

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

1966 GRADUATING CLASS OF ROSEBORO-SALEMBURG HIGH SCHOOL

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Years ago, before any of you were born, someone said, "If youth knew; if age could." If I may paraphrase his statement, I would say that if the young people of our nation were endowed with the knowledge and wisdom gained from experience and if the adults of our nation were endowed with the enthusiasm and capacity of our youth, many of the world's ills would be solved. We all know that this Frenchman meant that when one is young, he has the power to do anything, but he doesn't always know what to do. Then, when one is old and observation and experience have taught him the answers, he is tired, frightened; he doesn't care; he wants to be left alone. as long as he is safe; he doesn't have the capacity or the will to grieve over wrongs or troubles other than his own.

So you young men and women in this auditorium tonight, and in thousands of other rooms like this about the earth today, have the power to change the world, to rid it forever of war and injustice and suffering, provided you know what do do and how to do it. And so according to the old Frenchman, since you can't know what do do because you are young, then perhaps some of us here on the platform should be able to help you.

But maybe I am not as wise as I think or as I should be, because I can't give you a glib answer or pattern for your future.

But I can make some observations about your education. Your education that is only now beginning.

I speak of your education which is now beginning, for as disillusioning as it may sound, it would be a grave mistake for you to assume that you are now educated. It would be a reflection upon the instruction which you have already received. Even in those fields in which you think you have achieved proficiency, you have made only a beginning.

It seems probable that a great many of the world's ills, perhaps some of our most alarming ones, may be attributed to ignorance, and more seriously, to pretense of knowledge where there is none. One of your safeguards in the future will be your freedom from any form of self-deception.

You young men and women will see a population explosion that will create problems for which there are no immediate answers. New knowledge in the sciences, in medicine, and in every other field will present problems for which there are no immediate answers. So then, the best that I can do tonight is to challenge you to discover for yourselves the answers to the problems which these changes will cause. Finding these answers will be a part of your education which is now beginning.

How do we prepare then for a world not yet fully developed or clearly defined? Perhaps the best advice is to rely on past history. Determine and discover some of the causes and attributes

that have made for success in the lives of others. Test them to see if they still apply today and hope that they will make for success in the future.

As you look around and study the lives of the most successful people you know, I believe you will find that they share two traits of character. First, they possess a desire to succeed; and here let me say that I'm not speaking of succeeding materially, but of succeeding in every facet of their lives. Second, you will find that they possess a reliance upon God and a desire to help their fellowmen.

I should like to dwell on just one of these for a moment. The desire to succeed—for it appears to encompass and include the other.

You may recall that on one occasion when Jesus saw the multitude, he went up into the mountains and the people followed him and he told his disciples:

"If you love men which love you, what reward have ye?
Do not even the publicans the same"?

"If you salute your brothers only, do not even the
publicans the same"?

Then he asked a very significant question of all of them. A question that we ought to ask ourselves throughout our lives because it reveals one of the qualities of a truly successful man or woman—What do you more than others? That is the distinguishing mark of a successful man or woman.

James Corbett, long before your time, was a world heavyweight boxing champion. Someone asked him to what he attributed his great success. He told them this, that early in his career, he made up his mind that no matter how tough the fight, he would try to "go one more round." The determination of this great fighter to "go one more round" became an obsession with him, and because of it he became a World Champion.

WHAT A MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION! An obsession to go one more round—an obsession to do more than others.

America is filled with illustrations of people and communities that were obsessed with the idea of doing more than others, or of going one more round. You should know some of them.

Zane Grey, the writer of great western stories. All of you know him. Yet, he was told time and time again that "People do not like western stories." And his books were rejected by the publishers. But he was obsessed with that determination to try again. Finally he wrote The Riders of the Purple Sage. It became one of the great western novels of all time, and today every television station and every major movie theater thrills with the privilege of showing a movie based on a story by Zane Grey.

Walt Disney, as a young man, was told that he had no talent. The editor of the Kansas Star literally kicked him out of his office. Yet, his determination to succeed did not allow him to quit. He was determined to do a little more than others—to go one more round—

And finally he came up with the idea for the cartoon strip of "Oswald the Rabbit." It was accepted. Then came Mickey Mouse and others. Today, because of his will to succeed, he is now an American Institution.

Oh yes, you say, you are speaking of great men, but I'm an ordinary person. That is my handicap. A handicap will not keep a determined person from succeeding.

IMPRISON THEM. While in prison, Paul Bunyan wrote the immortal Pilgrim's Progress. One of the greatest literary masterpieces of all time.

BLIND THEM. John Milton's Paradise Lost. Another of the world's great literary masterpieces.

CRIPPLE THEM. President Franklin Roosevelt, crippled with polio in the prime of his youth, endured the most exhausting campaigns and led this nation to its most glorious victory.

No one to this day has been able to understand how the great musician, Beethoven, could compose some of the world's most beautiful music, music which he could never hear because he was deaf.

One of the greatest movies of all time was "A Rhapsody in Blue." Yet, few people know that the composer of that masterpiece was laughed right off the stage. He wrote more than 100 songs before he sold the first one for \$5.00. He went one more round, and then came PORGY AND BESS, AN AMERICAN IN PARIS, and many others.

AMERICA WAS BUILT BY PEOPLE WHO DID MORE THAN OTHERS—WHO WENT ONE MORE ROUND. So if you remember nothing more of what I have

said tonight—remember that failure is a part of life. Never be discouraged by it. =

I can think of no more appropriate thought to leave with you than these words from a great American, Theodore Roosevelt:

"It is far better to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered with failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."