

REMARKS BY

UNITED STATES SENATOR ROBERT MORGAN

WILSON TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA

MAY 23, 1975

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EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

MAY 25, 1975

CHANCELLOR JENKINS, TRUSTEES, FACULTY, GRADUATES AND GUESTS:

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME HAVE A PART IN THIS SIGNIFICANT AND HAPPY OCCASION.

THIS IS ANOTHER GREAT DAY IN THE HISTORY OF EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY AND CERTAINLY IT IS ONE THAT THE 2,618 MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 1975 WILL NEVER FORGET.

I AM TOLD THAT THIS IS A RECORD NUMBER OF GRADUATES AND THAT IS NOT SURPRISING BECAUSE THIS INSTITUTION HAS SHOWN A STEADY GROWTH UNDER ITS ABLE LEADERSHIP. ITS ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BEEN SPECTACULAR.

PERHAPS PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN SECTIONS OF OUR STATE FAIL TO APPRECIATE THE ROLE OF EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY, AND THE INFLUENCE IT HAS HAD UPON NORTH CAROLINA.

I, FOR ONE, AM GRATEFUL TO THIS SCHOOL. IT NURTURED ME AS A STUDENT AND GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE WHATEVER GOALS I HAVE REACHED.

EAST CAROLINA PROVIDED THE FOUNDATION UPON WHICH MY CAREER AS A LAWYER, AS A STATE LEGISLATOR, AS ATTORNEY GENERAL AND NOW AS A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE HAS BEEN BUILT.

WITHOUT THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN EDUCATION IT OFFERED A YOUNG MAN FROM A FARM IN HARNETT COUNTY, I COULD HAVE ACHIEVED NONE OF THESE THINGS.

THIS UNIVERSITY HAS ALWAYS, SINCE IT WAS FOUNDED, OFFERED THE CHANCE FOR AN EDUCATION TO YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN IN NORTH CAROLINA WHO WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GO TO COLLEGE ELSEWHERE.

AND BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN GRATEFUL TO THIS SCHOOL, I HAVE TRIED TO HELP IT AS AN ALUMNUS. MY SERVICE ON ITS BOARD OF TRUSTEES WAS IN LARGE MEASURE MY ATTEMPT TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE.

I FEEL THAT THIS UNIVERSITY HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO SERVE THE PEOPLE -- NOT THE FEW, BUT THE MANY -- NOT JUST THE WELL-TO-DO BUT THE LESS AFFLUENT -- NOT JUST THE CHOSEN, BUT ALSO THOSE WHO SOUGHT AND DESERVED A CHANCE FOR SELF IMPROVEMENT.

IN CARRYING OUT THIS MISSION, EAST CAROLINA HAS COMPILED AN ENVIABLE AND OUTSTANDING RECORD FOR ITS WISE AND EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP OF THE TAX DOLLAR. ITS UTILIZATION OF ITS FACILITIES IS AMONG THE BEST IN THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AND AS IT HAS GROWN, IT HAS IDENTIFIED THE NEEDS OF THE STATE AND HAS MOVED TO MEET THOSE NEEDS.

IT HAS SUPPLIED THOUSANDS OF TEACHERS TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

GRADUATES IN THE BUSINESS FIELD ARE EMPLOYED BY BANKS, ACCOUNTING FIRMS AND INDUSTRIES ACROSS THE STATE AND THE NATION.

ITS MUSIC AND ART SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN A BEACON OF CULTURE AND HELPED IMPROVE LIFE NOT ONLY IN THIS AREA, BUT IN ALL OF NORTH CAROLINA.

ITS CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH HAVE BEEN MEANINGFUL THROUGH THE SCHOOL OF NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS.

AND IN THE NEAR FUTURE, IT WILL MAKE AN EVEN GREATER GIFT TO THE STATE WITH A MEDICAL SCHOOL THAT WILL HELP FILL THE SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS IN THIS COUNTRY.

SO I WOULD HOPE THAT YOU WHO ARE GRADUATING HERE TODAY WILL FEEL THE SAME GRATITUDE AND THE SAME OBLIGATION TO EAST CAROLINA THAT I HAVE FELT AND THAT YOU WILL SUPPORT HER AFTER YOU LEAVE THIS CAMPUS FOR WHATEVER LIES AHEAD.

AND FOR YOU WHO ARE GRADUATING TODAY, WHAT LIES AHEAD?

YOU ARE GOING FROM STUDENT LIFE INTO A WORLD THAT IS TEMPORARILY, AT LEAST, NOT IN THE BEST CONDITION.

THE ECONOMY HAS SUFFERED IN RECENT MONTHS AND WE FIND OURSELVES IN A STATE OF RECESSION.

THERE ARE A GREAT MANY PEOPLE OUT OF WORK.

OUR FUTURE SUPPLY OF ENERGY IS UNCERTAIN. NO LONGER CAN WE BE PROFLIGATE IN OUR USE OF PETROLEUM AS OUR DOMESTIC SUPPLIES HAVE DWINDLED AND THE OIL WE IMPORT HAS INCREASED IN PRICE SOME 400 PERCENT.

WE HAVE JUST SUFFERED A HUMILIATING EXPERIENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA THAT HAS CAUSED OUR ENEMIES TO REJOICE AND OUR FRIENDS TO QUESTION OUR RESOLUTION.

I FEEL THAT OUR GOVERNMENT'S SWIFT ACTION TO RECOVER OUR MERCHANT SHIP WHICH WAS SEIZED IN AN ACT OF PIRACY BY THE CAMBODIAN COMMUNISTS DID MUCH TO RESTORE OUR POSITION IN THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS AND I BELIEVE THAT THIS ACTION WAS SUPPORTED AND APPLAUDED BY A GREAT MAJORITY OF OUR CITIZENS.

BUT ON THE WHOLE, A GREAT MANY PEOPLE TODAY ARE CONFUSED, APPREHENSIVE AND SUSPICIOUS ABOUT WHAT IS TRANSPIRING IN THE WORLD AND HOW THOSE IN CHARGE ARE MANAGING AFFAIRS.

PART OF THIS LOSS OF FAITH, I AM SURE, STEMS FROM WATERGATE AND ITS AFTERMATH, BUT THAT ISN'T THE COMPLETE ANSWER.

THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW WE HAVE ALLOWED OUR ECONOMY TO GET INTO A STATE WHERE WE HAVE RUNAWAY INFLATION ON ONE HAND AND A RECESSION, WITH LINES AT THE UNEMPLOYMENT AGENCIES, ON THE OTHER.

THEY HAVE GROWN TO MISTRUST MUCH THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT DOES BECAUSE, SIMPLY, WHAT IS TRIED DOESN'T SEEM TO WORK.

THIS FAITH MUST BE RESTORED IF THIS NATION IS TO SURVIVE AS A HEALTHY, VIABLE REPUBLIC AND I HOPE THAT YOU MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF '75 WILL USE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS WHICH YOU HAVE ATTAINED HERE TO HELP THE SYSTEM WORK BETTER.

AND EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE UNCERTAINTIES, I FEEL THAT YOU SHOULD GO FORTH WITH CONFIDENCE BECAUSE THE POTENTIAL REWARDS ARE GREATER THAN THEY HAVE EVER BEEN.

WHILE MANY OF YOUR ELDERS HAVE INVESTED THEIR TIME AND MONEY IN BUSINESS VENTURES THAT HAVE SUFFERED REVERSES DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS, YOU HAVE BEEN MAKING A VERY REAL INVESTMENT IN YOURSELVES. THE WORK YOU HAVE DONE HERE AND THE KNOWLEDGE YOU HAVE ACQUIRED HAVE FAR STRENGTHENED YOUR CHANCES FOR SUCCESS IN TODAY'S COMPETITIVE MARKET.

AND I, FOR ONE, AM AN OPTIMIST.

THIS RECESSION WILL GO AWAY AND WE SHALL RETURN TO A NORMAL, HEALTHY ECONOMIC CLIMATE. ALREADY THERE ARE FAINT SIGNS ON THE HORIZON THAT CONDITIONS WILL GET BETTER. THE STOCK MARKET, USUALLY THE PRECURSOR OF CHANGING TIMES RATHER THAN THE FOLLOWER, HAS GAINED STRENGTH IN RECENT WEEKS.

WE WILL SOLVE OUR ENERGY PROBLEMS, ALTHOUGH THE PROFLIGATE USE OF GASOLINE THAT MARKED THE LAST DECADE MAY NEVER RETURN. WE MAY HAVE TO TURN TO SMALLER CARS, OR CERTAINLY TO CARS THAT CONSUME LESS FUEL.

WE WILL SURELY HAVE TO SHIFT FROM PETROLEUM TO COAL AND NUCLEAR ENERGY IN SOME CASES, MOST NOTABLY IN UTILITIES AND PERHAPS IN SOME LARGE INDUSTRIES.

SOLAR ENERGY IS A VERY REAL POSSIBILITY AND ONE DAY WE WILL RECYCLE OUR GARBAGE AND DERIVE ENERGY FROM IT.

IN SPITE OF OUR REVERSES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, THIS IS STILL THE GREATEST NATION IN THE FREE WORLD AND AS LONG AS WE REMAIN MILITARILY STRONG WE SHALL CONTINUE TO BE THE LEADER OF THAT WORLD. WE HAVE LEARNED, I THINK, THAT WE ARE NOT OMNIPOTENT, BUT OUR STRENGTH IS KNOWN AND RESPECTED BY FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE. AND PERHAPS AT NO TIME IN THIS COUNTRY'S HISTORY IS THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S ADMONITION TO "SPEAK SOFTLY AND CARRY A BIG STICK" MORE APPROPRIATE.

THE GENERATION THAT HAS GONE AHEAD OF YOU HAS MADE PROGRESS AND HAS LEFT YOU A PLANET THAT IS BETTER IN MANY WAYS THAN THEY FOUND IT.

LIFE EXPECTANCY IS LONGER. YOU WILL HAVE MORE TIME TO SPEND IN ACCOMPLISHING WHATEVER GOALS YOU HAVE SET OR WILL SET.

MANY DREAD DISEASES THAT WERE FATAL TO MY GENERATION WILL NOT TAKE YOUR LIVES. YOU WON'T GET POLIO, FOR ONE THING, AND PERHAPS AT SOME FUTURE GRADUATION HERE ONE OF YOU WILL SPEAK AND POINT OUT TO A CLASS 20 YEARS FROM NOW THAT THEY NEEDN'T FEAR CANCER ANY LONGER.

WE HAVE GONE INTO SPACE AND PUT MEN ON THE MOON AND WE KNOW FAR MORE THAN OUR PARENTS KNEW ABOUT THE OTHER PLANETS. AND I AM SURE THAT YOUR GENERATION WILL FIND USES FOR THE OCEANS THAT WILL BRING UNTOLD BENEFITS.

WITH ALL OF THE DIFFICULTIES YOU WILL ENCOUNTER AND WITH ALL OF THE ROADBLOCKS THAT LIE AHEAD, THE FACT IS THAT YOU ARE ENTERING A WORLD THAT OFFERS MORE OPPORTUNITY THAN ANY OTHER PERIOD I CAN THINK OF.

I HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF TODAY.

YOU ARE BETTER EDUCATED, IN BETTER HEALTH AND I BELIEVE ARE MORE AWARE OF THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS THAN ANY PREVIOUS GROUP OF COLLEGE GRADUATES.

I WOULD CHALLENGE YOU TO USE THESE TOOLS OF KNOWLEDGE AND HEALTH TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEM UNDER WHICH WE GOVERN AND LIVE.

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO OUR ANCESTORS CHALLENGED A SYSTEM THAT WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO THEM AND CHANGED IT. THIS YEAR OUR NATION CELEBRATES THE VICTORY OF THOSE BRAVE MEN WHO DARED TO RESENT TYRANNY.

WE HAVE MADE GREAT STRIDES SINCE THEN IN THE FIELDS OF TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH AND COMMUNICATIONS.

IN SPITE OF THESE ADVANCES, THERE IS WIDESPREAD UNHAPPINESS WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PUBLIC'S BUSINESS IS CONDUCTED.

THIS IS A SITUATION WHICH NEEDS YOUR HELP -- NOT BY BURNING AND LOOTING, WHICH WERE FASHIONABLE FOUR OR FIVE YEARS AGO BUT DID NOT WORK BECAUSE THAT IS NOT THE WAY TO MAKE THINGS BETTER.

INDEED, IF VIOLENCE TAKES OVER, THEN THE PRIVILEGE OF DISSENT MAY BE ONE OF THE FIRST CASUALTIES, BECAUSE AN ANGRY PERSON BENT ON VIOLENCE WON'T STOP TO DEBATE OR ARGUE. HE IS PAST THE POINT OF DISCUSSION OR TOLERANCE.

BUT YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO ATTACK THE SYSTEM WITH FRESH IDEAS OR A BETTER WAY OF DOING THINGS, AND THIS I HOPE YOU WILL DO.

CONCERN YOURSELF WITH PUBLIC MATTERS, AND IF YOU FEEL THAT SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE SAID, DON'T WAIT FOR OTHERS TO JOIN YOU.

AND DON'T BE BOUND OR CIRCUMSCRIBED BY WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST.

AS PRESIDENT LINCOLN OBSERVED, "GENIUS DISDAINS A  
BEATEN PATH. IT SEEKS REGIONS HITHERTO UNEXPLORED."

AND NOW MAY GOOD FORTUNE GO WITH YOU AS YOU LEAVE  
THIS CAMPUS.

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