

SPEECH BY:

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EAGLE SCOUT CEREMONY FOR TOM HUTAFF

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ON TRAILS TO MANHOOD

IT IS A REAL PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE WITH YOU TONIGHT TO SHARE IN THIS CEREMONY RECOGNIZING A VERY SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT IN THE AREA OF SCOUTING. TO ACHIEVE THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT IS QUITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT. CERTAINLY IT IS EVIDENCE THAT ONE IS ALREADY BEGINNING TO BLAZE THE TRAIL TO MANHOOD THROUGH SERVICE TO GOD AND COUNTRY. IT IS EVIDENCE THAT ONE HAS LEARNED TO UNDERTAKE DIFFICULT TASKS, AND THROUGH HARD WORK AND A WILLING SPIRIT ACCOMPLISH GREAT GOALS.

SO IT IS WITH A GREAT DEAL OF PRIDE IN HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT I EXTEND TO TOM HUTAFF MY SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS UPON ATTAINING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT AND ALSO CONTINUING THE GREAT SCOUTING TRADITION IN HIS FAMILY.

WHILE WE MEET HERE TONIGHT TO TALK ABOUT ACHIEVEMENT, AND IN PARTICULAR TO HONOR THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF TOM HUTAFF, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK FOR A FEW MINUTES ABOUT TODAY'S YOUTH AND THE POSSIBILITIES FOR BLAZING TRAILS INTO MANHOOD WHICH ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU.

MY CONSTANT EXPERIENCE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY HAS CONVINCED ME THAT BEING YOUNG IN 1973 IS NOT A SIMPLE THING. OUR WORLD IS COMPLICATED, FAR MORE COMPLICATED THAN IT WAS WHEN I

WAS A YOUNGSTER, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THIS COMPLEX SOCIETY OFFERS A GREATER VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES THAN EVER BEFORE. BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES IT OFTEN BECOMES A VERY DIFFICULT THING FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO DECIDE EXACTLY WHAT TRAIL TO BLAZE AND I'M AFRAID THAT THOSE OF US WHO ARE A LITTLE OLDER OFTEN FAIL TO APPRECIATE THIS.

FRANKLY, WHEN I CONSIDER THE PACE OF OUR SOCIETY AND HOW RAPIDLY IT CHANGES, I AM AMAZED THAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE MOST PART EXHIBIT AS MUCH ABILITY AS THEY DO TO COORDINATE AND MANAGE THEIR OWN LIVES.

LET'S THINK FOR A MINUTE ABOUT JUST ONE OF THE DECISIONS WHICH NOW FACES YOUNG PEOPLE AS THEY STRIKE OUT TO BLAZE THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL TRAIL.

THE QUESTION OF EDUCATION TODAY HAS BECOME PARTICULARLY PERPLEXING. THERE WAS A TIME, AND NOT MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN WE ASSUMED THAT COLLEGE WAS A NECESSARY STEP FOR EVERY YOUNG PERSON TO ACHIEVE HIS GOAL. WE OLDER PEOPLE PROBABLY FOSTERED THAT NOTION, AND I KNOW THAT WE PERPETUATED IT FOR A LONG TIME.

BUT TODAY MANY OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT SEE A FORMAL COLLEGE EDUCATION AS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS AND FEEL IT FAR BETTER TO FIND ANOTHER ROUTE TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR A VOCATION. THEY HAVE DISCOVERED THAT OUR SOCIETY NEEDS MANY SERVICES AND SKILLS WHICH CANNOT BE LEARNED IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM. THEY HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THEY CAN BLAZE THEIR TRAIL, THAT THEY CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO OUR

SOCIETY WITHOUT A LIBERAL ARTS DEGREE.

THIS IS NOT AN EASY DECISION IN A SOCIETY SUCH AS OURS WHERE WE, IN THE PAST, HAVE PLACED SO MUCH VALUE ON A SHEEPSKIN.

AT THE SAME TIME, OUR SOCIETY HAS BECOME TREMENDOUSLY COMPETITIVE. THERE ARE A MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE ON THE JOB MARKET AND THERE IS A GREAT DEMAND FOR THE AVAILABLE JOBS. EVEN A COLLEGE GRADUATE CAN NO LONGER ASSUME INSTANT EMPLOYMENT. THOSE WHO HAVE "DROPPED OUT" OF THE SYSTEM ESPECIALLY ARE FINDING LIFE OUTSIDE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT TO BE ROUGH AND THE FREE RIDE THEY ARE TRYING TO HITCH AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS TO BE A PRETTY BUMPY ONE. OUR YOUNG PEOPLE MUST DECIDE IF THEY'RE WILLING TO TAKE THE RISKS WHICH GO ALONG WITH "COPPING OUT" OF OUR CULTURE. THEY MUST DECIDE WHAT VOCATION OR PROFESSION THEY WILL PURSUE AND WHAT LIFESTYLE THEY ARE GOING TO ADOPT AT A FAIRLY EARLY AGE. AND IN THIS DAY THAT IS NO EASY CHOICE.

I URGE YOU AS YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE BOLD AS YOU FACE THESE CHOICES. CALL UPON ALL THE RESOURCES YOU HAVE AND DO NOT FEEL THREATENED OR DOUBTFUL OF YOUR OWN ABILITY TO COPE WITH THE DECISIONS YOU FACE.

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE WORRY THAT BY MAKING A PROMPT DECISION AND A STRONG COMMITMENT TO A COURSE OF ACTION THEY FEEL WORTHY OF THEIR EFFORTS, THAT THEY ARE THEREBY CLOSING DOORS ON OTHER OPPORTUNITIES. THEREFORE, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE PURSUING IN AN HONORABLE WAY THE HIGHEST OF GOALS THEY BECOME FRUSTRATED BECAUSE THEY FEEL THEY ARE MISSING OUT ON A LOT OF LIFE.

IT IS EASY TO SEE HOW A YOUNG PERSON COULD BECOME CONFUSED AND END UP IN FACT WITHOUT DIRECTION AT ALL. IT IS EASY TO SEE HOW ONE COULD TRY TO BLAZE SO MANY TRAILS THAT HE WOULD END UP HAVING BLAZED NOT A CLEAR TRAIL BUT INSTEAD A TANGLED PATH LEADING NOWHERE. I URGE YOU THEREFORE, TO SET YOUR COURSE AND STICK TO IT BECAUSE BY DOING SO, YOU WILL STRENGTHEN YOURSELF AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR COMMUNITY AND TO YOUR COUNTRY.

AS YOU DO SO, LET ME CAUTION YOU OF THE CONFUSION WHICH OFTEN ARISES WHEN ONE MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO CONCEPTS OF QUANTITY AND QUALITY. ALTHOUGH I AM SURE THAT EVERYONE HERE RECOGNIZES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "HOW MUCH" AND "HOW GOOD", I WONDER IF YOU ARE AWARE OF THE INCREASING VALUE THIS COUNTRY HAS PLACED ON QUANTITY, OFTEN AT THE GREAT COST OF SACRIFICING QUALITY. WHILE THE POPULATION EXPLOSION OBVIOUSLY REQUIRES THAT PRODUCTION OF ALL COMMODITIES BE STEPPED UP, IT DOES NOT REASONABLY EXPLAIN WHY SUCH PRODUCTION MUST BE LESS EFFICIENT AND OFTEN EVEN SHODDY.

THE IDEA OF PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE, BY WHICH MANUFACTURED GOODS ARE DESIGNED TO WEAR OUT IN A SHORT TIME, IS A TWENTIETH CENTURY CONCEPT. THERE IS NO NEED FOR ME TO TELL YOU HOW ABSURD IT IS THAT OUR SOCIETY CAN SEND MAN TO THE MOON AND INVENT HIGHLY COMPLEX INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY, BUT CAN NO LONGER MANUFACTURE CONSUMER PRODUCTS SUCH AS AN AUTOMOBILE OR A WASHING MACHINE OR A REFRIGERATOR WHICH WILL LAST FOR MORE THAN A FEW YEARS.

I WOULD GO FURTHER TO POINT OUT THAT WHAT IS TRUE IN ONE AREA OF OUR LIVES CAN OFTEN SPREAD TO INCLUDE OTHER AREAS. THUS, IT IS ONLY LOGICAL TO ASSUME THAT UNLESS WE ARE VERY CAREFUL, THE SHODDINESS OF MATERIAL OBJECTS CAN EXTEND TO A LESSENING OF QUALITY IN EDUCATION, ART AND CULTURE. PEOPLE DO NOT USUALLY OPENLY ADVOCATE A DECLINE IN QUALITY, BUT IT MAY BE THRUST UPON US IF WE DO NOT ACT TO RETAIN AND IMPROVE ALL STANDARDS OF LIFE.

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK OUT, CHOOSE AND PROMOTE QUALITY. ACCEPTANCE OF LESS THAN THE BEST -- IN OURSELF, IN OUR GOVERNMENT AND IN OUR SOCIETY GENERALLY -- IS A STRIKE AGAINST THE EXCELLENCE WHICH AMERICA HAS ALWAYS REPRESENTED.

THE ANTAGONISM I HAVE FOUND IN YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY TOWARD FLAG WAVING AND PATRIOTISM IN GENERAL MAY BE A DIRECT RESULT OF THEIR DISILLUSIONMENT WITH WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE AMERICA'S ACCEPTANCE OF LOWERED STANDARDS.

YOU CAN BE CERTAIN THAT THE AMERICAN OF 1776 WITH ITS HIGH PRINCIPLES AND LOFTY IDEALS OF INDIVIDUAL INTEGRITY, WOULD BE ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENDORSED BY MANY OF THE CYNICAL YOUTHS WHO "COP OUT" TODAY. THEIR DISILLUSIONMENT IS PERHAPS UNDERSTANDABLE IN SOME WAYS, BUT THEIR REFUSAL TO HELP CORRECT, THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO GIVE OF THEMSELVES FOR A BETTER SOCIETY, IS A DISHEARTENING AND DISAPPOINTING SPECTACLE.

I URGE ALL OF YOU HERE NOT TO TAKE THIS EASY WAY OUT. BE FREE IN YOUR CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM BUT TRANSLATE YOUR CONCERNS INTO DETERMINED, CONCERNED ACTION. ALTHOUGH IT IS NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS WRONG, SUCH UNDERSTANDING IS VALUELESS WITHOUT A REALISTIC VISION OF HOW TO CORRECT THE SITUATION. I STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO SEEK FLAWS IN OUR SOCIETY AND TO CONSIDER THEM AS ILLS TO BE CURED. BUT HELP PROVIDE THE MEDICINE. YOU HAVE THE ABILITY AND I KNOW YOU POSSESS THE SKILL TO DO SO.

WITH YOUR MINDS THUS DIRECTED TO QUALITY IN LIFE, ANY GOAL YOU MIGHT SET WILL BE ENHANCED BY YOUR DESIRE TO PRESERVE, STRENGTHEN AND PROMOTE RATHER THAN TO DESTROY AND CONDEMN.

LET ME MENTION TWO PARTICULAR AREAS WHERE I BELIEVE YOU CAN BLAZE SOME TRAILS.

ONE VITAL AREA IN WHICH HELP IS NEEDED IS THE ENVIRONMENT. TOO MANY PEOPLE TODAY UNTHINKINGLY ACCEPT CLEAN AIR, CLEAN WATER AND FERTILE FIELDS AS A WAY OF LIFE. THEY RECOGNIZE THE GROWING DANGERS TO OUR ENVIRONMENT, YET THEY DO NOTHING THEMSELVES TO STOP THE THREAT. SOME EVEN CONTINUE TO IGNORE THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION, THINKING SUCH PROBLEMS ARE CONFINED ONLY TO PLACES SUCH AS NEW YORK CITY AND LOS ANGELES.

I ASSURE YOU THAT THEY ARE NOT. I CAN SEE THE PROBLEM AS IT AFFECTS US HERE IN NORTH CAROLINA FIRSTHAND, AS MY OFFICE RECEIVES AN EVER INCREASING NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN CASES INVOLVING ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS.

GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE CITIZENS ALIKE, YOUNG AND OLD, MUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT IN YEARS AHEAD AND REMEMBER THAT MEN LIVING AMONG DISMAL SURROUNDINGS MOST ASSUREDLY WILL BECOME DISMAL CREATURES THEMSELVES. SO ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IS A MUST.

ANOTHER AREA IN WHICH YOU MIGHT FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON QUALITY IS IN GOVERNMENT. OUR WHOLE NATION, I AM AFRAID, IS EXPERIENCING A GROWING SKEPTICISM ABOUT GOVERNMENT AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS. AND OBVIOUSLY AS A PUBLIC OFFICIAL, THIS CONCERNS ME.

I, FOR ONE, HAVE NEVER BELIEVED THAT IN ORDER TO BE A POLITICIAN ONE MUST BE CORRUPT OR DISHONEST. I VIEW THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT AS AN HONORABLE PROFESSION, AND I AM DISTRESSED, QUITE FRANKLY, THAT CURRENT EVENTS ARE RAPIDLY CAUSING OUR PEOPLE TO BELIEVE TO THE CONTRARY. HOWEVER, I SEE IN THIS CURRENT DISILLUSIONMENT WITH GOVERNMENT A GOOD OBJECT LESSON FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. LEARN TO RECOGNIZE AND UNDERSTAND WHAT CONSTITUTES SOUND, RESPONSIVE, DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT AND TO SPOT IMMEDIATELY THAT WHICH SMACKS OF CORRUPTION AND UNBRIDLED AMBITION.

"DEMOCRACY (IN OUR COUNTRY) IS BASED ON THE CONVICTION THAT MEN HAVE THE MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY, AS WELL AS THE INALIENABLE RIGHT TO GOVERN THEMSELVES WITH REASON AND JUSTICE." (STEPHEN VINCENT BENET) I BELIEVE THIS QUITE STRONGLY AND I URGE YOU TO CONSIDER YOURSELVES A PART OF THAT

DEMOCRACY AND TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH GOES WITH IT. CONTRARY TO WHAT SOME BELIEVE, DEMOCRACY IN OUR NATION IS NOT JUST A PRIVILEGE TO BE ENJOYED, IT IS A TRUST TO KEEP AND MAINTAIN.

YOU CAN BLAZE NEW TRAILS IN GOVERNMENT BY DEVELOPING AN INTELLIGENT AND SENSITIVE APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT AND CORRECTING THOSE FAULTS WHICH EXIST. FOR GOODNESS SALES, DO NOT ABANDON GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, BUT CONSIDER THEIR ULTIMATE WORTH AND POTENTIAL FOR EXCELLENCE. DO NOT LET THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF TODAY DESTROY YOUR CAPABILITY AND DESIRE TO BECOME INVOLVED AND TO CREATE SOMETHING GOOD.

THERE IS MUCH MORE THAT I COULD SAY AND OTHER ADVICE THAT I COULD GIVE; HOWEVER, I WILL REFRAIN FROM DOING SO AND CONCLUDE BY SAYING THAT I HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT AND PERSONAL ADMIRATION FOR THOSE OF YOU INVOLVED IN SCOUTING, BOTH AS SCOUTS AND LEADERS OF SCOUTS. THE WORK YOU ARE DOING, WITHOUT DOUBT, IS FORMING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR THE BUILDING OF PERSONAL CHARACTER AND IN TURN THE BUILDING OF A BETTER NATION AND A BETTER WORLD. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE YOUNG PEOPLE HERE TONIGHT HAVE BOTH THE ABILITY AND DESIRE TO LEAD AND THAT THEY WILL DO SO IN THE FUTURE. YOU ALREADY ARE BLAZING NEW TRAILS INTO MANHOOD AND YOU HAVE OUR ENCOURAGEMENT, OUR SUPPORT, OUR APPRECIATION AND OUR PERSONAL THANKS FOR SETTING SUCH A FINE EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS.