

SPEECH BY:

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20TH CENTURY ADVANCEMENT FUND
HILTON INN
BENNETT COLLEGE
GREENSBORO, N. C.
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IT IS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE WITH YOU TODAY AND TO SHARE IN THIS MEETING OF THE SECOND CENTURY ADVANCEMENT FUND. YOURS IS A MOST IMPORTANT MISSION AND I COMMEND EACH OF YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO MAKE THE SACRIFICES ALWAYS REQUIRED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN AN UNDERTAKING SUCH AS THIS ONE.

I SUSPECT THAT MANY OF YOU MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE SURPRISED WHEN YOU DISCOVERED THAT I WOULD BE THE SPEAKER FOR YOUR PROGRAM TODAY. YOU MIGHT WELL HAVE ASKED YOURSELVES WHAT BUSINESS ROBERT MORGAN HAS ADDRESSING THE PATRONS OF A PRIVATE COLLEGE WHEN HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN PUBLICALLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE CAUSE OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION, PARTICULARLY EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY.

CERTAINLY YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO ASK SUCH A QUESTION. FOR YEARS I HAVE BEEN NEAR THE CENTER OF THE STORM REVOLVING AROUND EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY AND WHAT I BELIEVE HAS BEEN ITS SINCERE QUEST TO FULFILL ITS POTENTIAL FOR SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

BUT IN DOING SO I HAVE TRIED TO BE A STUDENT OF THE SYSTEM OF EVOLVING HIGHER EDUCATION IN OUR STATE AND TO UNDERSTAND AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THE RELATIVE ROLES OF EACH OF OUR STATE-SUPPORTED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING. IN TURN, I HAVE HAD A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO VIEW THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE AND DETERMINE IN MY OWN MIND WHAT ROLE PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION HAS AND SHOULD BE PLAYING IN NORTH CAROLINA AND TO DEVELOP A FULL APPRECIATION OF ITS CONTRIBUTION TO OUR SOCIETY.

CONSEQUENTLY, I HAVE BECOME CONVINCED THAT PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IS A VITAL, EVEN INDISPENSIBLE, PART OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF OUR STATE AND NATION AND THAT A BALANCE MUST BE PRESERVED BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT PRIVATE EDUCATION AND THE CONCERN OF OUR NATIONAL CONSTITUTION FOR THE VALUE OF INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR RIGHTS GREW UP TOGETHER IN THIS COUNTRY. IN RECENT WEEKS WE HAVE SEEN THE DRAMA OF CHECKS AND BALANCES IN OUR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ACTED OUT IN THE MOST VIVID FASHION AS WATERGATE AND ITS ATTENDANT PROBLEMS HAVE UNFOLDED BEFORE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. I WOULD SUGGEST TO YOU HERE TODAY THAT IN OUR GREAT DUAL SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION WE HAVE OPERATING THE SAME TESTED PRINCIPLES OF CHECKS AND BALANCES THAT HAVE SERVED TO MAKE THE UNITED STATES THE OLDEST SUCCESSFUL CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY NOW FUNCTIONING UPON THE EARTH.

I AM PROUD OF OUR STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND CONFIDENT THAT THE MISSION OF EACH IS A NOBLE ONE. IF I WERE NOT, I WOULD NOT HAVE DEVOTED MUCH OF MY TIME DURING THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS TO SERVING AS A TRUSTEE OF ONE OF THESE INSTITUTIONS AND ARGUING THEIR CAUSES AND PROMOTING THEIR PROGRESS IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THIS COUNTRY CANNOT AFFORD NOT TO HAVE STRONG PRIVATE COMPETITION FOR ITS STATE SCHOOLS. WE MUST HAVE BOTH SYSTEMS. THEY NEED EACH OTHER. THE MUTUAL STIMULATION AND CRITICISM BY WHICH THEY HAVE GROWN IN THE PAST IS NECESSARY TO KEEP BOTH SYSTEMS HEALTHY AND PROGRESSIVE IN THE FUTURE.

I MUST CONFESS ALSO THAT I AM CONSERVATIVE ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS IN YOUR INTEREST AND MINE - THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENT THOUGHT - THAT THE STATE NEVER BE ALLOWED THROUGH A MONOLITHIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO CAPTURE THE WHOLE MIND OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

I AM GLAD, THEREFORE, THAT OUR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS PROVIDE NOT ONLY ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EDUCATION OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, BUT THAT THEY ALSO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE AND INDIVIDUALLY DISTINCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION. AND THIS IS AS IT SHOULD BE IN A FREE SOCIETY.

SOME OF YOU MAY RECALL THAT AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR, DR. THURMOND KITCHIN, LATE PRESIDENT OF WAKE FOREST COLLEGE, QUOTED REPEATEDLY A DISTINGUISHED WRITER WHO HAD STATED THAT IF GERMANY HAD HAD EFFECTIVE PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, LIKE THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES, HITLER COULD NEVER HAVE COME TO POWER, TO VISIT - AS HE SO VERY NEARLY DID - TOTALITARIAN RUIN UPON US ALL.

I AM ESPECIALLY CONSCIOUS OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS THAT OUR PRIVATE COLLEGES CAN MEET BECAUSE OF A RECENT PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WHICH I HOPE YOU WILL PERMIT ME TO SHARE WITH YOU.

A FEW YEARS AGO MY WIFE AND I, AFTER CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT, TOOK INTO OUR HOME A FOSTER SON. HE WAS A FINE BOY BUT FRANKLY FROM AN ECONOMICALLY AND CULTURALLY DEPRIVED BACKGROUND. HE WAS BEHIND ACADEMICALLY AND SOCIALLY, AND WE SOON FOUND OURSELVES MAKING A CONCERTED EFFORT TO HELP HIM "CATCH UP" WITH OTHERS HIS AGE.

KATY AND I GAVE HIM WHAT INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION WE COULD PROVIDE IN VIEW OF OUR RATHER HECTIC DAY-TO-DAY PACES. IN ADDITION, WE ENROLLED HIM IN PREP SCHOOL FOR ONE SUMMER. IN SPITE OF THIS, WHEN RUPERT GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL, IT WAS OBVIOUS TO US THAT IF HE WAS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN FURTHERING HIS EDUCATION HE WOULD HAVE TO RECEIVE A GREAT DEAL OF SPECIAL ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE, INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION AND PERSONAL GUIDANCE.

AFTER PRELIMINARY INQUIRIES, INCLUDING TALKING WITH OFFICIALS AT EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY, WHERE I THEN SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, IT BECAME EQUALLY OBVIOUS THAT THE SPECIAL HELP THAT MY YOUNGSTER NEEDED WAS NOT TO BE FOUND AT A STATE-SUPPORTED INSTITUTION.

THIS STATEMENT IS NOT MEANT AS CRITICISM. IT IS SIMPLY A FACT THAT OUR LARGE STATE SCHOOLS, BY THEIR VERY NATURE, ARE NOT GEARED TO PROVIDE THE ASSISTANCE OFTEN REQUIRED FOR THE SUCCESS OF A STUDENT WITH A "SPECIAL NEED".

HOWEVER, MY FRIENDS AT EAST CAROLINA DID HELP ME SOLVE MY PROBLEM. THEY DIRECTED ME TO A PRIVATE INSTITUTION WHICH THEY SAID HAD DEVELOPED A GREAT DEAL OF EXPERTISE IN DEALING WITH STUDENTS WHO NEEDED INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION IN ORDER TO ATTAIN ACADEMIC STABILITY AND SUCCESS AND TO DEVELOP INTO A WELL-ROUNDED PERSONALITY.

IN THIS WAY I BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH LEES-McRAE COLLEGE WAY UP IN THE NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS, FAR REMOVED FROM EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA, WHERE ^{my} BY ROOTS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN. IN THIS WAY I SAW WHAT A SMALL, PRIVATE COLLEGE WITH A WELL-DEFINED MISSION COULD MEAN TO A STUDENT WHO DESIRED AND HAD THE ABILITY TO ACQUIRE A COLLEGE EDUCATION PROVIDED INDIVIDUAL NEEDS COULD BE DIAGNOSED AND MET. EQUALLY IMPORTANT IN THIS ^w SAY, I BELIEVE I CAME TO FULLY APPRECIATE THE ROLE OF PRIVATE EDUCATION IN SPITE OF MY PREVIOUS IDENTIFICATION WITH PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTH CAROLINA.

(INSERT COMMENTS ABOUT RUPERT'S EXPERIENCE AT LEES-McRAE, I.E. THE KIND OF SPECIAL THINGS THEY DID FOR HIM, SUCH AS SPECIAL TUTORING, OPPORTUNITY TO EARN MONEY AND HELP PAY FOR OWN SCHOOLING, SOCIAL SITUATION.)

I WAS PLEASED AS I READ THE BROCHURE TITLED, "THERE WAS A CRY HEARD ..." TO FIND THAT BENNETT COLLEGE ALSO DIRECTS ITSELF TOWARD THE INDIVIDUAL. I WAS DELIGHTED TO FIND SUCH LANGUAGE AS "THE STUDENT BODY IS SMALL ENOUGH TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR ADVISORS, FACULTY MEMBERS AND STAFF MEMBERS TO HAVE CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS," NOTING THAT "... THERE IS LITTLE OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE ATTENTION BY LOSING ONESELF IN A CROWD."

THIS QUALITY ATTRACTED ME AS A CONCERNED PARENT TO LEES-McRAE, WHICH PROVIDED THE UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE REQUIRED FOR MY FOSTER SON. AND I KNOW IT HAS ATTRACTED OTHERS. THIS QUALITY, IN FACT, IS NECESSARY TO THE VERY EXISTENCE OF COLLEGES LIKE LEES-McRAE AND BENNETT AND CERTAINLY IS VITAL TO PLANS FOR CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT IN THE VERY COMPETITIVE HIGHER EDUCATION FIELD IN THIS STATE AND REGION.

THE VERY TITLE OF YOUR PROMOTIONAL BROCHURE STATES VIVIDLY ANOTHER FACT WHICH I CONSIDER VITAL TO BOTH THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE PRIVATE COLLEGE TODAY.

"THERE WAS A CRY HEARD ...," SAYS TO ME THAT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING BENNETT COLLEGE HAS HAD A DISTINCTIVE MISSION; THAT IT WAS NOT SIMPLY ANOTHER COLLEGE BORN OF THE AMBITION OF MEN, BUT AN INSTITUTION BORN OF NECESSITY TO QUIET THE "WAILS OF IGNORANCE" AND TO TAKE THE HANDS OF THOSE "GROPING IN THE DARKNESS OF ILLITERACY" AND TO LEAD THEM, HOWEVER GENTLY REQUIRED, TO THE LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS HAVE BROUGHT CHANGE. BUT BENNETT COLLEGE ALWAYS HAS STEARED A STEADY COURSE "IN THE MAINSTREAM OF BLACK EXPERIENCE" AND SUCCESSIVE CAPTAINS AND CREWS HAVE SAILED FORWARD, WELL INTO THE TWENTIETY CENTURY NOW, WITH THE SAME DEDICATION AND DETERMINATION OF ITS FOUNDERS.

BENNETT, LIKE OTHER PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN OUR STATE, ESPECIALLY CHRISTIAN COLLEGES, OVER THE YEARS HAS DARED TO BE DIFFERENT. IT HAS RESISTED THE TEMPTATION TO BECOME A CARBON COPY OF PUBLICALLY SUPPORTED INSTITUTIONS AND THEREIN, IN MY OPINION, LIES THE ANSWER TO ITS CONTINUED EXISTENCE IN A TIME WHEN MANY PRIVATE SCHOOLS HAVE FOLDED AND DISAPPEARED.

EDUCATION IN OUR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, IN SPITE OF OUR INFLATIONARY TIMES, STILL REMAINS RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE HERE IN OUR STATE. OUR LEGISLATORS HAVE BEEN GENEROUS IN THEIR APPROPRIATIONS AND PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION HAS REMAINED WITHIN THE FINANCIAL REACH OF MOST QUALIFIED STUDENTS IN OUR STATE.

BUT PRIVATE COLLEGES, AS YOU WELL KNOW, HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN THE CRUNCH. SPIRALLING COSTS OF OPERATING INSTITUTIONS HAVE RESULTED IN SPIRALLING TUITION RATES. THE SIMPLE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT MANY PARENTS AND STUDENTS WHO WOULD PREFER THE UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF A PRIVATE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE HAVE SIMPLY BEEN PRICED OUT OF THE MARKET.

CONSEQUENTLY, MANY BOARDS OF TRUSTEES OF PRIVATE COLLEGES HAVE BEEN FORCED TO CLOSE THE RED-BLOTTED PAGES OF THEIR LEDGER BOOKS AND THE DOORS OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS, MANY OF WHICH HAD LONG AND DISTINGUISHED HISTORIES OF SERVICES.

THERE HAVE BEEN WIDELY VARYING CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEMISE OF THE COLLEGES WHICH RECENTLY HAVE PASSED FROM THE EDUCATIONAL SCENE. BUT IN MY OPINION THE ONE FACTOR WHICH HAS MEANT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN OUR DAY HAS BEEN THE ABILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION TO DEFINE ITS PARTICULAR MISSION (AND I EMPHASIZE THE WORD "PARTICULAR") AND TO ARTICULATE IT TO THE PUBLIC IT HAS DETERMINED TO SERVE.

PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION WILL NOT SURVIVE AS A "ME TOO" ANSWER TO PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION. PARENTS AND STUDENTS SIMPLY WON'T PAY MORE FOR THE SAME PRODUCT THEY CAN "PURCHASE" MORE CHEAPLY AT A PUBLICALLY SUPPORTED AND SUBSIDIZED INSTITUTION.

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS ARE NOT INSPIRED TO OFFER THEIR SERVICES AND PATRONS DO NOT APPEAR WHEN THE SUM TOTAL OF THEIR EFFORTS IS TO DUPLICATE THE STATE-SUPPORTED SYSTEM. AND WE REALLY SHOULD NOT EXPECT THEM TO.

RECENTLY I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF VISITING ONE OF THE STATE'S MORE ESTABLISHED JUNIOR COLLEGES. I FOUND THERE A BUSTLING CAMPUS WHICH SEEMED FILLED WITH SCHOOL SPIRIT AND LIFE. I WAS SURPRISED LATER TO HEAR ITS PRESIDENT TELL ME THAT ONLY A FEW YEARS BEFORE THE COLLEGE SEEMED DOOMED TO CLOSE. UNFORTUNATELY, IT HAD CHOSEN TO ADOPT THE "ME TOO" ANSWER TO COMPETITION FROM PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION.

THOUGH IT HAD STRONG TIES WITH A MAJOR DENOMINATION, APPARENTLY IT HAD BEGUN TO DRASTICALLY DE-EMPHASIZE ITS CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. RULES OF PERSONAL CONDUCT HAD BEEN LIBERALIZED AND THE CURRICULUM HAD BEEN REVAMPED APPARENTLY TO MIMIC THAT OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

THE END RESULT WAS THAT IT WAS JUST LIKE THE PUBLIC COLLEGES YET CONSIDERABLY MORE EXPENSIVE. IT BECAME VERY DIFFICULT FOR ANYONE TO EXPLAIN TO A STUDENT WHY HE SHOULD ATTEND THIS PARTICULAR COLLEGE AND FEWER AND FEWER STUDENTS DID.

THE SITUATION BECAME DESPERATE AND EVENTUALLY A DECISION HAD TO BE MADE. APPARENTLY IT WAS THE CORRECT ONE. THE TRUSTEES LOOKED LONG AND HARD AT THE SCHOOL'S HISTORIC MISSION AND THEN DECIDED TO MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO REAFFIRM IT.

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER OF THE SCHOOL WAS AGAIN EMPHASIZED. RULES OF PERSONAL CONDUCT WERE REVISED AND THE CURRICULUM WERE ALTERED ACCORDINGLY. BOTH STUDENTS AND FACULTY WERE ADVISED OF THE REAFFIRMATION OF THE SCHOOL'S ORIGINAL TENETS AND ADVISED THAT THEY WOULD BE ENFORCED.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, SOME LEFT. ENROLLMENT DECLINED NOTICEABLY. BUT IT QUICKLY BOTTOMED OUT AND BEGAN AN UPSURGE. PARENTS AND STUDENTS WHO WANTED THIS EDUCATIONAL ATMOSPHERE AND EXPERIENCE ARE NOW COMING IN INCREASING NUMBERS AND RECRUITERS FOR THE SCHOOL AGAIN HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER TO THE STUDENT WHO ASKS, "WHY SHOULD I CHOOSE YOUR COLLEGE?" CONTRIBUTORS WHO SUPPORT THIS IDEA OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION ARE COMING FORWARD WITH CONTRIBUTIONS, AND THE COLLEGE IS AGAIN ON AN EVEN KEEP AND MOVING FORWARD.

DIFFERENT SCHOOLS HISTORICALLY HAVE HAD DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES AND TRADITIONS. CERTAINLY, I AM NOT SAYING THAT EVERY ONE SHOULD BE EXACTLY LIKE THE ONE I JUST DESCRIBED. WHAT I AM SAYING, AND I BELIEVE YOU WILL AGREE, IS THAT UNLESS A PRIVATE COLLEGE RECOGNIZES THAT IT MUST HAVE INDIVIDUAL

CHARACTER AND DIRECTION, ITS CHANCES FOR ADVANCEMENT AND SURVIVAL IN OUR DAY ARE SLIM.

BENNETT COLLEGE AND YOU, AS ITS PATRONS, HAVE RECOGNIZED THIS FACT. "THERE WAS A CRY HEARD ..." IN 1873 AND OVER THE DECADES THE CRIES OF SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS HAVE FALLEN UPON RECEPTIVE EARS. THE NEEDS HAVE CHANGED, BUT DEDICATION TO MEET THEM HAS NOT.

THE KEY TO YOUR SUCCESSFUL INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT, IN MY OPINION, THEREFORE LIES ALMOST SOLELY IN YOUR ABILITY TO ARTICULATE THE DISTINCTIVE MISSION OF BENNETT COLLEGE AND TO RELATE ITS FUTURE TO THE TOTAL, IMPORTANT ROLE OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND.

I AM CONFIDENT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO.