

SPEECH BY

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EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

LET ME FIRST EXPRESS TO YOU MY SINCERE THANKS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A PART OF YOUR STUDENT GOVERNMENT PROGRAM HERE TODAY. I WANT TO SAY THAT I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO BE IN THE MIDST OF A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE SO VERY INTERESTED IN STUDENT GOVERNMENT AND WHAT IT STANDS FOR. WHEN I WAS ASKED TO SPEAK HERE TODAY, I WAS TOLD THAT YOUR CONFERENCE THEME WAS "AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP." I THINK THAT SUCH A TOPIC IS A VERY TIMELY ONE, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE CRISIS WHICH WE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN WITNESSING IN OUR OWN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

THAT IS TO SAY THAT IT IS VERY ENCOURAGING TO SOMEONE LIKE MYSELF WHO HAS BEEN IN POLITICS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AND WHO BELIEVES THAT PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT IS AN HONORABLE PROFESSION, TO SEE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE STILL INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP.

THE FIRST QUALITY OF ANY EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IS THE ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO LEAD. I AM REMINDED OF THE STORY

ABOUT THE FRENCH GENERAL WHO EXCLAIMED TO ONE OF HIS AIDES THAT HE MUST FIND OUT IN WHICH DIRECTION HIS PEOPLE ARE GOING SO THAT HE COULD GET OUT IN FRONT AND LEAD THEM. CERTAINLY THAT IS NOT EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP. WHAT IS REQUIRED OF EACH OF YOU, IN ESSENCE THEN, IS TO RECOGNIZE THAT YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. I KNOW THAT MANY PEOPLE, AND PERHAPS EVEN SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS, BELIEVE THAT THIS IS A TIME FOR DESPAIR FOR THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN THIS COUNTRY DUE TO THE CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT WHICH WE HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO IN WASHINGTON. BUT I WOULD URGE YOU NOT TO JUDGE TOO HARSELY THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN THIS COUNTRY FOR I BELIEVE THAT THE SUBSEQUENT EXPOSURE OF CORRUPTION IN WASHINGTON AND THE INVESTIGATIONS WHICH HAVE FOLLOWED STRONGLY INDICATE THAT DEMOCRACY IS VERY MUCH ALIVE AND WELL IN THIS COUNTRY.

BUT DEMOCRACY AND ITS METHODS CAN ONLY WORK WHEN PEOPLE, SUCH AS YOURSELVES, TAKE THE TIME TO PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS, WHETHER IT BE SIMPLY BY WRITING YOUR CONGRESSMAN AND GOING TO VOTE, OR ACTUALLY SEEKING A ROLE OF LEADERSHIP.

BUT, YOU MAY ASK, WHY SHOULD YOU PUT YOURSELF OUT AND WORK SO HARD TO ACHIEVE A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP IF THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT IT WILL NOT MAKE ANY REAL DIFFERENCE. "THERE IS", SAID AN ITALIAN PHILOSOPHER, "NOTHING MORE DIFFICULT TO TAKE IN HAND, MORE PERILOUS TO CONDUCT, OR MORE UNCERTAIN IN ITS SUCCESS THAN TO TAKE THE LEAD IN THE

INTRODUCTION OF A NEW ORDER OF THINGS." YET THIS IS THE MEASURE OF THE TASK FOR YOU, IF YOU DECIDE TO STAY INVOLVED, AND INDEED FOR ALL OF US. BUT THE ROAD IS STREWN WITH MANY DANGERS.

FIRST IS THE DANGER OF FUTILITY, AS I HAVE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, THE BELIEF THAT THERE IS NOTHING THAT ONE PERSON CAN DO. BUT I WOULD POINT OUT TO YOU THAT MANY OF THE WORLD'S GREAT MOVEMENTS, OF THOUGHT AND ACTION, HAVE FLOWED FROM THE WORK OF A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL. A YOUNG MONK BEGAN THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION, A YOUNG GENERAL EXTENDED AN EMPIRE FROM MACEDONIA TO THE BORDERS OF THE EARTH, AND A YOUNG WOMAN RECLAIMED THE TERRITORY OF FRANCE. IT WAS A YOUNG ITALIAN EXPLORER WHO DISCOVERED THE NEW WORLD AND THE 32 YEAR OLD THOMAS JEFFERSON WHO PROCLAIMED THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL.

THESE PEOPLE MOVED THE WORLD AND SO CAN WE ALL. FEW MAY HAVE THE GREATNESS TO BEND HISTORY ITSELF, BUT EACH OF US CAN WORK TO CHANGE A SMALL PORTION OF GOVERNMENT AND EVENTS, AND IN THE TOTAL OF ALL THOSE ACTS WILL BE WRITTEN THE HISTORY OF THIS GENERATION OF AMERICANS.

WE HAVE WITNESSED IN RECENT MONTHS THAT HONESTY, COURAGE, AND, INDEED THE TRUTH, HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT ABSENT FROM OUR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. STRONG AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

CANNOT LONG EXIST ON HALF-TRUTHS. THUS, I BELIEVE THAT A MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION THAT SHOULD BE ASKED OF INDIVIDUALS WHO SEEK TO BE OUR FUTURE LEADERS IS HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT OPENNESS IN GOVERNMENT AND HONESTY FROM LEADERSHIP. DO THEY HAVE A VIEWPOINT, SOUNDLY BASED, ABOUT WHAT IS FUNDAMENTALLY RIGHT AND WRONG IN THE PRACTICES OF POLITICS? WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW IS NOT SO MUCH WHAT A CANDIDATE'S VIEWS ARE ON GOVERNMENTAL QUESTIONS AS WHETHER OR NOT WE CAN TRUST HIM. FOR IF WE CANNOT, ALL ELSE PALES INTO INSIGNIFICANCE. WHAT AN ORGANIZATION, OR A COUNTRY, OR A PEOPLE NEED TO BE TOLD BY THEIR LEADER IS NOT NECESSARILY WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR, BUT WHAT IS TRUE. FOR WE MUST REMEMBER THAT TODAY, AS IN THE BEGINNING, IT IS THE TRUTH THAT MAKES US FREE.

PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT DANGER IN BECOMING A GOOD AND HONORABLE LEADER IS THE DANGER OF TIMIDITY. FEW OF US ARE WILLING TO BRAVE THE DISAPPROVAL OF OUR FRIENDS, THE CENSURE OF OUR COLLEAGUES, THE RATH OF OUR SUPERIORS. MORAL COURAGE IS A RARER COMMODITY THAN BRAVERY IN BATTLE OR GREAT INTELLIGENCE. YET IT IS THE ONE ESSENTIAL, VITAL QUALITY FOR THOSE WHO SEEK TO IMPROVE AND CHANGE A POLITICAL SYSTEM THAT YIELDS MOST PAINFULLY TO CHANGE.

IF YOU HAVE WATCHED OR LISTENED TO ANY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE WATERGATE HEARINGS, YOU WILL KNOW THAT A FAMILIAR THEME RUNNING THROUGH MUCH OF THE TESTIMONY IS THE CONCEPT

OF "I DID WHAT I WAS TOLD TO DO, AND I DID NOT ASK ANY QUESTIONS." SUCH REASONING MAY SERVE AS AN EXPLANATION OF CONDUCT, BUT IT CAN NEVER ATTAIN THE STATUS OF A JUSTIFIABLE EXCUSE.

THE INABILITY TO SAY NO MUST NOT BE LACKING IN THE FUTURE. THEREFORE, I ASK EACH OF YOU TO EXAMINE YOURSELVES TO FIND WHETHER YOU HAVE SUCH MORAL COURAGE FOR WHILE YOU ARE THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT LEADERS OF TODAY, YOU MAY SOON BE IN OUR STATE AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE FUTURE.

I SAY THIS, BECAUSE I WOULD BE LESS THAN HONEST WITH YOU IF I DID NOT TELL YOU THAT I HOPE THAT SOME OF YOU WILL SOME DAY SEEK TO ENTER POLITICAL OFFICE. I KNOW OF NO GREATER AREA OF LIFE THAN THAT OF PUBLIC SERVICE. IT IS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP THAT HELPS SO VERY MUCH TO KEEP THIS COUNTRY FREE AND THEREFORE MAKE ALL ELSE POSSIBLE.

BUT WHETHER YOU DECIDE TO ENTER POLITICS OR SOME OTHER WAY OF LIFE, TRY TO BECOME INVOLVED IN WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND YOU. AMERICA'S YOUNG PEOPLE, IN THE LAST DECADE AND A HALF, HAVE LED THE WORLD IN SPREADING IDEALISM AND PEACE AND LOVE. THE PEACE CORPS, INITIATED BY PRESIDENT KENNEDY, HAS SENT THOUSANDS OF YOUNG AMERICANS TO HUTS AND VILLAGES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TRYING TO MAKE SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE A LITTLE BETTER.

BUT YOU DO NOT NEED TO TRAVEL VERY FAR TO SEE THAT NOT ALL OF THE INJUSTICES ARE AWAY FROM OUR SHORES, OR THAT ALL OF OUR PROBLEMS HERE HAVE BEEN SOLVED. THERE ARE ENOUGH CHALLENGES REMAINING FOR EACH OF YOU IF YOU ARE WILLING. THERE IS A CHINESE VERSE THAT SAYS, "MAY HE LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES." LIKE IT OR NOT, WE LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES. THEY ARE TIMES OF DANGER AND UNCERTAINTY, BUT THEY ARE ALSO MORE OPEN TO OUR CREATIVE ENERGY THAN ANY OTHER TIME IN HISTORY. ALL OF US WILL ULTIMATELY BE JUDGED, AND AS THE YEARS PASS WE WILL SURELY JUDGE OURSELVES, ON THE EFFORT WE HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO BUILDING A NEW SOCIETY AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH OUR IDEALS AND GOALS HAVE SHAPED THE EFFORT.

IT WAS NOT VERY LONG AGO THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON PROCLAIMED THE GREAT SOCIETY. IT IS NOW IMPERATIVE THAT WE BECOME AN OPEN SOCIETY FOR WE CAN ILL-AFFORD TO BE A NATION OF STRANGERS.

POLITICAL COMMENTATORS AND HISTORIANS HAVE OFTEN REFERRED TO THIS TIME AS THE AMERICAN CENTURY. I WONDER IF THE WORLD WOULD NOT BE BETTER SERVED IF LATER GENERATIONS, ON LOOKING BACK, REFER TO THIS AS THE PEOPLE'S CENTURY. THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION ULTIMATELY DEPENDS UPON YOU AND ME AND MILLIONS OF PEOPLE JUST LIKE US THROUGHOUT THIS LAND.

"FOR THOSE TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN MUCH IS REQUIRED. AND WHEN AT SOME FUTURE DATE, THE HIGH COURT OF HISTORY SITS IN

JUDGMENT ON EACH OF US, RECORDING WHETHER IN OUR BRIEF SPAN OF SERVICE WE FULFILLED OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STATE, OUR SUCCESS OR FAILURE, IN WHATEVER OFFICE OR PLACE WE HOLD, WILL BE MEASURED BY THE ANSWERS TO FOUR QUESTIONS: FIRST, WERE WE TRULY PEOPLE OF COURAGE? SECOND, WERE WE TRULY PEOPLE OF JUDGMENT? THIRD, WERE WE TRULY PEOPLE OF INTEGRITY? FINALLY, WERE WE TRULY PEOPLE OF DEDICATION?"