

ADDRESS BY ROBERT MORGAN
UNITED STATES SENATOR
PEMBROKE STATE UNIVERSITY
PEMBROKE, NORTH CAROLINA
MAY 9, 1976

Looking out upon this audience today, I know it is not necessary for me to remind you that graduation is a serious occasion. This is true, for as you realize, perhaps far better than I, graduation marks the end of your dependence upon others and the beginning of the time when more and more you will find yourselves standing alone pondering important decisions and carrying new, and often strange, responsibilities.

And we know that responsibilities can never be carried lightly, but who is better able to shoulder them than those of you graduating here and around our nation this year? After all, you have had the advantage of a university education, which in this democratic nation of ours traditionally has sought to instill as a primary quality an appreciation of both

the benefits and responsibilities which are ours because we are Americans and we are free.

The burdens which fall upon you today, however, are especially heavy, for I believe that we have never pondered a generation of young people with greater awareness of the problems about them or greater concern for the welfare of mankind.

But this awareness, this concern which is so much a part of the generation we graduate today, too often is not shared by those of us who are a little older. This can be a tragic thing. Let me illustrate with a short story.

It is said that at exactly 5:13 in the morning on the 18th of April, 1906, a cow was standing somewhere between the

main barn and the milking shed of the old Shafter ranch in California, minding her own business. Suddenly, the earth shook, the skies trembled, and when the San Francisco earthquake was all over, there was nothing showing of the cow but a bit of her tail.

This Shafter cow is a symbol of our times. She stood quietly enough, thinking such gentle thoughts as cows are likely to have, while huge forces beyond her knowledge built up all around her and, within a minute, discharged in a great movement that changed the configuration of the earth, destroyed a city, and swallowed her up.

Certainly if we all do not learn to understand and guide the great forces of change at work in our world today, we may

find ourselves, like the Shafter cow, swallowed up by vast upheavals in our way of life. For it is clear, I think, that within a decade or two the main challenge to our society will come from a world of faster and faster change.

Of course, change has always been part of the human experience. It is the nature of a living society that it is always undergoing change and refinement for the only social and political order immune to change is a dead one.

What is different now, however, is the speed of change, and the sure knowledge that it will come faster and faster as time goes on. The result of such change will affect every part of life, including personal values, morality, and religions - all of which seem most remote from technology. So swift is

the acceleration that trying to make sense of change or
acclimate ourselves to it will come to be our basic industry.

The question we will ask about progress will no longer be

"How much" but instead, "How good?"

Those of us who are somewhat older tend to regard change
with apprehension. We find that older people generally like
to keep things as they are, while on the other hand adaptability
to changing conditions, responsiveness to new ideas, willingness
to experiment, a desire to improve the conditions of human life,
are all attributes of youth.

I warn you; it is easy to lose these attributes after you
leave the excitement and foment of the university campus.

It has been said that "Part of the American myth is that people

who are handed the dead skin of a sheep at graduation think that it will keep their minds alive forever." I assure you that nothing could be further from the truth and that after you enter the work-a-day world, you will have to make a conscious effort to keep your mind alive and vital and your interests attuned to current problems and concerns.

Yesterday's ideas alone will never be sufficient, and neither will knowledge gathered from past experience, for the world has never known before the conditions we are now in.

This is the task that has been given to your generation of graduates, for you must unwind the thread of knowledge which binds the solutions to our problems. It is the fate of your generation - as with every other - to live in a world of conditions

which you did not make and change them for your progeny. If you succeed, humanity will flourish; if you fail, those who survive will condemn all of us for it.

In your efforts to succeed, education, of course, is the first answer and you must seek to improve it, for it is the bulwark upon which not only progress but preservation of life on this planet stands. A society in which its citizens are not true men of learning cannot succeed today, for without education we cannot solve the great problems of our times.

The second answer to the challenges of your generation is conservation and development, both together and not one alone, since we must not commit the errors of our predecessors. Do we want industrial development and the industrial slums and

wasteland of the Northeast; do we want industrial development and the industrial atmosphere of Southern California? Or do we want development which conserves our countryside, streams, rivers and air?

The answer to these questions is obvious. The decade of the 70's is a decade of the environment. At long last, we have become concerned about the quality of our total environment and ask whether we can continue to deplete our natural resources without concern for those who must come after us. Largely through the influence of your generation - your very young generation - all of us have become convinced that the quality of our environment must be improved and that we must hand down unblemished, to those who come after us, the natural wealth and beauty that is so much a part of our heritage. We have recognized the truth in Adlai

Stevenson's words, "This world exists for people before it exists for anything else."

Therefore, this world must be made safe for people and must be made fit for people.

Unless we do so, our civilization will perish like the Shafter cow, and leave but a trace of its tail for future archaeologists.

The ways in which this can be done have not yet been fully learned. The spool of knowledge is still too tightly wound; you must unwind the thread from that spool. And you must learn how to balance our love of the earth with our need to grow economically.

"Throughout our history our soil and water, our forests and minerals, have provided the resources upon which this country grew; and our power ascended. Today, this great gift of material wealth provides the foundation upon which the defense of freedom rests, here and around the world. And our future greatness and our strength depend upon the continued abundant use of our natural resources." That is the way John F. Kennedy put it, and he was right.

The third answer is human concern. The purposes of government are many, but to sum up, its primary purpose is to do for the people what the people cannot do for themselves. As a moral nation and a moral people, we must continue, for example, to be concerned about adequate medical facilities and health care personnel. We must make sure that the mentally

ill are treated with compassion and that every effort is made to restore the mentally ill to productive rolls in their communities.

We must not be complacent when we have conquered one disease or one illness or one injustice. Each generation brings new challenges - cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy replace polio and smallpox as an enemy of our young.

The fourth answer is liberty and justice for all. Human rights must be protected, so must the rights of property. Just as the accused must be protected and insured of a fair trial, the people must be protected and assured security in their homes and on their streets. And just as the rights of free enterprise must be guaranteed, so must the consumers' right

to a fair sale. As Woodrow Wilson said,

"No amount of dwelling upon the idea of liberty and justice will accomplish the object we have in view unless we ourselves illustrate the idea of liberty and justice."

The fifth answer lies in the improvement of the quality of American government, for government must be made responsive to the needs demanded by changing conditions. You, as the most knowing persons in our society, must make government responsive, and the most effective way of doing that is not by violence but by becoming active citizens. For though we must adopt a new way of life, we must not abandon the great and good ideals of human rights, liberty, and justice upon which our nation has been founded. We must conserve and restore the good in our

intellectual heritage and no one is better qualified than you to perform that task of conservation and restoration.

Benjamin Franklin put it so well when a lady stopped him as he walking out of the Constitutional Convention after the Constitution was written. "Doctor Franklin," she said, "what have you gentlemen produced?" And he said, "Lady, we have produced a republic, and we hope you can keep it."

Before closing, I would like to challenge you with the words of Sir Winston Churchill, who challenged the youth of his day by saying: "Come on now, all you young [people] all over the world... You have not an hour to lose. You must take your places in life's battle lines...."

"Don't be content with things as they are. 'The earth

is yours and the fullness thereof.' Enter upon your inheritance, accept your responsibilities.

"Don't take No for an answer, never submit to failure.

Do not be fobbed off with mere personal success or acceptance.

You will make all kinds of mistakes; but as long as you are generous and true, and also fierce, you cannot hurt the world or even seriously distress her. She was made to be wooed and won by youth."

I believe also that the world was made to be wooed and won by youth, so when you go forth from Pembroke State University, apply what you have learned in order to create a cleaner world, a concern for human beings, a better government, and a happier life for all mankind. Be resolute and fearless

and your reward will be your own and mankind's preservation.

This is a big order, I know, but I share the faith of North Carolina's Thomas Wolfe who said, "I think the true discovery of America is before us. I think the true fulfillment of our spirit, of our people, of our mighty and immortal land, is yet to come. I think the true discovery of our own democracy is still before us. And I think that all these things are certain as the morning, as inevitable as noon. I think I speak for most men living when I say that our America is Here, is Now, and beckons on before us, and that this glorious assurance is not only our living hope, but our dream to be accomplished."