

The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “College Graduation Message, 1976” of the Eliska Hasek Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TO THE 1976 COLLEGE GRADUATES:

The freedom to pursue knowledge is one of the great blessings our Founding Fathers sought to bestow on the society they envisioned. You have been the beneficiaries of this great legacy. You have tasted the freedom to engage in the studies of your choice, to express your opinions and to pursue new opportunities for self-fulfillment.

As I congratulate you on the accomplishments reflected in your college degrees, a proud nation looks to you to help advance the continuing realization of the dream of our Founding Fathers and the aspirations of our society. We can reflect that two hundred years ago half of our population was less than twenty years of age. The author of our Declaration of Independence was thirty-three; and of its signers, sixteen were in their thirties and three were in their twenties. Young or old, our Founding Fathers cherished the concepts of individual freedom and equality and were fiercely determined to direct their own destiny.

As the Bicentennial college graduating class, you are the embodiment of what America can achieve. You are both the strength and the hope of our nation. I send each of you my very best wishes for every success and personal satisfaction in your future lives.

Gerald R. Ford

