

REMARKS BY ATTORNEY GENERAL ROBERT MORGAN
LEO JENKINS DAY
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About seventy years ago there arose in Eastern North Carolina a man who was possessed of a new idea - an idea that he believed would so stir the hearts and minds of all the people that they would strive to achieve their full potential. He believed the State should not only seek to open the door of the schoolhouse to every child, but that it should seek to persuade and influence every child, regardless of his position in life or his race or religion, to enter the school.

Hostility to Aycock's educational policies became particularly intense throughout the State, yet Governor Charles B. Aycock, convinced that his cause was right, and realizing that change often stirs hostility, continued to champion his plea for universal education. He faced hostile crowds throughout the State and even a hostile state legislature; but he told all, in unmistakable terms, that the future of the underprivileged and the entire state hinged on universal education. We know now that he was right.

Governor Aycock found, as others since have found, that any effort to change the status quo or to "buck the old guard" would subject one to the wrath of those who would "hold the line" against any change, except that change which enhances their own prestige and status. There have been and will be others through the years.

The one we honor tonight is not afraid of change nor is he afraid to play a controversial role. He had demonstrated time and time again that he has the courage to do what he thinks is right and for the best interest of the university which he leads - and the State which he serves - even though it may mean the disfavor and criticism of others and at times criticism by those in his own profession.

Since coming to East Carolina, Dr. Leo Jenkins has watched it grow from a college of less than 2,000 students to the point where the university today provides an opportunity for more than 9,500 young men and young women who are seeking a university education on campus.

He has lead East Carolina in providing off-campus services, to the thousands of people in the area which it serves - fulfilling its role as a regional university.

When East Carolina was faced with the demands of the people in this State to provide for opportunities for the training and education of nurses, it turned to the Board of Higher Education. When its request was summarily turned down, the college had the courage to turn directly to the people through their duly elected representatives in the legislature for permission. It was granted and under the leadership of President Jenkins we can point today to a fully accredited baccalaureate nursing program - one of three in the State.

Under his leadership many other programs have been established, including the new School of Allied Health Professions which will help provide much needed professionals in the field of health, and is now working to alleviate the shortage of doctors which exists everywhere.

Dr. Jenkins has taken East Carolina's motto "To Serve" literally and has been the inspiration behind

the growth and establishment of The Division of Continuing Education which offers educational opportunities to the people of Eastern North Carolina who are unable to take advantage of regular campus programs; the Developmental Evaluation Clinic which provides multi-disciplinary developmental evaluation for handicapped individuals; and The Regional Development Institute established to create understanding and contribute toward aiding the process of regional growth and development. These are just one or two of the programs that have flourished under his guidance.

There are so many accomplishments that even his bitterest opponents admit that they admire his dogged determination to attain his objectives.

He is a good listener, a deep student of what he hears and reads; and, then, when he makes up his mind as to what should be done and how it should be done, he is not content until it is done.

Dr. Jenkins is equally at home in a crossroads gathering and in making a college commencement day address, or serving as a lay speaker in the Methodist Church.

Because of his traits of good judgment, sternness, tenacity and even on occasion, stubbornness, and a compelling urge to help people help themselves make life more worthwhile, he is now a prominent figure in North Carolina public life. In the future we may expect him to become even more prominent in perhaps other capacities.

This belief and courage led President Jenkins to advocate a policy of optimism for East Carolina College. In following that policy the college surmounted the most difficult opposition ever encountered by any institution of higher learning seeking to serve the people in the state. The 1967 Legislature largely through his efforts granted it the right to serve North Carolina as a new dynamic university.

He believes that "progress of an area can come only after the section can offer cultural opportunities, economic opportunities and the best in medical and recreational facilities."

He believes that the total economic development of eastern North Carolina depends upon a well-traveled road between the University and the people. Through his inspiring leadership this road has been opened to all the people

of North Carolina and through his plans and dreams for the future he extends an invitation for the University to continue to be used by the people for the fullest development of our state.

Only through such courageous leaders will North Carolina be able to keep alive the spirit of individualism and descent which gave birth to this nation, nourished it as an infant and carries it through its severest tests upon the attainment of maturity.

I am especially honored to join other North Carolinians in honoring one who has meant so much to the life of our state.