

SPEECH GIVEN BY ROBERT MORGAN, ATTORNEY GENERAL
ASHEBORO JAYCEES - DSA BANQUET
January 12, 1970

ON THE OLD DECADE AND THE NEW

insurance
Telephone

Senate about
Ellis
Green (Hogan)
Billy Miller

Vacuum Cleaners
magazines
mortgage brokers
encyclopedias

ON THE OLD DECADE AND THE NEW

also
Postcard
J.M.C.

#2
Challenges of New Decade

Crime

9 times faster youth
~~most~~
Responsibility
young people
Law officers

Highways -

78 - 40% more cars
build 30% cheaper before
needs

#24 - 4 lanes from Marin
gate to Sausalito

San Bruno - 4 lanes beyond
the school

#24 - New express - bypass
to Frej

#17 bk to S.C.

Speech by
Robert Morgan, Attorney General
Smithfield Jaycees

January 13, 1969

ON THE OLD DECADE AND THE NEW

The arrival of the '70's somehow seems to make the events of the '60's and the decades before suddenly more distant --- And in some ways that may be good.

In discussing the '60's, the question is often raised: "What other ten years have been so loaded with tragedy and change?" The question is a good one and regrettably not easily answered. Those of us who are older perhaps could point to the thirties and the great depression, the forties and the great war and suggest an answer.

But I think the tragedy of the decade we have just left behind is by far the greatest. Students of literature tell us that the true tragedy must begin on a note of the great hope and joy and end in despair. Certainly, we came close to this in the '60's.

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In my opinion, this Nation has never known greater hope than it did during the early days of the administration of John F. Kennedy. The whole Nation seemed young then. In the words of the President himself, this great Nation seemed to be for a while the mystical realm of Camelot. But, the dream was fleeting and it disappeared forever that tragic day in Dallas.

Two more assassinations followed, the conflict in Viet Nam grew worse, and we moved toward the '70's for the most part confused and with little hope that any of our grave national problems would be resolved. Frankly, I think many of our people wished the '70's on us, believing that by passing into a new decade we would leave behind some of the frustrations of the '60's. And perhaps we have, for I am optimistic.

I believe that much of the violence that has plagued us did not make it over the threshold. I think it is apparent to all that the massive violence which filled our streets for a while accomplished little. The human suffering, the loss of lives and the destruction of property resulted instead in the deterioration of racial relations which men of good will shall have a difficult time repairing.

I believe that the time of turmoil on our college campuses - of violence, hostility and disrespect for great institutions - is also passing. Perhaps our young people had a point to make and felt there was no other way to make the Establishment listen. I don't know, but I do know that most of us were shaken to discover that our college and university campuses - long the stronghold of reason and order, had been turned into centers of disorder and that "demands" had been substituted for the reason of the conference table.

Perhaps I am overly optimistic, but I think that the terrible war which plagued us during the '60's will not follow us far into the '70's if we pursue the course which has been laid out for an honorable withdrawal from the Vietnamese battlefields. But I believe quite strongly that we will never resolve this conflict honorably unless the American people stand united in their efforts.

I do believe that we are moving toward peace, and I think that it is due in large measure to the public support which our President has been able to muster. Our President may eventually fail in his efforts to

find peace - again, I don't know - but I do know it will be the greatest tragedy of our time if his failure to find peace is a result of a divided America.

In spite of the chaos of the '60's, though, I think there are some lessons to be learned from the things that took place. Foremost, I think, we have learned that the American people, as never before, are aware of what is going on around them and that they are determined to have a part in shaping their own destinies and the destiny of their Nation. This is true of the young person - the student - who emerged during the '60's as a powerful force in our society, determined to speak out in some way and to be heard on the issues which concerned him.

This is also true of our Nation's minorities who produced powerful and articulate leaders who spoke for them, though often in strangely different voices. We heard Martin Luther King preach about non-violence and Rap Brown shout, "Burn, Baby, Burn." We heard the arguments of the migrant workers in California in their attempts to unionize. We heard integrationists and separatists speak out. And whether we agreed or

not, we could not deny the fact that we had entered a time when people could speak and be heard.

Finally, the voices of the "silent American" ceased to be silent any longer and that great mass of middle class Americans at last found their way into national publications and to the TV screen. It seems that these were the last voices heard, for I note that one magazine honored the "forgotten Americans" as the "man and woman" of the year as late as 1969.

You know, during the past decade, we heard a lot of talk about "relevance." Students said that their curricula should be "relevant." Minorities said that government should be "relevant." We must have heard the word a thousand times from one source or the other. As a matter of fact, it has become so commonplace that it seemed a natural one to use in talking about the decade we are entering now - the 1970's.

I believe that the '70's will be a time when the American people must think seriously about their relationship to a number of things. The relevance of people to their communities, to their environments and to their governments are three of the areas that are

of utmost concern to many Americans and three into which I think the 1970's must provide new insights.

Communities - In every community, there are all too many people who shun civic endeavors altogether, saying that they "just don't have the time," or "just aren't joiners." In some few instances, this reluctance may be justified and understandable; but in most instances, you and I know that it is not so.

In most instances, these people have not taken the time you have to consider their individual responsibilities to their communities, to their fellow citizens and to themselves. They haven't discovered what you have discovered - that there is more, much more, to being a good citizen than simply obeying laws, voting and paying taxes. You know that feeling of personal satisfaction that comes from engaging in cooperative efforts which result in real and lasting contributions to your community. Though we have just crossed the threshold of a new decade and expect many changes to come in the '70's, we can rest assured that the satisfaction derived from unselfish service will not change and that people will still find their greatest feeling of fulfillment when they give the most to others.

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Environment - We are going to have to become more conscious of the environment about us. Three former North Carolina Governors - Hodges, Moore and Sanford - said in an article in last Sunday's paper that the number one problem to be faced in the 1970's is that of cleaning up and preserving a wholesome environment for ourselves and those who are to come after us.

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Governor Hodges predicted, "We in this State are going to show the way for the entire South and a good part of the Nation in how to have good recreation and living conditions."

Governor Sanford echoed this sentiment saying, "Making a living is important, and that's what we had to do first. But more important is living. The kind of State, the kind of community, the kind of cities we will have constitute the major challenge for the people of North Carolina."

I believe that both Governor Hodges and Sanford are correct. We must be concerned about continued development in our State, but we must at the same time preserve the environment. We must stress conservation and development, both together and not either alone.

We Americans, we North Carolinians, are just beginning to realize the urgency of this challenge. But I believe that at last we have grasped it and that the '70's will bring the greatest emphasis upon conservation and environmental problems that we have seen in the history of this Nation. For at last, we can all see the "relevance" of conservation to our own daily lives, and the lives of our children and grandchildren who are to come after us.

We have so long reveled in our bounty that we have talked ourselves into believing that it has no limitations. Nothing could be further from the truth. And no idea could be more dangerous to a people who are daily becoming more numerous and more urbanized.

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The present administration in North Carolina already has moved to meet this challenge. I believe we have in Roy Sowers, our present Director of the Department of Conservation and Development, a man who is conscious of the environmental problems which face us and who is determined to see that we strike a good balance between efforts to encourage new industry and growth and the necessity for preserving a wholesome environment. My office has employed a specialist in environmental problems,

to be treasured and preserved? Who is there among us who will deny that this is in fact "the goodliest land under the cope of heaven?"

Let's stop dead these desecrations to our land and air before they stop us dead!

The third area in which I hope the '70's will bring new relationships - new relevance - is between the individual citizen and the government which first and foremost is designed to serve him.

I do not need to tell you that many persons have lost faith in their governments at all levels. While they believe with Henry Clay that "Government is a trust, and the officers of government are trustees; and both the trust and the trustees are created for the benefit of the people," they have come to feel that their individual power to affect the workings of government and to make their voices heard has been lost.

The people should not be asked to accept "government on faith." Those of us whom you have elected should be constantly going to you, the people, to explain what is being done on your behalf. Government is strongest and

holds the public confidence best when this is done regularly, with candor, and without any attempt to deceive or lull the people into complacency.

I think that the events of the '60's taught the American public to inquire into the workings of their government to make sure that it is relevant to their needs. And I think that those of us who expect to serve you in the '70's should resolve here and now to make sure that you stay well informed. Nothing could foster such improvement better in the '70's than increased relevance of the process to the needs of the ordinary citizen.

As your Attorney General, I intend to do my part to make government work for the people, to make sure that I do not become so caught up in the activities of my office that I forget to keep the people who helped elect me informed about what the Office of the Attorney General is doing. If I fail to do so, I frankly feel that I do not merit your continued support.

In closing, I would like to add that self-government is difficult, but it is freedom, and let us be aware that the efforts which were first necessary to create freedom are fully as necessary today to sustain it.