUMAN CONDITION IN THIS VASTLY OVERPOPULATED WORLD OF OURS.

I TOLD HIM I WAS COMING OVER HERE, TONIGHT, TO ADDRESS YOUR GRADUATING CLASS, AND ASKED HIM IF HE HAD ANY MESSAGE FOR YOU.



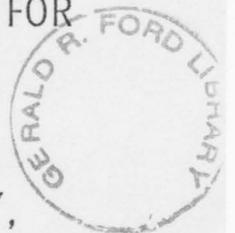
"YEAH," HE SAID, "TELL 'EM THAT 3 MILLION 119 THOUSAND AMERICANS WILL GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL THIS MONTH. IF THAT DOESN'T WOW 'EM TELL THEM THERE ARE ALREADY MORE THAN 12 MILLION 18-21 YEAR-OLDS IN THEIR IMMEDIATE COMPETITIVE CUSP. AND THAT OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WILL PUMP OUT ANOTHER 10 OR 11 MILLION BEFORE THIS CLASS REACHES THE AGE of 21.

OKAY, SO I TOLD YOU.

WELL, YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT, THAT'S A WHOLE LOT OF COMPETITION - FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, FOR JOBS, FOR A SMALL PIECE OF TURF JUST TO CALL YOUR OWN IN A LAND THAT HAS ANOTHER 180 MILLION PEOPLE -- GIVE OR TAKE -- WHO ALREADY OWN MOST OF THE ACTION.

AS THEY'RE FOND OF SAYING, ACROSS THE RIVER IN WASHINGTON, IT'S A MIND BOGGLER -- IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE IN THE MOOD FOR SOME BOGGLING.

IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE BLACK, OR SOME OTHER MINORITY, MULTIPLY THE BOGGLE BY TWO AND DRAW ONE CARD FROM THE



"OOPS!" PILE.

AND, SINCE I'M OFF TO SUCH AN OPTIMISTIC START I MIGHT AS WELL REMIND YOU THAT ABOUT 10 MILLION AMERICANS ARE LOOKING FOR WORK -- AND THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGES OF UNEMPLOYMENT ARE BEING RACKED UP BY THE "PR.IVILEGED" GENERATION YOU ARE ABOUT TO JOIN.

NOW, THERE ARE A LOT OF WAYS TO DEAL WITH THIS KIND OF BAD NEWS. FOR EXAMPLE,

IN RECENT YEARS, WE HAD THE GREAT "DROP OUT" EXPERIMENT. THAT WAS A REAL WINNER. UNFORTUNATELY, FOR TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, IT WAS BASED ON THE SIMPLE PREMISE THAT ONE COULD ALWAYS DROP BACK IN WHEN THE EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY BEGAN TO PALL.

BUT A FICKLE FATE FORGOT TO GO ALONG WITH THE GIG. TODAY, THERE'S NOT ONLY A SCARCITY OF DROPPING-IN POINTS - THERE'S A VAST POOL OF SKILLED PEOPLE TO FILL ANY VACANCY THAT COMES ALONG.



THERE'S NO QUESTION ABOUT IT: WHEN YOU'VE GROWN UP IN A KIND OF COMFORTABLE, MIDDLE-CLASS ATMOSPHERE -- THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE SIMPLE, UNENCUMBERED LIFE OF THE DO-IT-YOURSELF COMMUNE -- THE OPEN ROAD WITH A JUG OF WINE AND A CRUST OF BREAD -- IS A TEMPTATION THAT'S PRETTY HARD TO PUT DOWN.

AND, GETTING OUT IS VERY EASY.

IT'S GETTING BACK IN THAT TAKES A BIT OF IMAGINATION -- ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'VE SKIPPED THE NICE NECESSITY OF PICKING UP SOME EXTRA EDUCATIONAL OR SKILL CREDITS DURING YOUR SOJOURN IN HAPPY TOWN.

NOT THAT I'M KNOCKING THE SIMPLE LIFE. SHOW ME THE PERSON WHO HAS NEVER THOUGHT OF CHUCKING THE BATTLE AND I'LL SHOW YOU A COMPLETE DUMMY.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE STATISTICS, MY FRIEND QUOTED, ARE MURDER.

AS YOU KNOW, FROM YOUR OWN SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE, YOU JUST CAN'T SKIP THE REQUIRED DRILL -- WHETHER YOU THINK THE COURSE IS RELEVANT OR NOT. IF YOU'RE SICK -- OR ABSENT



FOR SOME OTHER REASON -- YOU HAVE TO MAKE UP THE WORK.

AFTER YOU FINISH YOUR SCHOOLING THE NECESSITIES OF MAKING A LIVING TAKE OVER WHERE THE CURRICULUM LEFT OFF.

ONLY, NOW IF YOU SKIP THE COURSE, THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEBODY TO TAKE YOUR PLACE -- HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS, MILLIONS OF THEM!

SO, THE CITIZEN WHO TUNES OUT AND TURNS OFF, DOESN'T JUST FALL BEHIND THE CLASS -- HE OR SHE FALLS BEHIND EVERY SUCCEEDING CLASS THAT GRADUATES IN THE MEANTIME.

ISN'T THAT A TERRIBLE THING TO THINK ABOUT ON A DAY LIKE THIS?

SO, LET'S NOT THINK ABOUT IT. LET'S THINK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE.

WHY NOT THINK ABOUT YOURSELF? THAT'S ALWAYS A PLEASANT EXERCISE. PEOPLE MIGHT CALL IT SELFISH, BUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH SELFISHNESS?

HERE YOU ARE AFTER GIVING TWELVE OF THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE TO YOUR PARENTS AND YOUR TEACHERS. GOING THROUGH ALL THAT DRUDGERY JUST TO MAKE THEM HAPPY. PILING UP



THOSE GOOD GRADES SO THEY CAN BRAG TO THEIR FRIENDS. NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN. AFTER ALL, THIS IS YOUR GRADUATION!

THE BEST WAY TO THINK ABOUT YOURSELF IS TO THINK ABOUT YOU IN RELATION TO YOU ALONE -- AND FORGET ABOUT ALL THOSE OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE CROWDING THE TERRITORY.

AS YOU MUST HAVE LEARNED, BY NOW, THE COMPETITION THAT CAN BEAT YOU IS NOT THE PERSON WHO'S TRYING TO ACE YOU -- IT'S YOU.

ISN'T IT AMAZING HOW TIRED YOU SUDDENLY BECOME WHEN YOU START THINKING ABOUT THE JOB YOU DON'T WANT TO DO?

DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU REALLY START CRAVING ALL THAT WONDERFUL FATTENING STUFF? THE MINUTE YOU FIND OUT YOU'RE OVERWEIGHT.

PERHAPS I DON'T LOOK IT, BUT I USED TO PLAY A LOT OF COLLEGE BALL. I KNEW MORE GUYS WITH SORE ARMS AND TRICK KNEES (PAUSE) - DEVELOPED AS SOON AS THEY GOT A LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THE GUYS ON THE OTHER TEAM.

JACK NACKLAUS ONCE SAID THAT GOLF IS A GREAT GAME FOR



RELAXING (PAUSE) ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LEARN HOW TO RELAX. I SAW MY FRIEND FLIP WILSON RECENTLY TAKE A FOURTEEN ON A PAR FOUR HOLE. HIS "COMPETITION" WASN'T THE OTHER FELLOWS IN OUR FOURSOME -- WE WERE LONG HOME. HIS COMPETITION WAS THAT FIRST SHOT, HE, HIMSELF, HAD HOOKED INTO A TREE.

SO, WHETHER YOUR THING IS SCHOOL, WORK, OR FUN, YOU DON'T NEED ANYBODY ELSE AROUND TO HELP MAKE YOU MISERABLE.

ONCE YOU HAVE THAT BIT OF WISDOM TUCKED AWAY UNDER YOUR HAIRPIECE, YOU GET TO SEE A LOT OF THINGS IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.

BY BEING TRULY SELFISH, YOU WIN SOME AND LOSE SOME -- BUT YOU'RE MUCH BETTER OFF IN THE LONG RUN.

ONE OF THE THINGS YOU LOSE IS THE PRIVILEGE OF BLAMING YOUR LOSSES ON SOMEBODY ELSE. BUT THAT LOSS IS MORE THAN OFFSET BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE COMPETITION YOU GIVE YOURSELF, IS FAR TOUGHER THAN ANY KNUCKLE BALL THROWN AT YOU BY SOMEBODY ELSE.



WHERE YOU WIN IS THAT IN IGNORING THE OUTSIDE COMPETITION,  
YOU'RE AUTOMATICALLY ONE STEP AHEAD OF IT.

OBVIOUSLY, IT'S A GAME YOU DON'T WANT TO CARRY TOO FAR.  
IF YOU DON'T TAKE A PEEK OVER YOUR SHOULDER ONCE IN A WHILE  
YOU COULD WIND UP EATING TRIPE WHEN EVERYBODY ELSE IS EATING  
FILET MIGNON.

IT'S OKAY TO BE AN ISLAND -- IN SPITE OF THE POEM TO THE  
CONTRARY. BUT IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO HAVE YOUR ISLAND PARKED  
WITHIN SWIMMING DISTANCE OF SOMEBODY ELSE -- LIKE THE ONE  
YOU LOVE.

BESIDES, YOU'D LOOK PRETTY RIDICULOUS OUT THERE DOING  
THE "BUMP" WITH NOBODY BUMPING BACK AT YOU.

ANYWAY, WE ALL KNOW THAT LOVERS ARE NEVER IN COMPETITION  
WITH ONE ANOTHER -- JUST AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS NEVER ARGUE,  
AND ALL FRIENDS ARE FRIENDS FOR LIFE. BUT THAT'S A WHOLE OTHER  
FAIRYTALE AND I'M THE GREEN FROG OF SESAME STREET.



ONE THING ABOUT BEING SELFISH IS THAT IN IGNORING YOUR COMPETITORS YOU HAVE MORE TIME TO CONCENTRATE ON WHAT YOU WANT TO DO -- AND MORE TIME TO WORK OUT HOW TO DO IT IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PARTICULAR TALENTS YOU BRING INTO THE PLAY.

AND THAT'S THE FUNDAMENTAL BEHIND INDIVIDUALISM.

BECAUSE, IF YOU WASTE YOURSELF TRYING TO PLAY SOMEBODY ELSE'S GAME YOU'RE BOUND TO BE OUTCLASSED IN THE LONG RUN.

I HAVE NO ARGUMENT WITH THE YIPS AND HIPS. THAT'S A HARD BAG IF YOU FOLLOW IT TO THE ULTIMATE NOWHERE. WHAT'S KILLING THE "MOVEMENT" -- IF I MAY CALL IT THAT -- IS THAT IT REQUIRES ITS FOLLOWERS TO COPY THE LIFE STYLES AND FOLLOW THE RULES LAID OUT BY SOMEBODY ELSE.

AND, OF COURSE, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT ITS FOLLOWERS WE'RE FLEEING.

WHAT A JOLT TO WAKE UP AND DISCOVER THAT NO MATTER WHAT THE GAME, SOMEBODY IS ALWAYS TRYING TO LAY RULES ON YOU! AT LEAST, IN THE OLD HUM AND DRUM OF ~~THE~~ DREARY SQUARE LIFE,



THE REQUIREMENTS ARE FAMILIAR.

MIND YOU, I DIDN'T SAY IDYLIC NOR EVEN SATISFACTORY.

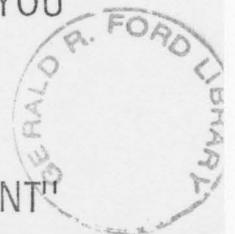
BUT AFTER 15 to 18 YEARS OF TRYING TO COPE WITH THE OLD RULES, THE DROPOUTS SUDDENLY FOUND THEMSELVES FACED WITH A WHOLE NEW SET IN WHICH THEY HAD NO PREVIOUS TRAINING.

A FRIEND OF MINE LIVES NEAR A MOUNTAIN PASS ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL IN NORTHERN NEW JERSEY WHERE HE TRIES TO BE A FRIEND TO PASSERS-BY. DURING THE HIKING SEASON HE SPENDS A GOOD PART OF HIS TIME BANDAGING FOOT BLISTERS ON KIDS WHO THINK THAT ALL THERE IS TO MOUNTAIN CLIMBING IS KNOWING HOW TO WALK.

THERE'S A MORAL IN THERE SOMEWHERE, BUT ANYWAY, I'M SURE YOU GET THE MESSAGE.

AS FAR AS THIS CLASS IS CONCERNED, IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE A PRETTY GOOD GRASP OF THE LIFE CONDITION AT THIS POINT, YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE.

I COULD FEED YOU THAT OLD CLICHE ABOUT "COMMENCEMENT" MEANING A BEGINNING -- AND PAINT A ROSY POT OF GOLD AT THE



END OF THE PRETTY RAINBOW OF LIFE THAT STRETCHES BEFORE YOU.

BUT YOU'D KNOW I WAS WHOOFING YOU -- AND SO WOULD I.

YOU'RE BEGINNING, ALRIGHT -- BUT AFTER TWELVE  
SUCCESSIVE YEARS OF WATCHING YOUR CLASS ASSIGNMENTS GET  
HARDER AND HARDER, I DOUBT THAT YOU HAVE ANY FALSE ILLUSIONS  
ABOUT WHAT'S AHEAD. THAT'S COOL. BECAUSE I DIDN'T COME  
HERE TO FEED YOU ILLUSIONS.

CERTAINLY THINGS ARE GOING TO GET TOUGHER. DID ANY  
OF YOU EVER THINK THEY WERE STUFFING ALL THAT UNWANTED  
KNOWLEDGE INTO YOUR HEAD SO YOU COULD BE THE FIRST  
MATE ON THE GOOD SHIP LOLLIPOP?

OF COURSE YOU DIDN'T!

THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE GOING ON TO COLLEGE ALREADY KNOW  
THAT YOU' LL NEED EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER LEARNED JUST TO STAY  
EVEN -- AND WISH YOU KNEW MORE. THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE GOING  
INTO JOBS, OR THE SERVICE, MUST HAVE FACED THE FACT THAT YOU WILL  
HAVE IT EVEN ROUGHER. WITHOUT A SCHEDULED CLASS ROUTINE TO  
KEEP, YOUR CONTINUED ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE WILL HAVE TO  
COME THROUGH YOUR OWN VOLUNTARY DETERMINATION.



IF YOU PLAN TO GO TO COLLEGE LATER ON, YOU MUST BE AWARE THAT EVERY MONTH YOU'RE AWAY FROM FORMAL EDUCATION THE HARDER IT WILL BE TO REACQUIRE THE HABIT. BUT, NO MATTER WHAT THE ODDS -- AS YOU LEAVE JEB STUART -- YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING YOU'LL EVER NEED TO CUT A HANDSOME SWATH THROUGH THE BUSINESS OF LIFE.

AND I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THE SO-CALLED "ADVANTAGE OF YOUTH."

YOUTH HAS A VERY BAD HABIT OF GETTING AWAY FROM US ALL TOO FAST. AND, BESIDES THAT, IT'S AN <sup>"</sup>ADVANTAGE<sup>"</sup> THAT YOU TEMPORARILY SHARE WITH EVERYBODY IN YOUR AGE BRACKET. IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL TO BE THE FIRST KID ON THE BLOCK -- IF YOU'RE THE ONLY KID ON THE BLOCK. WHEN THERE'S NOTHING ON YOUR TURF BUT OTHER K'IDS YOU NEED SOMETHING MORE THAN YOUTH TO CATCH THE BRASS RING.

SO LET'S BE SELFISH ABOUT IT.

WHAT YOU HAVE NOW -- AND WILL HAVE UNTIL THEY CARRY YOU OUT BY THE HANDLES -- IS YOU.



IN YOU, THERE IS EVERYTHING YOU'RE GOING TO GET. AND WHETHER OR NOT YOU FEEL YOU WERE ON THE LONG END -- OR THE SHORT END -- WHEN GOD PASSED OUT THE FAVORS, THERE'S NO POINT IN DWELLING ON IT.

NOW, BEFORE YOU START THINKING THAT THAT'S MY CUE FOR LEADING INTO THE SUBJECT OF MAKING IT IN THE WHITE WORLD WITH A BLACK SKIN -- FORGET IT. I'VE NEVER HAD TIME TO INDULGE MYSELF IN WISHING FOR A RESHUFFLED DECK. I'VE GOT ENOUGH TO DO JUST TRYING TO FULFILL MY OWN POTENTIAL.

I LIKE THE WAY I AM SIMPLY BECAUSE ITS'S THE WAY I AM.

AND IF THAT SOUNDS IDIOTICALLY SIMPLISTIC -- LIKE POPEYE THE SAILOR MAN -- DON'T KNOCK IT UNTIL YOU'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

ONE PREMISE IS VALID -- AND THAT IS: IF YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU'VE GOT, THE LAST THING YOU NEED IS A BACK FULL OF HANG-UPS TO DRAG YOU DOWN.

DIG? SO NOW LET'S SAY YOU'VE CHUCKED ALL OF YOUR HANG-UPS INTO THE LOCKER, AND YOU'RE ON YOUR INDIVIDUALISTIC WAY.

BUT, TO WHERE?



YOU'VE SEEN A LOT OF GRADUATION CARDS -- PREFERABLY WITH SOME GREENERY ENCLOSED. NEXT TO "CONGRATULATIONS" THE MOST OFTEN EXPRESSED WISH IS FOR YOU "SUCCESS" -- USUALLY ILLUSTRATED WITH A HAPPY FACED GRADUATE CONTEMPLATING ALL THAT GOOD STUFF LIFE HAS TO OFFER.

WELL, "SUCCESS" IS A VERY OKAY THING TO WISH -- SO, WE'LL ASSUME THAT THE RIGHT THING FOR YOU TO DO IS TO GET OUT OF JEB STUART AND START SCRATCHING FOR SUCCESS.

THE ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT IT'S EASIER TO SAY THAN DEFINE. IN TERMS OF HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMICS YOU ALREADY HAVE ACHIEVED "SUCCESS" -- AND YOU HAVE YOUR DIPLOMA TO PROVE IT.

THAT SUGGESTS THAT THE SUCCESSFUL LIFE IS MADE UP OF A SUCCESSION OF SUCCESSES -- AFTER WHICH, YOU HANG UP YOUR SPIKES AND LAPSE INTO A SUCCESSFUL RETIREMENT.

I'M NOT TRYING TO BE FUNNY, BUT ISN'T IT ODD THAT NOBODY EVER WISHES US "FAILURE?" AND, IT'S REALLY TOO BAD, BECAUSE HISTORY TELLS US THAT MANY OF MANKIND'S MOST MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENTS WERE BORN OUT OF FAILURE.



SOME OF THE NOBLEST MEN AND WOMEN THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN HAVE BEEN LABELED FAILURES BY THEIR CONTEMPORARIES.

INNUMERABLE TREASURES IN ART AND LITERATURE HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED LONG YEARS AFTER THEIR ORIGINATORS HAD PERISHED IN ABJECT POVERTY OR DISGRACE.

MEN AND WOMEN WHO FAILED GLORIOUSLY FILL THE PAGES OF THE EXODUS -- AND OUR OWN HISTORY OF THE TREK THROUGH THE WILDS IN THE CONQUEST OF THE WEST.

WHY, THEN, THIS ENDURING PREOCCUPATION WITH "SUCCESS"-- A WORD NO PERSON CAN DEFINE -- EXCEPT ONLY AS YOU DEFINE IT FOR YOURSELF.

BECAUSE IT'S THE THING. THAT'S WHY.

OBVIOUSLY, IT'S SAFER FOR AN AUNT OR UNCLE TO WISH YOU SOMETHING VAGUE LIKE "SUCCESS," THAN TO GET TOO SPECIFIC.

"DEAR JACKIE,"-- (MILLIONS OF BLACK KIDS ARE NAMED JACKIE ROBINSON \_\_\_\_\_ -- WE LOOK TO THE DAY WHEN YOU'LL BE IN CARNEGIE HALL. " SIGNED, AUNT ANN AND UNCLE FRED."

GREAT! THAT'S NICE AND SPECIFIC. RIGHT?



RIGHT! JACKIE STANDS SIX-FEET-THREE: WEIGHS IN AT TWO-TWENTY-FIVE, AND THE ONLY "HALL" HE WANTS TO BE IN IS THE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME.

SO MUCH FOR "SUCCESS."

BY NOW, YOU MUST HAVE FIGURED OUT THAT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DECIDE WHAT HALL YOU WANT TO BE IN -- AND HOW MUCH OF YOURSELF YOU WANT TO SPEND IN GETTING THERE.

SO FAR, YOU'VE MADE IT TO JEB STUART'S HALL OF GRADUATES AND THAT'S ALL THE **SUCCESS** YOU NEED -- FOR THE MOMENT.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THE REST OF THE WEEKEND OFF? MONDAY'S SOON ENOUGH TO START WORKING ON YOUR NEXT STEP.

I REALIZE THAT IT WOULD BE NICE IF I FINISHED THIS ADDRESS - AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ADMINISTRATION -- WITH A FEW KINDS WORDS ABOUT THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES THAT AWAIT YOU -- AS YOU MAKE YOUR WAY TOWARD THE CHALLENGING WORLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY.



BUT I'M NOT GOING TO DO THAT.

OF COURSE THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES. THEY'RE EVERYWHERE YOU WANT TO LOOK. IF THERE WEREN'T, THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY REASON FOR YOUR GOING TO SCHOOL IN THE FIRST PLACE.

BUT IT'S LIKE TRYING TO DEFINE SUCCESS. THERE'S NOT MUCH POINT IN TALKING ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES IN, SAY GOVERNMENT -- AND THEY ARE LIMITLESS, IF THE PERSON YOU'RE TALKING WITH WANTS TO BE A BASS FIDDLE PLAYER.

I WILL SAY THIS ABOUT OPPORTUNITY. IF YOU GO AFTER WHATEVER IT IS YOU WANT WITH EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT YOU'LL MAKE YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES AS YOU GO.

IF THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN OLD COPY-BOOK HEADING -- SO-BE-IT. BUT, JUST BECAUSE IT'S A CLICHE, DON'T THINK FOR A MINUTE THAT IT DOESN'T WORK OUT THAT WAY .

AS THE MAN SAID, "THE HURRIEDER YOU GO THE LUCKIER YOU GET."

BUT, I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE YOU WITH A THOUGHT.



AS YOU KNOW, IT'S VERY POPULAR TO PUT DOWN THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CIVILIZATION.

OUR INDUSTRIAL MIGHT HAS CREATED UGLY SCARS -- BOTH ON OUR LANDSCAPE AND IN THE AFFAIRS OF PEOPLE. OUR CITIES ARE FULL OF BLIGHT AND MUCH OF WHAT WE DO IN LIFE SEEMS MEANINGLESS.

THE LIST OF WRONGS OFTEN SEEMS TO BE LONGER THAN THE LIST OF RIGHTS.

WHILE DEEP DOWN, WE REALLY KNOW THAT CIVILIZATION HAS ALSO PRODUCED GREAT TREASURES IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES, IT'S SOMETIMES PRETTY HARD NOT TO THINK THAT WE'VE LOST MORE THAN WE 'VE GAINED.

WHEN YOU THINK OF ALL THOSE WRONGS, IT'S PRETTY NATURAL TO START KNOCKING THE SYSTEM. BUT PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS KNOCKED THE SYSTEM.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE ONLY REASON HUMANS EMERGED FROM THE CAVE WAS BECAUSE SO MANY PEOPLE WERE PUTTING DOWN CAVES AS A PLACE TO LIVE.



THE ONLY REASON THEY INVENTED THE LEVER WAS BECAUSE EVERYBODY WAS COMPLAINING ABOUT HAVING A SORE BACK.

LOOK AT ANYTHING MANKIND HAS EVER INVENTED -- THE BAD AS WELL AS THE GOOD -- AND YOU CAN ALMOST HEAR ALL THE MOANING THAT WENT ON BEFORE IT WAS PRODUCED.

IN THE PROCESS, OF COURSE, PEOPLE WOUND UP WITH A LOT OF STUFF THEY NEVER NEEDED -- LIKE WARS AND BUBBLE GUM, FOR INSTANCE -- BUT THE RIGHT TO GRIPE HAS NEVER LOST ITS POPULARITY.

SO GO AHEAD AND COMPLAIN ABOUT THINGS -- THERE'S GOOD REASON FOR COMPLAINT.

AND WHILE YOU' RE AT IT, IT MIGHT COME TO YOU THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS IN NEED OF CHANGE OR IMPROVEMENT, THAT YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TIME TO SIT AROUND AND ONLY RAIL AGAINST THEM. YOU MIGHT EVEN GET THE URGE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM.

HOW LUCKY CAN YOU GET?



JUST THINK HOW DULL LIFE WOULD BE IF EVERYTHING WERE  
PERFECT --

-- IF THERE WERE NO CHALLENGES TO KEEP YOUR BRAIN AWAKE:  
NO HILLS TO CLIMB, NOTHING TO SHOULDER; NO PATHS TO TAKE.

WELL, NOBODY PROMISED US A ROSE GARDEN -- BUT WE HAVE  
ONE ANYWAY -- AND IT'S CHOCK FULL OF CHALLENGING THORNS.

ISN'T IT AMAZING HOW MUCH BETTER A ROSE SMELLS WHEN  
IT'S BRISTLING WITH SABER-SHARP BRISTLES?

DO YOU THINK A HIGHER BEING WAS TRYING TO TELL US  
SOMETHING WHEN HE GAVE US THIS PARTICULAR ROSE GARDEN?

I DO.

AND NOW I MUST RUN HOME AND TELL MY CHILDREN HOW  
INTERESTING THEIR FATHER WAS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. AND, I REALLY DO WISH YOU "SUCCESS" --  
YOUR WAY !



JEB STUART SCHOOL

Would you believe I graduated from High School twenty four years,  
ago?

Don't answer -- I can <sup>tell</sup> ~~see~~ right away ~~that~~ you do, believe it.

Well, see? That's one of the problems we have.

I can remember sitting ~~there~~ with the 1951 graduating class of Palmer Memorial -- hoping that the kindly old fella up there on the stage would hurry up with whatever he was trying to tell us so I could get on with the important things: Like seeing my girl, rapping with the guys, and getting to the beach party.

I'd guess the old guy was probably about my age today. And, in a way, I felt sorry for him. He was so out of touch with what was going on in the heads of his audience, it was pathetic.

I don't remember anything he said. All I could guess is that it must have been important to him.

That's fair enough, when you think of the odds. So that's what I'm going to do. ~~The~~ way, I can always go home and tell the kids that one person in the crowd hung on my every word.

Me.



2.

What's important to me is individualism; The will to do your thing.

I think you only have yourself to blame if everything goes to pot -- no pun intended. I think that no matter what the odds, God gave us everything we need, in ourselves, to cope with whatever life hands us.

A friend of mine who is a very big thinker in the field of Human Resources was impressing me one night recently with his grasp of the human condition in this vastly overpopulated world of ours.

I told him I was coming over here, <sup>tonight.</sup> ~~today,~~ to address your graduating class, and asked him if he had any message for you.

"Yeah," he said, "Tell 'em that 3 million 119 thousand Americans will graduate from High School this month. If that doesn't wow 'em tell them there are already more than 12 million 18-21 year-olds in their immediate competitive cusp. And that our educational system will pump out another 10 or 11 million before this class reaches the age of 21."

Okay, so I told you.

Well, you've got to admit, that's a whole lot of competition - for higher education, for jobs, for a small piece of turf just to call your



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own in a land that has another 180 million people -- give or take -- who already own most of the action.

As they're fond of saying, across the river in Washington, it's a mind boggler -- if you happen to be in the mood for some boggling.

If you happen to be Black, or some other minority, multiply the boggle by two and draw one card from the oops! pile.

And, since I'm off to such an optimistic start, ~~on the road to euphoria~~, I might as well remind you that about 10 million Americans are looking for work -- and the highest percentages of unemployment are being racked up by the "privileged" generation you are about to join.

Now, there are a lot of ways to deal with this kind of bad news. For example,

In recent years, we had the great "drop out" experiment. That was a real winner. Unfortunately, for too many young people, it was based on the simple premise that one could always drop back in when the experience of poverty began to pall.

But a fickle fate forgot to go along with the gig. Today, there's not only a scarcity of dropping-in points - there's a vast pool of skilled



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people to fill any vacancy that comes along.

There's no question about it: When you've grown up in a kind of comfortable, middle-class atmosphere -- the attractions of the simple, unencumbered life of the do-it-yourself commune -- the open road with a jug of wine and a crust of bread -- is a temptation that's pretty hard to put down.

And, getting out is very easy.

It's getting back in that takes a bit of imagination -- especially when you've skipped the nice necessity of picking up some extra educational or skill credits during your sojourn in Happy Town.

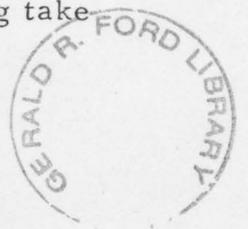
Not that I'm knocking the simple life. Show me the person who has never thought of chucking the battle and I'll show you a complete dummy.

The problem is that the statistics, my friend quoted, are ~~inexorable.~~ <sup>NEVER ENDING</sup>

As you know, from your own schooling experience, you just can't skip the required drill -- whether you think the course is relevant or not.

If you're sick -- or absent for some other reason -- you have to make up the work.

After you finish your schooling the ~~exigencies~~ <sup>necessities</sup> of making a living take over where the curriculum left off.



5.

Only, now if you skip the course, there's always somebody to take your place -- hundreds, thousands, millions of them!

So, the citizen who tunes out and turns off, doesn't just fall behind the class -- he or she falls behind every succeeding class that graduates in the meantime.

Isn't that a terrible thing to think about on a <sup>Night</sup>~~day~~ like this?

So, let's not think about it. Let's think about something else.

Why not think about yourself? That's always a pleasant exercise.

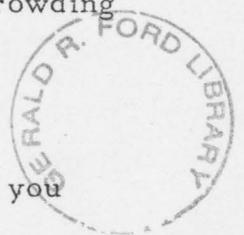
People might call it selfish, but what's wrong with selfishness?

Here you are after giving twelve of the best years of your life to your parents and your teachers. Going through all that drudgery just to make them happy. Piling up those good grades so they can brag to their friends.

Now, it's your turn. After all, this is your graduation!

The best way to think about yourself is to think about you in relation to you alone -- and forget about all those other people who are crowding the territory.

As you must have learned, by now, the competition that can beat you is not the person who's trying to ace you -- it's you.



6.

Isn't it amazing how tired you suddenly become when you start thinking about that job you ~~really~~ don't want to do?

Do you know when you really start craving all that wonderful fattening stuff? The minute you find out you're overweight.

Perhaps I don't look it, but I used to play a lot of College ball. I knew more guys with sore arms and trick knees (pause) - developed ~~on the~~ <sup>as soon</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>soon</sup> ~~spot once~~ they got a look at the size of the guys on the other team.

Jack Nicklaus

~~Sammy Snead~~ once said that golf is a great game for relaxing (pause) -

Flip Wilson

all you have to do is learn how to relax. I saw my friend/ ~~(see flip)~~

the other week

take a fourteen on a par four hole, once. His "competition" wasn't the

other fellows in our foursome -- we were long home. His competition

was that first shot, he, himself, had hooked into a tree.

So, whether your thing is school, work, or fun, you don't need anybody else around to help make you miserable.

Once you have that bit of wisdom tucked away under your hairpiece, you get to see a lot of things in a different light.

By being truly selfish, you win some and lose some -- but you're much better off in the long run.



7.

One of the things you lose is the privilege of blaming your losses on somebody else. But that loss is more than offset by the knowledge that the competition you give yourself, is far tougher than <sup>any</sup> ~~the~~ knuckle ball ~~thrown at you by somebody else.~~  
~~anybody else can throw at you.~~

Where you win is that in ignoring the outside competition, you're automatically one step ahead of it.

Obviously, it's a game you don't want to carry too far. If you don't take a peek over your shoulder once in a while you could wind up eating tripe ~~under the assumption that you are eating~~ <sup>steak</sup> ~~filet mignon.~~  
~~when everybody is~~

It's okay to be an island -- in spite of <sup>the poem</sup> ~~that song~~ to the contrary. But it's always nice to have your island parked within swimming distance of somebody else -- like the one you love.

Besides,  
You'd look pretty ridiculous out there doing the "bump" with nobody bumping back at you.

Anyway, we all know that lovers are never in competition with one another -- just as brothers and sisters never argue, and all friends are friends for life. But that's a whole other fairytale and I'm the Green Frog of Sesame Street.



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One thing about being selfish is that in ignoring your competitors you have more time to concentrate on what you want to do -- and more time to work out how to do it in such a way that you can take advantage of the particular talents you bring <sup>into</sup> ~~to~~ the play.

And that's the fundamental behind individualism.

Because, if you waste yourself trying to play somebody else's game you're bound to be outclassed in the long run.

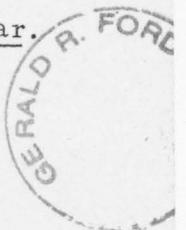
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And, of course, that's exactly what its followers were fleeing.

What a jolt to wake up and discover that no matter what the game, somebody is always trying to lay rules on you! At least, in the old hum and drum of the dreary square life, the requirements are familiar.

Mind you, I didn't say <sup>IDEAL</sup> ~~any~~ nor even satisfactory.

But after 15 to 18 years of trying to cope with the old rules, the drop-outs suddenly found themselves faced with a whole new set in which they had no previous training.



9.

A friend of mine lives near a mountain pass on the Appalachian Trail in Northern New Jersey. WHERE he tries to be a friend to passers-by. During the hiking season he spends a good part of his time <sup>(trusting)</sup> ~~bandaging~~ foot blisters on kids who think that all there is to mountain climbing is knowing how to walk.

There's a moral in there somewhere, but anyway, I'm sure you get the message.

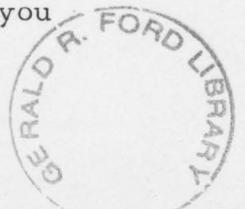
As far as this class is concerned, if you didn't have a pretty good grasp of the life condition at this point, you wouldn't be here.

I could feed you that old cliché about "Commencement" meaning a beginning -- and paint a rosy pot of gold at the end of the pretty rainbow of life that stretches before you.

But you'd know I was whoofing you -- and so would I.

You're beginning, alright -- but after twelve successive years of watching your class assignments get harder and harder, I doubt that you have any false illusions about what's ahead. <sup>And</sup> That's <sup>cool</sup> ~~good~~ <sup>g</sup> Because I didn't come here to feed you ~~an~~ illusion<sup>s</sup>.

Certainly, things are going to get tougher. Did any of you ever think they were stuffing all that unwanted knowledge into your head so you could be the first mate on the Good Ship Lollipop?



10.

Of course you didn't!

Those of you who are going on to College already know that you'll need everything you've ever learned just to stay even -- and wish you knew more. Those of you who are going into jobs, or the service, must have faced the fact that you will have it even rougher. Without a scheduled class routine to keep, your continued acquisition of knowledge will have to come through your own voluntary determination.

If you plan to go to College later on, you must be aware that every month you're away from formal education the harder it will be to re-acquire the habit. But, no matter what the odds -- as you leave JEB Stuart ~~today~~ -- you're got everything you'll ever need to cut a handsome swath through the business of life.

And I'm not talking about the so-called "advantage of youth."

Youth has a very bad habit of getting away from us all too fast. And, besides that, it's an "advantage" that you temporarily share with everybody in your age bracket. It's not a big deal to be the first kid on the block -- if you're the only kid on the block. When there's nothing on your turf but other kids you need something more than youth to ~~catch~~ catch the brass ring.

So let's be selfish about it.



11.

What you have now -- and will have until they carry you out by the handles -- is you.

In you, there is everything you're going to get. And whether or not you feel you were on the long end -- or the short end -- when God passed out the favors, there's no point in dwelling on it.

Now, before you start thinking that that's my cue for leading into the subject of making it in the White world with a Black skin -- forget it. I've never had time to indulge myself in wishing for a reshuffled deck. I've got enough to do just trying to fulfill my own potential.

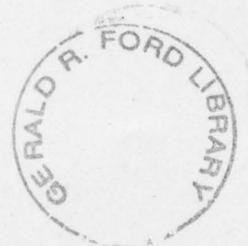
I like the way I am simply because it's the way I am.

And if that sounds idiotically simplistic -- like Pop-Eye the Sailor Man -- don't knock it until you've thought about it.

One premise is valid -- and that is: If you're going to make the most of what you've got, the last thing you need is a ~~box~~<sup>bag</sup> full of hang-ups to drag you down.

DIG? ~~Let's say~~ So now, ~~let~~ you've chucked all of your hang-ups into the locker, and ~~with~~ you're on your individualistic way.

But, to where?



12.

You've seen a lot of graduation cards -- preferably with some ~~of that~~ green ~~stuff~~ enclosed. Next to "Congratulations" the most often expressed wish is for your "Success" -- usually illustrated with a ~~cherubic faced~~ *happy faced* graduate contemplating all that good stuff life has to offer.

Well, "Success" is a very okay thing to wish -- so, we'll assume that the right thing for you to do is to get out of JEB Stuart and start scratching for success.

The only problem is that it's easier to say than define.

In terms of high school academics you already have achieved "success" -- and you have <sup>your</sup> diploma to prove it.

That suggests that the successful life is made up of a succession of successes -- after which, you hang up your spikes and lapse into a successful retirement.

I'm not trying to be funny, but isn't it odd that nobody ever wishes us "failure?" And, it's really too bad, because history tells us that many of mankind's most magnificent achievements were born out of failure.

Some of the noblest men and women the world has ever known have been labeled <sup>disasters</sup> failures by their contemporaries.



13.

Innumerable treasures in art and literature have been discovered long years after their originators had perished in abject poverty or disgrace.

Men and women who failed gloriously fill the pages of the Exodus -- and our own history of the ~~arduous trek through the wilds in the conquest~~<sup>Conquest</sup> of the West.

Why, then, this enduring preoccupation with "Success" -- a word no person can define -- except only as you define it for yourself.

~~Maybe that's the reason~~ Because it's the thing. That's why.

Obviously, it's safer for an ~~aunt or uncle~~<sup>relative</sup> to wish you something vague like "Success," than to get too specific.

"Dear Jackie," -- ~~(millions of Black kids are named Jackie Robinson~~  
~~Something)~~ -- ~~"Aunt Gladys and Uncle Benji"~~<sup>"We"</sup> look to the day when  
you'll be in Carnegie Hall. -- Signed, Aunt ~~ANN~~ AND Uncle ~~Fred~~.  
Bettye STANLEY

Great! That's nice and specific. Right?

Right! Jackie stands six-feet-three; weighs in at two-twenty-five, and the only "hall" he wants to be in is the Football Hall of Fame.

So much for "success."



14.

By now, you must have figured out that you're the only one who can decide what Hall you want to be in -- and how much of yourself you want to spend in getting there.

So far, you've made it to JEB Stuart's Hall of Graduates and that's all the success you need -- for the moment.

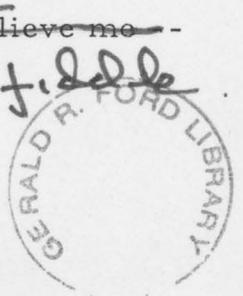
As a matter of fact, why don't you take the rest of the weekend off? Monday's soon enough to start working on your next step.

I realize that it would be nice if I finished this address - as a representative of the Administration -- with a few kind words about the golden opportunities that await you -- as you make your way toward the challenging world of the 21st Century.

But I'm not going to do that.

Of course there are opportunities. They're everywhere you want to look. If there weren't, there wouldn't be any reason for your going to school in the first place.

*But,* It's like trying to define success. There's not much point in talking about opportunities in, say Government -- and they are limitless, ~~believe me --~~ if the person you're talking with wants to be a ~~college~~ *base* *player.*



15.

I will say this about opportunity. If you go after whatever it is you want with everything you've got you'll make your own opportunities as you go.

If that sounds like an old copy-book heading -- so-be-it. But, just because it's a cliché, don't think for a minute that it doesn't work out that way.

As the man said, "The hurrieder you go the luckier you get."

But, I would like to leave you with a thought.

As you know, it's very popular to put down the accomplishments of civilization.

Our industrial might has created ugly scars -- both on our landscape and in the affairs of people. Our cities are full of blight and much of what we do in life seems meaningless.

The list of wrongs often seems to be longer than the list of rights.

While deep down, we really know that civilization has also produced great treasures in the arts and humanities, it's sometimes pretty hard not to think that we've lost more than we've gained.



16.

When you think of all those wrongs, it's pretty natural to start knocking the system. *But people <sup>have</sup> always knocked the system.*

As a matter of fact, the only reason humans emerged from the cave was because so many people were putting down caves as a place to live.

The only reason they invented the lever was because everybody was complaining about having a sore back.

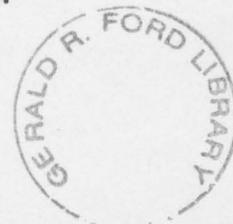
Look at anything mankind has ever invented -- the bad as well as the good -- and you can almost hear all the moaning that went on before it was produced.

In the process, of course, people wound up with a lot of stuff they never needed -- like wars and bubble gum, for instance -- but the right to gripe has never lost its popularity.

So go ahead and complain about things -- there's good reason for complaint.

And while you're at it, it might come to you there are so many things in need of change or improvement, that you really don't have time to sit around and ~~just~~ <sup>only</sup> rail against them. *you might even get the urge to do something about them.*

How lucky can you get?



17.

Just think how dull life would be if everything were perfect —

— If there were no challenges to keep your brain awake: no hills to climb, nothing to shoulder; no paths to take.

Well, nobody promised us a rose garden -- but we have one anyway -- <sup>and</sup>  
It's chock full of challenging thorns.

Isn't it amazing how much better a rose smells when it's bristling  
with saber-sharp ~~pristles~~ <sup>teeth</sup>?

Do you think a higher being was trying to tell us something when he gave  
us this particular rose garden?

I do.

And now I must run home and tell my children how interesting their  
father was.

Thank you very much. And, I really do wish you "success" -- YOUR  
WAY!



Vog TIME

FOR Ann Release ~~June 6 p. 4~~

~~JEB STUART SCHOOL~~

Would you believe I graduated from High School twenty four years, ago?

Don't answer -- I can <sup>tell</sup> ~~see~~ right away ~~that~~ you do believe it.

Well, see? That's one of the problems we have.

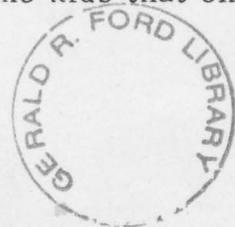
I can remember sitting there with the 1951 graduating class of Palmer Memorial -- hoping that the kindly old fella up there on the stage would hurry up with whatever he was trying to tell us so I could get on with the important things: Like seeing my girl, rapping with the guys, and getting to the beach party.

I'd guess the old guy was probably about my age today. And, in a way, I felt sorry for him. He was so out of touch with what was going on in the heads of his audience, it was pathetic.

I don't remember anything he said. All I could guess is that it must have been important to him.

That's fair enough, when you think of the odds. So that's what I'm going to do. ~~That~~ way, I can always go home and tell the kids that one person in the crowd hung on my every word.

Me.



2.

What's important to me is individualism; The will to do your thing.

I think you only have yourself to blame if everything goes to pot --  
no pun intended. I think that no matter what the odds, God gave us  
everything we need, in ourselves, to cope with whatever life hands us.

A friend of mine who is a very big thinker in the field of Human  
Resources was impressing me one night recently with his grasp of  
the human condition in this vastly overpopulated world of ours.

I told him I was coming over here, <sup>tonight</sup> today, to address your graduating  
class, and asked him if he had any message for you.

"Yeah," he said, "Tell 'em that 3 million 119thousand Americans  
will graduate from High School this month. If that doesn't wow 'em  
tell them there are already more than 12 million 18-21 year-olds in  
their immediate competitive cusp. And that our educational system  
will pump out another 10 or 11 million before this class reaches the  
age of 21.

Okay, so I told you.

Well, you've got to admit, that's a whole lot of competition - for  
higher education, for jobs, for a small piece of turf just to call your



3.

own in a land that has another 180 million people -- give or take -- who already own most of the action.

As they're fond of saying, across the river in Washington, it's a mind boggler -- if you happen to be in the mood for some boggling.

If you happen to be Black, or some other minority, multiply the boggle by two and draw one card from the oops! pile.

And, since I'm off to such an optimistic start ~~on the road to euphoria,~~ I might as well remind you that about 10 million Americans are looking for work -- and the highest percentages of unemployment are being racked up by the "privileged" generation you are about to join.

Now, there are a lot of ways to deal with this kind of bad news. For example,

In recent years, we had the great "drop out" experiment. That was a real winner. Unfortunately, for too many young people, it was based on the simple premise that one could always drop back in when the experience of poverty began to pall.

But a fickle fate forgot to go along with the gig. Today, there's not only a scarcity of dropping-in points - there's a vast pool of skilled



4.

people to fill any vacancy that comes along.

There's no question about it: ~~When~~ you've grown up in a kind of comfortable, middle-class atmosphere -- the attractions of the simple, unencumbered life of the do-it-yourself commune -- the open road with a jug of wine and a crust of bread -- is a temptation that's pretty hard to put down.

And, getting out is very easy.

It's getting back in that takes a bit of imagination -- especially when you've skipped the nice necessity of picking up some extra educational or skill credits during your sojourn in Happy Town.

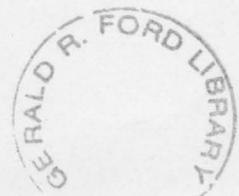
Not that I'm knocking the simple life. Show me the person who has never thought of chucking the battle and I'll show you a complete dummy.

The problem is that the statistics, my friend quoted, are ~~inexorable~~ <sup>murder</sup>

As you know, from your own schooling experience, you just can't skip the required drill -- whether you think the course is relevant or not.

If you're sick -- or absent for some other reason -- you have to make up the work.

After you finish your schooling the ~~exigencies~~ <sup>Necessities</sup> of making a living take over where the curriculum left off.



5.

Only, now if you skip the course, there's always somebody to take your place -- hundreds, thousands, millions of them!

So, the citizen who tunes out and turns off, doesn't just fall behind the class -- he or she falls behind every succeeding class that graduates in the meantime.

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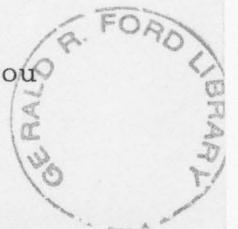
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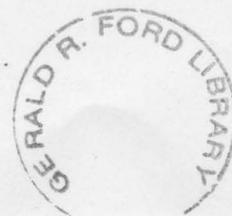
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You've seen a lot of graduation cards -- preferably with some ~~color~~ green <sup>ery</sup> enclosed. Next to "Congratulations" the most often expressed wish is for your "Success" -- usually illustrated with a <sup>happy</sup> ~~cherubic~~ faced graduate contemplating all that good stuff life has to offer.

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Innumerable treasures in art and literature have been discovered long years after their originators had perished in abject poverty or disgrace.

Men and women who failed gloriously fill the pages of the Exodus -- and our own history of the ~~arduous~~ trek through the wilds in the conquest of the West.

Why, then, this enduring preoccupation with "Success" -- a word no person can define -- except only as you define it for yourself.

~~Because it's the thing.~~ Because it's the thing. That's why.

Obviously, it's safer for an aunt or uncle to wish you something vague like "Success," than to get too specific.

"Dear Jackie," -- (millions of Black kids are named Jackie Robinson Something) -- "~~Aunt Gladys and Uncle Ben~~ <sup>"we"</sup> look to the day when you'll be in Carnegie Hall." -- Signed, AUNT ANN AND Uncle Fred."

Great! That's nice and specific. Right?

Right! Jackie stands six-feet-three; weighs in at two-twenty-five, and the only "hall" he wants to be in is the Football Hall of Fame.

So much for "success."



14.

By now, you must have figured out that you're the only one who can decide what Hall you want to be in -- and how much of yourself you want to spend in getting there.

So far, you've made it to JEB Stuart's Hall of Graduates and that's all the success you need -- for the moment.

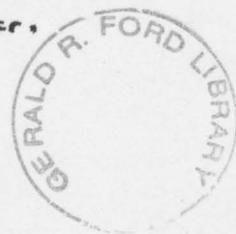
As a matter of fact, why don't you take the rest of the weekend off? Monday's soon enough to start working on your next step.

I realize that it would be nice if I finished this address - as a representative of the Administration -- with a few kind words about the golden opportunities that await you -- as you make your way toward the challenging world of the 21st Century.

But I'm not going to do that.

Of course there are opportunities. They're everywhere you want to look. If there weren't, there wouldn't be any reason for your going to school in the first place.

*But:* It's like trying to define success. There's not much point in talking about opportunities in, say Government -- and they are limitless, ~~believe me~~ -- if the person you're talking with wants to be a ~~bellie~~. *boss fiddle player.*



15.

I will say this about opportunity. If you go after whatever it is you want with everything you've got you'll make your own opportunities as you go.

If that sounds like an old copy-book heading -- so-be-it. But, just because it's a cliché, don't think for a minute that it doesn't work out that way.

As the man said, "The hurrieder you go the luckier you get."

But, I would like to leave you with a thought.

As you know, it's very popular to put down the accomplishments of civilization.

Our industrial might has created ugly scars -- both on our landscape and in the affairs of people. Our cities are full of blight and much of what we do in life seems meaningless.

The list of wrongs often seems to be longer than the list of rights.

While deep down, we really know that civilization has also produced great treasures in the arts and humanities, it's sometimes pretty hard not to think that we've lost more than we've gained.



16.

When you think of all those wrongs, it's pretty natural to start knocking the system. *But people have always knocked the systems.*

As a matter of fact, the only reason humans emerged from the cave was because so many people were putting down caves as a place to live.

The only reason they invented the lever was because everybody was complaining about having a sore back.

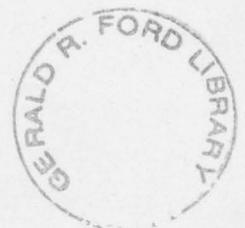
Look at anything mankind has ever invented -- the bad as well as the good -- and you can almost hear all the moaning that went on before it was produced.

In the process, of course, people wound up with a lot of stuff they never needed -- like wars and bubble gum, for instance -- but the right to gripe has never lost its popularity.

So go ahead and complain about things -- there's good reason for complaint.

And while you're at it, it might come to you there are so many things in need of change or improvement, that you really don't have time to sit around and ~~just~~ <sup>only</sup> rail against them. *You might even get the urge to do something about them.*

How lucky can you get?



17.

Just think how dull life would be if everything were perfect —

— If there were no challenges to keep your brain awake: no hills to climb, nothing to shoulder; no paths to take.

Well, nobody promised us a rose garden -- but we have one anyway -- and  
It's chock full of challenging thorns.

Isn't it amazing how much better a rose smells when it's bristling  
with saber-sharp bristles?

Do you think a higher being was trying to tell us something when he gave  
us this particular rose garden?

I do.

And now I must run home and tell my children how interesting their  
father was.

Thank you very much. And, I really do wish you "success" -- YOUR  
WAY!

