

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TO THE 1972 COLLEGE GRADUATES:

When I think of what it means to be graduating from college in today's world, I reflect sometimes on the story that is told of an old and wise teacher in ancient Greece. It is said that there was no question which the teacher could not answer and nothing which he could not understand. Finally, one student thought of a way to discredit his teacher's wisdom.

The student planned to conceal a bird in his hands. He would ask the old man to guess what he was holding and, if he guessed a bird, the boy would ask whether it was dead or alive. Should the old man guess dead, the boy would let the bird fly away. But, if the wise man guessed the bird was alive, the boy would crush out its life and open his hands to reveal a dead bird. And so it happened, until the boy asked, "Is the bird alive or dead?" The old man replied, "My son, the answer to that question is in your hands."

Today the future of this Nation surely rests in your hands. Whether the promise of progress and prosperity will be realized, whether democracy and freedom will grow, whether men will continue to be governed by human wisdom -- all this, and more, rests in your hands.

You are the best educated generation in our history. What will you do with your knowledge and ideas? How fully will you engage your mind and will and spirit in helping to make America an even better place to live?

I am hopeful that you will use your talents and knowledge to help make our Nation's ideals a reality. Now is the time for a future of peace, for more responsive government, for equal opportunity for all. I congratulate you on what you have finished and look forward with hope toward what you can now begin to accomplish.

*Richard Nixon*