

SPEECH BY:

ROBERT MORGAN
ATTORNEY GENERAL

FOUNDERS DAY-MOUNT OLIVE
COLLEGE
MOUNT OLIVE, NORTH CAROLINA
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~~Approved~~

IT IS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU HERE TODAY FOR YOUR FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATION. MOUNT OLIVE COLLEGE IS RENDERING GREAT SERVICE TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THIS REGION AND I AM SURE THAT EVERYONE HERE - STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF MEMBERS AND PATRONS - ARE EQUALLY PROUD OF THIS INSTITUTION AND ITS MISSION.

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 PUBLICLY 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.

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.

KATIE 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 ^mBY 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 ^wSAY, 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 HAVE BEEN PLEASED OVER THE YEARS TO NOTE THAT MOUNT OLIVE COLLEGE ALSO DIRECTS ITSELF TOWARD THE INDIVIDUAL. YOU ARE FORTUNATE IN HAVING A STUDENT BODY SMALL ENOUGH TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR ADVISORS, FACULTY MEMBERS AND STAFF MEMBERS TO HAVE CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS. STUDENTS CANNOT BECOME "LOST IN THE CROWD" HERE AND FOR THAT YOU SHOULD ESPECIALLY BE THANKFUL.

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 MOUNT OLIVE AND CERTAINLY IS VITAL TO PLANS FOR CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT IN THE VERY COMPETITIVE HIGHER EDUCATION FIELD IN THIS STATE AND REGION.

BESIDES CONCENTRATING ON THE INDIVIDUAL, THERE IS ANOTHER QUALITY WHICH I CONSIDER VITAL TO BOTH THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE PRIVATE COLLEGE TODAY.

MOUNT OLIVE, LIKE MANY OTHER PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN OUR STATE, ESPECIALLY CHRISTIAN COLLEGES, OVER THE YEARS HAS BEEN GUIDED BY A DISTINCTIVE MISSION AND HAS DARED TO BE DIFFERENT. IT HAS RESISTED THE TEMPTATION TO BECOME A CARBON COPY OF PUBLICLY 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 SCHOOLS' 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 KEEL AND MOVING FORWARD.

DIFFERENT SCHOOLS HISTORICALLY HAVE HAD DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES AND TRADITIONS. MT. OLIVE HAS ITS OWN AND CERTAINLY, I AM NOT SAYING THAT EVERYONE 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 LIKE THIS ONE RECOGNIZES THAT IT MUST HAVE INDIVIDUAL

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

THE FOUNDERS OF MT. OLIVE COLLEGE, WHOM WE HONOR TODAY, REALIZED THIS FACT. THEY REALIZED THAT MT. OLIVE MUST NOT BE SIMPLY ANOTHER "ME TOO" INSTITUTION. AS A RESULT, YOU WHO ARE ITS STUDENTS IN 1973 ARE SHARING A SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE DESIGNED TO MEET YOUR PARTICULAR NEEDS AND TO HELP YOU ACCOMPLISH YOUR OWN PERSONAL GOALS.

THIS MUST MAKE THE FOUNDERS OF MT. OLIVE COLLEGE VERY HAPPY AND I KNOW IT MAKES ALL OF YOU HERE TODAY VERY PROUD. TO YOU AS STUDENTS, I SAY, "APPRECIATE AND ENJOY THE UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OFFERED HERE AT MT. OLIVE."

TO FACULTY, STAFF AND PATRONS, I SAY, "USE TODAY TO REACQUAINT YOURSELVES WITH THE FAITH AND DEDICATION OF YOUR FOUNDERS. USE TODAY TO RENEW YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION FOR THE DISTINCTIVE MISSION OF THIS COLLEGE."

THE FUTURE OF THIS COLLEGE RESTS UPON YOUR WILLINGNESS TO DO SO AND YOUR ABILITY TO ARTICULATE THE DISTINCTIVE MISSION OF MT. OLIVE COLLEGE AND RELATE ITS FUTURE TO THE TOTAL, IMPORTANT ROLE OF PRIVATE EDUCATION IN THIS REGION DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND.

I AM CONFIDENT OF YOUR WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO DO SO.