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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

SATURDAY, JULY 12, 1975

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU MR. LADD (CHAIRMAN)
DOCTOR ALEXANDER (PRESIDENT)
CONGRESSMAN RALPH METCALF
GRADUATES AND PROUD PARENTS
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN



St. Mark United Methodist Church

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I WELCOME YOUR INVITATION AND THIS OPPORTUNITY TO
BE HERE AT THE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES OF BEAUTIFUL CHICAGO
STATE UNIVERSITY.

THAT'S WHAT I SO ADMIRE ABOUT DOCTOR ALEXANDER.
HE NOT ONLY TELLS IT LIKE IT IS -- BUT ALSO, LIKE IT
BETTER BE!

EVEN DURING MY VERY BRIEF VISIT TODAY, I CAN SEE
THAT THIS GRADUATING CLASS HAS TALENT, VISION, AMBITION --
AND A SENSE OF HUMOR AS WELL. I ASKED ONE OF THE
GRADUATING STUDENTS HERE TODAY, WHAT INSPIRED YOUR SCHOOL
SYMBOL OF A BLACK HAND AND A WHITE HAND CLASPED TOGETHER?
DOES IT SYMBOLIZE THE BROTHERHOOD OF LEARNING?

HE SAID, "NO, MR. PRESIDENT. THE

CLASPED HANDS HAVE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MEANING.

AFTER A BIG RAIN STORM, THAT'S A BLACK STUDENT AND

A WHITE STUDENT -- HELPING EACH OTHER GET FROM THE

UNIVERSITY CENTER TO THEIR CLASSES!"

I WAS SO MOVED BY THE MORE THAN 5,000 SIGNATURES
ON THE PETITION INVITING ME THAT NO RAIN STORM COULD HAVE
KEPT ME AWAY.

I WAS IMPRESSED NOT ONLY BY THE GREAT NUMBER OF
SIGNATURES BUT ALSO BY THE CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY SUCCESS
STORY.

C.S.U. SERVES THE URBAN NEEDS OF A GREAT CITY.

NOT LONG AGO C.S.U. CAME UNDER HEAVY ATTACK.

BUT YOU EFFECTIVELY ANSWERED THE CHALLENGE.

TODAY C.S.U. IS GRADUATING A FIRST-RATE AND HOPEFUL

CLASS OF 1975. YOU HAVE OVERCOME.

YOU CAN TODAY SHARE A JUSTIFIABLE PRIDE.

SO CAN THE CITY OF CHICAGO, THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, AND

THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES. YOU PROVED THE CRITICS WRONG.

I KNOW OF THE SACRIFICES OF YOUR HUSBANDS AND WIVES,

YOUR PARENTS, YOUR GRANDPARENTS, AND EVEN GREAT-GRANDPARENTS.

SOME OF YOUR GUESTS HERE TODAY WERE DENIED EVEN

THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL. BUT NONE CAN

STAND TALLER IN AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT THAN THEY DO FOR

INSPIRING AND ENCOURAGING TODAY'S GRADUATES.

TO THOSE RELATIVES WHO NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO ATTEND
AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING, I SAY: YOU HAVE LEARNED
THE GREATEST HISTORY LESSON THAT THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CAN TEACH. YOU HAVE LEARNED TO NOURISH HOPE, TO SUSTAIN
BELIEF IN A BETTER LIFE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION, TO WORK TOWARD
THAT GOAL, AND TO NOW EXPERIENCE THE PROOF THAT THE
AMERICAN DREAM IS POSSIBLE FOR ALL.

TO THE GRADUATES, I SAY: YOU HAVE MADE YOUR LOVED

ONES PROUD.

YOU HAVE MADE CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY PROUD.

AND YOU HAVE MADE ME PROUD TO BE PRESIDENT OF A NATION

WHERE GRADUATES LIKE YOU STRIVE AGAINST HEAVY ODDS FOR

SELF-BETTERMENT, FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE,

AND FOR EXCELLENCE; WHERE GRADUATES BUILD ON ABILITIES RATHER

THAN COP OUT ON DISABILITIES; WHERE GRADUATES BELIEVE IN

THEMSELVES AND IN THE CONTRIBUTION THEY CAN MAKE TO THEIR

COMMUNITY; AND WHERE GRADUATES PROVIDE A LIVING DEMONSTRATION

OF HOW WE ARE GOING TO TURN AROUND THE PROBLEMS OF THE CITIES.

CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY IS A SHOWCASE OF
WHAT CAN BE DONE BY PEOPLE WITH DETERMINATION. YOU
HAVE SHOWN HOW WHITE AND BLACK HANDS CAN UNITE TO
BUILD A MULTI-RACIAL INSTITUTION. YOU HAVE SHOWN
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT. AND YOU HAVE RESPONDED TO
THE REAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY YOU SERVE.

MOST OF TODAY'S GRADUATES HAD TO WORK FULL OR
PART-TIME ON OUTSIDE JOBS. I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE A
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. AS A FRESHMAN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN, I WORKED AS A BUS BOY IN THE NURSES' CAFETERIA
AT THE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL. I ALSO WAITED ON TABLES
IN THE INTERNS' DINING ROOM.

BUT LET ME QUICKLY ADD THAT, EVEN DURING THE GREAT
DEPRESSION, IT WAS MUCH EASIER FOR ME. I WAS NOT THE
VICTIM OF RACIAL PREJUDICE NOR OF A DEPRIVED ENVIRONMENT.
SO I CANNOT HONESTLY SAY THAT MY EXPERIENCE WAS THE SAME
AS THAT OF THOSE WHO ARE STRUGGLING TO MAKE IT TODAY IN
CHICAGO AND THROUGHOUT AMERICA. BUT I DO SAY THAT MY
EXPERIENCE LEADS ME TO CARE ABOUT AND TO IDENTIFY WITH EVERY
UPWARD-BOUND INDIVIDUAL IN THIS NATION.

AND I DEFY ANYONE TO PUT DOWN THE GREATEST FRATERNITY
OF THEM ALL -- THE COLLEGE GRADUATES WHO LEARNED SOMETHING
ABOUT LIFE BY DIRTYING THEIR HANDS.

I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE UNEMPLOYED OF THIS
RECESSION AND THOSE NOW EMPLOYED BENEATH THE LEVEL OF THEIR
CAPACITIES.

A NATION THAT DEPRIVES ANYONE OF AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
IS ITSELF DEPRIVED.

A NATION THAT CANNOT CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR
HUMAN DIGNITY FOR ALL IS ITSELF LACKING A MEASURE OF
HUMANITY AND DIGNITY.

THE DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL IS BASED ULTIMATELY
UPON A SENSE OF PRIDE. IT DOES NOT COME FROM GOVERNMENT
PROGRAMS THAT TAKE OVER THE INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE AND REDUCE
THE PERSON TO A CASE FILE AND A CLAIM NUMBER. REAL AID
TO THE INDIVIDUAL IS AID THAT HELPS THE INDIVIDUAL TO HELP
HIMSELF OR HERSELF. FEDERAL ASSISTANCE THAT HELPS PEOPLE
ACHIEVE HIGHER EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATION IS FULLY JUSTIFIED.

I AM TOLD THAT ONE OF YOUR GRADUATES HERE TODAY
RECEIVING A DEGREE IN EDUCATION IS A 45-YEAR-OLD WOMAN WHO
WORKED AS A TEACHER'S AIDE. SHE ASPIRED TO TEACH.
WITH NINE CHILDREN -- ONE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED -- IT WAS
NOT EASY. BUT HER PERSEVERANCE IS TYPICAL OF THIS ENTIRE
GRADUATING CLASS. SO IS THE SPIRIT OF YOUR VIETNAM
VETERANS AND OTHERS WHO CAUGHT UP TO WIN DEGREES TODAY.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN PROVIDE FINANCIAL AID TO EDUCATION.

BUT IT CANNOT GIVE INDIVIDUALS THE DETERMINATION YOU HAVE

DISPLAYED IN EARNING YOUR DEGREES.

AS PRESIDENT, I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ATTITUDE
OF GOVERNMENT TOWARD INDIVIDUALS. BUT I AM ALSO CONCERNED
ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF INDIVIDUALS TOWARD THE NATIONAL
COMMUNITY -- AND TOWARD THEMSELVES IN TERMS OF PERSONAL
SELF-RESPECT.

I CANNOT AND DO NOT SAY THAT WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT.

SOME PEOPLE ARE OUTSIDE THE BOAT STRUGGLING IN STORMY WATERS.

WE -- THE FORTUNATE -- ARE IN THE BOAT AND CAN

THROW OUT A LIFE PRESERVER. WE CAN AND WILL HELP.

BUT THOSE IN THE WATER MUST NOT JUST HANG ON INDEFINITELY

TO THEIR LIFE PRESERVERS BUT MUST SWIM TOWARD RESCUE.

REAL ASSISTANCE IS TO HELP PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES.

WE CANNOT DO EVERYTHING FOR EVERYBODY. BUT THERE IS ROOM

FOR ALL WHO TRY TO MAKE IT. THE ONLY SOUL REALLY LOST IS

THE ONE WHO GIVES UP WITHOUT TRYING.

MANY OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE CITIES REMAIN UNSOLVED.

I AM DEDICATED TO TURNING AROUND THE TREND OF
DETERIORATION AND DESPAIR, OF CRIME AND UNEMPLOYMENT,
OF POLLUTION AND BAD HOUSING, AND OF DRUGS AND OF
PREMATURE DEATH.

BUT I AM ALSO DEDICATED TO THE CONVICTION THAT
LOCAL PROBLEMS MUST, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS,
BE SOLVED BY LOCAL PEOPLE. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
HAS HELPED AND WILL CONTINUE TO HELP.

THAT IS WHY I CAME TO CHICAGO TODAY TO MEET YOU.

WE IN WASHINGTON CAN LEARN A LOT FROM YOU. MANY OF YOU

HAVE OVERCOME A DEPRIVED ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC

LIMITATIONS. YOU SUCCEEDED BECAUSE YOU ARE RICH IN

HUMAN CAPACITIES AND HAVE THE LOVE OF FAMILIES WHO CARE.

THIS AUDITORIUM IS FILLED WITH INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS
STORIES.

I DON'T SEE ANY REASON TO WORRY ABOUT THE
CLASS OF 1975 AT C.S.U.

BUT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF SOME OTHER
YOUNG AMERICANS WHO ARE TODAY NEITHER IN SCHOOL NOR WORKING
AT JOBS. THEY ARE IN THE STREETS.

SOME HAVE LOST HOPE AND MOTIVATION TO THE EXTENT THAT
THEY ARE NO LONGER EVEN LOOKING FOR WORK. SOME HAVE
POLICE RECORDS.

SOCIETY HAS BEGUN TO THINK OF THEM AS RECORDS AND
PUBLIC ENEMIES RATHER THAN AS HUMAN BEINGS IN TROUBLE.

SOME ARE SICK WITH ADDICTION TO DRUGS BECAUSE
THEY ARE SO EMPTY INSIDE, SO DEVOID OF HOPE, THAT THEY
FILL THEMSELVES WITH THE ARTIFICIAL ILLUSION OF CONTENTMENT.

SO I CHALLENGE TODAY'S GRADUATES TO USE YOUR NEW

SKILLS TO HELP THE PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN THIS HALL TODAY.

YOU ARE UNIQUELY EQUIPPED.

I CHALLENGE THE GRADUATES IN EDUCATION TO TEACH

YOUNG PEOPLE HOW TO READ AND WRITE.

I CHALLENGE THE GRADUATES IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

TO STIMULATE THE MIND AND INSPIRE THE SPIRIT.

I CHALLENGE THE GRADUATES IN CORRECTIONS AND
LAW ENFORCEMENT TO COUNSEL AND MOTIVATE INDIVIDUALS FROM
THE PATH OF DESTRUCTION OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS.

I CHALLENGE THE BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION
GRADUATES TO CONCEIVE OF NEW JOBS THAT ARE MORE
INTERESTING, CHALLENGING, AND REWARDING.

AND I CHALLENGE ALL GRADUATES TO SET AN EXAMPLE
THAT GIVES HOPE TO THE MILLIONS WHO HAVE NOT YET MADE IT.
YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT YOUR DETERMINATION CAN MAKE
A DIFFERENCE. YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN PART OF THE PROBLEM.
^ BUT NOW YOU ARE PART OF THE PRIDE.

C.S.U. HAS SHOWN THAT A NEW TRADITION CAN

EMERGE FROM PROBLEM AREAS. YOUR PRESIDENT,

DR. ALEXANDER, MADE C.S.U. A SCHOOL THAT DEMANDS

PERFORMANCE OF ITS STUDENTS. HE MADE C.S.U. A SCHOOL

WHERE YOU SHAPE UP OR SHIP OUT.

I AGREE WITH THE C.S.U. PHILOSOPHY. YOU KILL PRIDE

IF STUDENTS ARE PASSED MERELY BECAUSE THEY COME FROM

DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS. THAT IS NO FAVOR.

IT IS A DISSERVICE. YOU SACRIFICE FOR AN EDUCATION.

YOU ARE ENTITLED TO A FAIR CHANCE TO LEARN. C.S.U IS NOT

A SCHOOL WHERE THE STUDENT CAN COAST THROUGH FOR FOUR

YEARS AND EMERGE WITH A DEGREE BUT WITHOUT COMPETENCE.

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE MAKES MORE VALID THE

DIPLOMAS YOU ARE RECEIVING TODAY. IT IS A SERVICE TO THE

UNIVERSITY, TO THE STUDENTS, AND TO THE COMMUNITY.

YOU WELCOMED THE CHALLENGE.

YOU MADE THE GRADE.

A UNITED AMERICA REQUIRES OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

CITIZENS AND COOPERATION OF ALL RACES AND GROUPS.

THAT IS WHY I DRAW SUCH ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE ACHIEVEMENTS

OF THIS GRADUATING CLASS. YOU ARE THE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL

PROVIDE NEW ENERGY, NEW IDEAS, AND NEW LEADERSHIP TO HELP

RESOLVE THE PLIGHT OF THE CITIES.

IF I CAN GO ONCE MORE TO THE DAYS WHEN I WAS
GOING THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE, THERE WAS A POEM
BY A VICTORIAN ENGLISHMAN THAT WAS A FAVORITE OF
COMMENCEMENT ORATORS. I HEARD IT RECITED SO MANY TIMES
THAT I THINK I STILL KNOW IT BY HEART.

THE LAST PART WENT LIKE THIS:

"IT MATTERS NOT HOW STRAIT THE GATE,

HOW CHARGED WITH PUNISHMENTS THE SCROLL,

I AM THE MASTER OF MY FATE;

I AM THE CAPTAIN OF MY SOUL."

THOSE SENTIMENTS SERVED MY GENERATION, BUT MAYBE
THEY SOUND A LITTLE OLD-FASHIONED TODAY. I DON'T KNOW.
BUT I DO KNOW THIS: AMERICA IS A FAR BETTER PLACE TODAY
THAN IT WAS WHEN I GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE FORTY YEARS AGO.
AND BECAUSE OF YOU AND YOUR DETERMINATION I DO BELIEVE IN
A BETTER TOMORROW FOR ALL AMERICANS.

END OF TEXT