

Speech by Robert Morgan
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I want those of you who are graduating from Pamlico Technical Institute tonight to know that you are today in the presence of some very distinguished persons. Those persons are your parents and certainly they are some of the most remarkable people ever to walk on earth.

These are the people who within just five decades have increased life expectancy by approximately 50 percent-- who while cutting the working day by a third, have more than doubled per capita output.

These are the people who have given you a healthier world than they found. And because of this you no longer have to fear epidemics of flu, typhus, diphtheria, smallpox, scarlet fever, measles or mumps. And the dreaded polio is no longer a medical factor, while TB is almost unheard of.

These remarkable people lived through history's greatest depression. Many of these people have known what it is to be poor, to be hungry and cold. And because of this, they determined that it would not happen to you, that you would have a better life.

Because they were materialistic, you will work fewer hours, earn more, have more leisure, travel to more distant places, and have more chance to follow your life's ambition.*

But they will tell you, as I do, that all the battles have not been won and that young people today are offered a challenge that is greater than any ever offered to mankind before. For as we know, ours is an age of technological magic.

In spite of the accomplishments of their parents, our young people will in their lifetimes be given the chance to do mankind more good than all past generations of human beings combined have been able to do. Our young people will conquer still other diseases that now plague us. They will find ways of further extending man's active lifetime. They will build cities yet undreamed of. They will invent things so miraculous that they are to us inconceivable. They will solve problems yet unheard of. They will develop techniques which are beyond the limits of our imaginations. They will write, paint, and compose in words yet undevised. They will find ways of living on those unlivable parts of our planet. And they will travel into outer space as often as we go to the seashore.

In effect, each of you graduating here tonight will be living in a world of constant change but because of the education you have received you will be able to cope with it.

You know, though, many 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 of the classroom. It has been said that "Part of the American myth is that people who are handed the dead skin of a sheep (sheep skin) at graduation think that it will keep their minds alive forever." I assure you that nothing could be further from the truth and that in 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.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt said that "There is a mysterious cycle in human events, to some generations much is given. Of other generations, much is expected. This generation of

Americans has a rendezvous with destiny."

The cycle has again turned about. To your generation much has been given. Through the efforts of your parents and forefathers, farsighted political leaders and brave men on the battlefield, you have enjoyed security, freedom and the opportunity of an education. But we must remember that of your generation more is expected than has ever been expected before. You also have a rendezvous with destiny.

Each generation of human beings attempts to solve the problems that confront it. Some of its solutions are successful, some are not. And each generation passes on to the next not only the results of its successes and failures, but also new problems, for each day a new sun comes over the horizon; today is never quite the same as yesterday.

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 experiencing. You must look for new ideas, for new knowledge to meet new and challenging situations.

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.

Let me caution you that it would be a grave mistake for you to assume that you are educated. It would be a reflection upon the instruction which you have already received. Even in those fields in which you think you have acquired some skills, you have made only a beginning. You must continue to seek learning and one of your safeguards in the future will be the fact that you know you are not totally educated--that there still is much to be learned.

The second answer to the challenges of your generation is conservation and development. Needless to say, we must have both and we must caution ourselves to make sure they are compatible.

This section of eastern North Carolina, of course, is anxious to promote industrial development but no one would advocate development which would lessen the quality of life for the people of this area.

North Carolina is dedicated to the total development of its resources and people but it is equally dedicated to

conservation of its countrysides, water and air. I share that dedication as I am sure you do.

The decade of the 70's in every sense of the word, 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, "The 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.

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.

"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.

"Thus, it is our task in our time and in our generation, to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours." (John F. Kennedy)

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 to be concerned about more 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 roles 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. One

form of injustice replaces another and our struggle to right them must be constant throughout the decades.

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.

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.

"What you have inherited from your father, earn over again for yourself or it will not be yours." (Goethe) The efforts which were first necessary to create freedom are just as necessary to sustain it in your day.

As Benjamin Franklin so aptly put it to a lady who queried him on walking out of the Constitution Convention after the Constitution was written, "Doctor Franklin, what have you gentlemen produced?" And he said, "Lady, we have

produced a republic, and we hope you can keep it."

Each of you is a privileged person, for you have trained in an excellent school to pursue a useful and productive profession. But I beg you not to allow yourselves to leave this campus and become defenders of privilege or proponents of interests which are shortsighted and selfish. I urge you instead to "fight for a free America--for a country in which all men and women have equal rights to liberty and justice." I urge you to fight, as I hope it will someday be said I have done, "for the rights of the little man as well as the big man--for the weak as well as the strong, for those who are helpless as well as those who can help themselves." (Franklin D. Roosevelt)

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 men, 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."

This is a big order, I know, but I have faith enough in you and the other young people of this state and nation to believe you can fill it. Those gathered here tonight for your graduation do also and I am sure join me in this challenge to you.

Congratulations.