

# BACCALAUREATE 2001

Below are excerpts from the Rev. Dr. Floyd H. Flake's Baccalaureate Address. For his remarks in their entirety see Almanac's website.

## Proving Your Greatness

I am grateful for the opportunity to greet the Class of 2001. I commend each and every one of you. Since this service is a baccalaureate, let's see if we might be able to glean from a particular passage of scripture some understanding of what I think you will do as you go out into the world from this place with all of the greatness that is personified by it and the education you have attained. The credentialing that you carry by virtue of the fact that you have its degree and you will go into a world now where change is constantly occurring.

I would like to speak from the topic, proving your greatness and use for this, the 17th chapter of Joshua—the 14th and 15th verses. In it there are people who stand before Joshua who have led his people into the promised land and as they stand before him, they come with a complaint. And they come before him with that complaint saying unto him, why hath thou given me but one line of one portion of inheritance seeing that I am a great people, for as much as the Lord has blessed me hither to? And Joshua answered them, if thou be a great people then get thee up to the wood country, cut down for thyself the land of the Perizzites and the giants if Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. In this text one of the things that we realize is that often times we make decisions about our lives. Those things that will guide us and direct us, built upon perceptions and assumptions of a particular time frame.

Many of us who are standing here today can testify that what we thought when we entered into our college years was different at the time of our graduation. The way the world was in the time of our entry was different in the time that we came out. All of us have learned how to live with paradigm shifts and often times our inability to make the natural adjustments and change perceptions to deal with the reality of the world as it is, as opposed to the way it was, causes us to lose a bit of our faith, a sense of direction and purpose. We lose our focus. We are challenged to such a degree that we dare to believe that perhaps these have been wasted years—that the time that we have come into this arena, things have happened so rapidly that we are not prepared to make the change. May I say to you today that change is a part of life and we make decisions about how we deal with those changes. We either deal in reactive ways or by being proactive. We think about what we want to be, what we want to do. We think about greatness as merely having received the necessary tools, the equipment, the degree, that says we have received a body of knowledge and now have the capability to go to the world and to communicate it.

And yet in a changing world where the paradigm is shifted, to whom are we communicating? No longer are we able to go into the environments where we thought we'd be functioning. The professions that we thought showed so much promise for us, now we see that those professions have changed. We thought we'd be going to the Internet e-commerce community, only to see now that because of paradigm shifts that world is turned upside down.

The opportunities that were available four years ago are no longer available now. How do we handle it? Do we handle it by understanding, by faith? We do have the capability to overcome because not only did we get a degree that symbolizes mere knowledge in a particular field, it also symbolizes that we have a body of knowledge and a capability and skill for the necessary adjustments to be able to function in a world that is ever-changing. This is not the first adjustment that you will have to make. By the time you reach that place at the half-century mark, as I have done, you will discover that there are many changes you will have made. Even your parents, whom you believe you need not hear from any longer with their advice, if you would but listen, they will testify that they have had to make perceptual changes to deal with the reality of those paradigm shifts that have taken place in their lives. They did not expect many of the changes that have occurred during your four years here and yet they knew that if they were to prove their greatness, change and adjustment to them is an inefable requirement for all the rest.

Greatness, then, is not measured exclusively by the degree that you have, it is really a piece of paper; it does suggest that you have a body of knowledge to sell to the world, the one thing you must understand is that you cannot be so locked in the box that you cannot deal with the reality of change. And a part of that change means coming out, adjusting to a new world that according to the most recently released census data indicates to us that at last we will finally get behind us this notion of race and class and distinctions of people because, if the census data is correct, and I dare to believe that it is, we will be living in a world where there is no pronounced majority. All of us will be the majority. There is no minority and I have never accepted that nomenclature in the first place. All of us will have to learn how to live with each other to determine ways by which we will express our unity to each other not based upon our differences but by dealing with the reality that there is so much that we share in common.

No longer are we looking at each other merely from racialized terms but we are dealing with each other from a reality that we are one America—we

are one people. We are a people who have common pursuits, goals and directions and as we move into this future, our greatness will ultimately be determined by willingness to learn how to live with each other, to respect each other, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "to view each other from the content of our character." It is time for that change, it is time for us to stop exploiting freely abroad a democracy that often is viewed in hypocritical terms by those who are part of the very society that we declare is the greatest nation in the world.

Our challenge becomes one of moving towards principle-centered paradigms that don't change because of conditions, but understand that we stand on a ground of faith and although things around us shift we do not shift, we stand out because we have determined that we can be great. We can be greater than we are, a greater people, a greater nation. We must cease trying to place

impediments in the face of those who tried to stand up in a world that is often cruel to people because of the limitations of their background, their environmental circumstances, of what we consider to be their genetics. Our reality must be one where we learn how to lift people up, regardless of the places where they are.

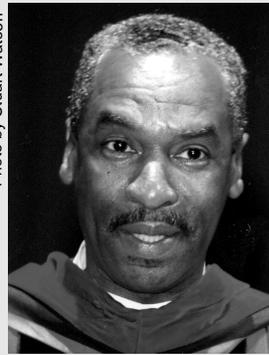
As I listen to people discuss who can succeed in America and who ought to fail, I'm often amazed because I am the product of 5th and 6th grade educated parents who gave birth to 13 children, who slept in two bedrooms, in a two-bedroom house, rolling roll-away beds out into the living room and the kitchen. Every time I had an opportunity to stand as dean of the students or

dean of the chapel at Boston University or to stand in the House of Congress, I asked myself, "What would I be if I had listened to what other people said I could not be, if I had accepted that as a notion of what my life would be about?"

Our challenge becomes to prove our greatness: facing the challenges, understanding that they are there. No one has made the road easy for you, but the challenges are there to help to build a kind of character that allows you to build for a future that is greater than your past. To build upon the legacy that you have received from those who have gone before you and a great institution like the University of Pennsylvania, so imbedded in the principles of freedom and independence. My prayer is that you have learned enough to be able to go out into the world and make the necessary adjustments.

A group of people stood before Joshua, said unto Joshua, we have a serious problem. We can't understand why you would give us less than you have given other people. One of the great challenges that I have faced as pastor of Allen Church is I have looked at the community of which I am a part, a middle class community that in the early 1980s was in decline. In decline because people did not see the opportunities available to them. They saw the greatness of a community that did exist before they moved there, immediately following white flight. They made a determination that their best hope was to leave that community and go to the suburbs. My challenge to them is not to move to the suburbs but let's make the suburbs a part of the community where you live. Let's make it an environment where people are comfortable not only in living, but also if they have already left, coming to back to. That challenge brought us to the place where we understood the necessity of building homes, buying up boarded-up properties, building our own school, redefining for people their sense of self. Giving them the understanding that if you have knowledge, if you have faith, if you have a focus, it is possible for you to turn your situation around. It is not necessary to run from it, but rather to run to it with an optimistic view that somehow within you there is the power to bring about change rather than waiting for the government to do it. My challenge was, *let's do it ourselves*. The people have responded. And they now believe that they live in the promised land. And they believe so much so that they continue to make necessary investments in it. So these people stood before Joshua and said to him, "you don't know who we are; we are a great people. We are the sons and daughters of Joseph; our ancestors include Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. If you understood who we were you would have given us more than you gave the others. Their square footage is more than ours; the ample land that you have given to them offers greater opportunities than ours. They need but go and break up the barren land; they need but plant in the fallow places and they will be able to produce crops. But the land that you gave to us is a woody place; it

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Floyd H. Flake

Photo by Stuart Watson

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is a mountainous region and we don't understand how we will be able to do anything with that. You could have given us a land similar to everybody else's. You could have given us a place that was not already inherited by the giants."

Oftentimes in life we are faced with the challenges of having to work our way through the woods. To climb the high mountains, to come to the place where we face the giants. Do we manage it by merely reacting, or do we find ourselves looking for ways to make opportunities where none seem to exist. The great challenge that you will face as young people is that there will be many mountains, there will be many wooded regions, many places where you will wonder if you have the power to overcome the giant. But your degree signifies the level of greatness. Your challenge now is to go out and to prove it. It can be the legacy for your future and so you as members of the Class of 2001 get ready for the great challenge that is yours. The paradigm has shifted and it is shifting everyday. Between now and the time you take your first job it can shift even more. But the question becomes, are you ready for this great challenge.

This great challenge will not be met by merely racializing, politicizing and personalizing every issue. It's time to rise beyond the level of those things that separate us and come to an understanding of what brings us together. We must become more accountable. We must move beyond our discouragements, our disappointments. We must stop merely complaining about what we don't have and begin to look at the opportunities that are available to us; look at ourselves

in relationship to those who do not have; and then challenge ourselves to be more responsive to their needs. When we do that, we will have the kind of nation—we will have the kind of people—who will be able to stand on their ground of faith not merely declaring it another Martin Luther King celebration 'We Shall Overcome'—not merely having a few Brotherhood Sundays where we come together across racial lines. Not merely talking about opportunities that aren't being made available to women and allowing the gender gap to continue to exist. Not merely talking about the necessity of trying to break a glass ceiling, but rather we will join hands together and we will join, not based upon who is beside us, but understanding that whoever is beside us is our brother and whoever is beside us is our sister and no longer will the refrain be "we shall overcome" but it will be that we have overcome. We will indeed demonstrate to the rest of the world that we are a great people.

So, to the Class of 2001, go out to the barren places, go the mountainous regions, go to the places where the giants already inhabit—and conquer. When you have conquered, stand up on the strength of a faith that says that my faith, my focus is so in order I am so in tune with the reality of who I am and who I intend to be, that there is no force in the world that can keep me from becoming greater. If the barriers are there—I can overcome them, I can go around them, I can go through them, I can go under them, but by God—I am determined to prove my greatness. God bless you and may the Lord be with you.

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*Baccalaureate Address by President Judith Rodin, May 20, 2001*

## Building A Better World

Graduates of the Class of 2001, families, friends, deans, members of the faculty, Reverend Flake, and all honored guests: tomorrow, a group of extraordinary young men and women will take the field named for Benjamin Franklin to claim the prize they have worked so hard to earn: A degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Graduates, you have cleared the highest academic hurdles and met the most exacting standards to get that sheepskin. Now it is *your* turn to celebrate and *our* turn to cheer. Your degree tells the world that you are *champions*, ready to give society the best of all the knowledge and learning you have gained at Penn.

What a journey it has been! Four years ago, you arrived at Penn from so many different places and backgrounds. You brought with you different tastes, convictions, standards, skills, attitudes, politics, and personal goals.

For the next four years, you would have the unique experience—and the extraordinary challenge—of living in the most dynamically diverse community you could possibly imagine.

You definitely have made the most of this unique opportunity. You learned to live skillfully at Penn by forming alliances with your colleagues and making common cause with one another, harnessing and harmonizing your different skills and beliefs to pursue your *common* goals. Time and again, you pulled together, even when the grind of course work and force of events could have driven you apart.

When I think about your experiences over the past four years, I am reminded of historian Joseph Ellis' descriptions of the Founders in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Founding Brothers*. Ellis wrote that Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, and the other great leaders of the American revolutionary generation embodied complementary and *offsetting* talents, personalities, and beliefs.

By "colliding and colluding with each other," Ellis wrote, these fiercely proud and independent men "created a dynamic whole that was greater than the sum of its parts."

*That* describes what *you* have collectively accomplished at Penn. And in many ways the Founding Brothers had it easier. After all they were so much less diverse than we are here, not yet confronting issues like race or inequality, not yet seeing the huge ethical opportunities and challenges that science would provide. You have learned the meaning of collaboration in the service of humanity in a very complex moment in history.

I think of the computer science major from Long Island and the electrical engineering major from Singapore who teamed up to design and build a medium-scale, computer-controlled research blimp. Tomorrow, this blimp will fly next to the tennis courts near Franklin Field—a reminder to us all that Penn is a place where dreams can soar. The blimp's research capabilities are tremendous, as are the students who combined their talents to achieve something special—and became the closest of friends in the process.

Franklin would be so proud of them, as he would be proud of the graduating Nursing students who identified a need for peer-to-peer health education services in the College House System, and created Health Corner, which just opened last month at Community House. Health Corner represents a remarkable and important advance in student life at Penn. By raising awareness on exercise, nutrition, and sleep, the Health Corner can deliver a preemptive blow

against the stresses and problems that afflict many students. This project typifies the productive collaborations that Nursing students at Penn routinely engage to boost our capacity for enlightened self-care.

When it comes to can-do collaborations, our Wharton students are also up there with the best of the best. While they are known for the imaginative ways they sharpen their capitalist tools, Wharton students also invest their time and energy in numerous humanitarian enterprises.

To strengthen the links between Penn and the community, a Wharton senior founded Penn Students for Cancer Awareness. This group has developed outreach programs that stress peer counseling and education. At the same time, a dedicated band of Whartonites volunteer to bring comfort and support to patients at Penn's Cancer Center.

Finally, when I think of our seniors from the College, I recall Freshmen Convocation four years ago, when I challenged students—good-naturedly, I hope—to tackle the unsolved problem of finding world peace. Little did I imagine that so many outstanding students would accept this challenge and run with it.

Some of you in the College have worked to bridge the digital divide by building a computer lab in Tanzania. Some of you tapped into the powerful universal language of music to bridge cultural divides when you organized a combined conference and concert on Islam and the Globalization of Hip Hop. And some of you narrowed the health care divide by founding and joining American Youth Understanding Diabetes Abroad, which is doing so much to raise public awareness of that disease throughout Latin America.

Poverty, disease, and cultural enmity are more than just affronts to our sense of justice; they are destabilizing forces that threaten humanity's future. Those of you who went the extra mile—as so many of you have—to fight poverty, disease, and ignorance have brought the world that much closer to world peace. Humanity owes you a debt of gratitude.

Now, a new and quite exciting chapter in your lives is about to begin. Just as America's Founders eventually had to return to *their* lives and assume the formidable task of *governing* a new Republic, so, too, you must leave our campus and get on with the business of shaping a *world* that desperately needs your skills, your energies, and above all, your passion.

My challenge to you—and my prayer for you—is that you keep defying gravity and leap across *all* boundaries to lift humanity to higher ground.

Believe me, you've got powers and talents even our Founders would envy. And experiences they never could have dreamed of. In *Founding Brothers*, Ellis observed that "the faces that look down upon us with such classical dignity ... and the voices that speak to us across the ages, seem *so* mythically heroic, at least in part, because they *knew* we would be looking and listening."

Graduates—we do not know yet whether your faces will wind up in the National Portrait Gallery—whether your words will become required reading for schoolchildren—but treat *all* your efforts as though you *did* know that others will be watching and learning from what you conceive, and how you act. What we do know now, with confidence, is that future generations of Penn students will enjoy the fruits of your labor of love to build a better Penn and a better world.

I am extremely proud of you, Penn's Millennial Class. God bless you all.

The Commencement Address of Senator John McCain

## Confronting Challenges

Thank you. . . Thank you distinguished faculty, families and friends, and thank you University of Pennsylvania Class of 2001. The invitation to give this commencement address is a great honor for someone who graduated fifth from the bottom in the United States Naval Academy Class of 1958. To stand here, in full academic regalia, and address an audience of distinguished academics and their learned students has reaffirmed my long held faith that in America anything is possible.

If my old company officer at the Academy were here, whose affection for midshipmen was sorely tested by my less than exemplary behavior, I fear he would decline to hold Penn in the high esteem that I do.

Nevertheless, I want to join in the chorus of congratulations to the Class of 2001. This is a day to luxuriate in praise. You have earned it. You have succeeded in a demanding course of instruction from an excellent university. Life seems full of promise. Such is always the case when a passage of life is marked by significant accomplishment. Today, it must surely seem as if the world attends you.

But spare a moment for those who have truly attended you so well and for so long, and whose pride in your accomplishments is even greater than your own—your parents. When the world was looking elsewhere, your parents' attention was one of life's certainties. And if tomorrow the world seems a little more indifferent as it awaits new achievements from you, your families will still be your most unstinting source of encouragement, counsel and often—since the world can be a little stingy at first—financial support.

So, as I commend the Class of 2001, I offer equal praise to your parents for the sacrifices they have made for you, and for their confidence in you and love. More than any other influence in your lives, they have helped make you the success you are today, and might become tomorrow.

I thought I would show my gratitude for the privilege of addressing you by keeping my remarks brief. I suspect that some of you might have other plans for the day that you would prefer to commence sooner rather than later, and I will try not to detain you too long.

It is difficult for commencement speakers to avoid resorting to clichés on these occasions. Or at least, I find it difficult. Given the great number of commencement addresses that are delivered every year by men and women of greater distinction, greater insights and greater eloquence than I possess, originality proves to be an elusive quality.

One cliché that seems to insist on my attention is the salutation “leaders of tomorrow,” which is probably uttered hundreds of times by speakers addressing graduating classes from junior high schools to universities. In a general sense, it is an obvious truth. You and your generational cohorts, after all, will be responsible for the future course of our civilization, and, given America's profound influence in the world, much of the course of human events in your time. But will you specifically, with all the confidence and vitality that you claim today, assume the obligations of professional, community, national, or world leaders? I'll be damned if I know. I'm not clairvoyant, and I don't know you personally. I don't know what you will become. But I know what you could become. What you should become.

America is still a land of unlimited opportunities, and American citizenship confers advantages, no matter one's socio-economic status, that are the envy of people from every other country on earth. Moreover, no matter the circumstances of your birth, the very fact that you have been blessed with a quality education from this prestigious university gives you an enormous advantage as you seek and begin your chosen occupations. Whatever course you choose, absent unforeseen misfortune, success should be within your reach. You are members of an elite group, but, of course, this is a democracy, and leaders are not exclusively chosen from among our most advantaged citizens.

All of you will eventually face a choice, earlier in life than you might now presume about whether you will become leaders in our society, in commerce, industry, government, the arts, religion, the military, or any integral part of our civilization. Or will you allow others to assume that responsibility while you attempt to reap the blessings of a prosperous country without meaningfully contributing to its advancement. I very much hope you will take the first course.

Such responsibility, to be sure, is not always an unalloyed blessing to the person who chooses it. Leadership is both burden and privilege. But as

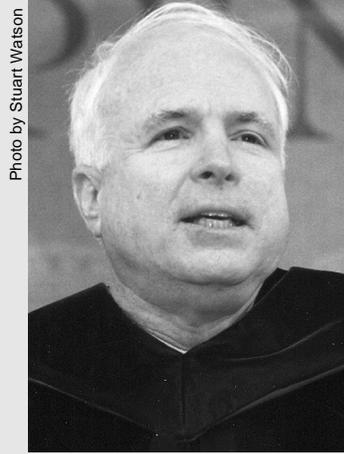


Photo by Stuart Watson

John McCain

Socrates contended “the un-examined life is not worth living,” so I contend that the passive life is not worth forgoing the deep satisfaction, the self-respect, that comes from employing all the blessings God bestowed on you to leaving the world better for your presence in it.

No one expects you at your age to know precisely how you will lead accomplished lives or use your talents in a cause greater than your self-interest. You have some time, I'm sure, before such choices and challenges confront you. Indeed, it has been my experience that such choices reveal themselves over time to every human being. They are seldom choices that arrive just once, are resolved at one time, and, thus, permanently fix the course of your

life. Many of the most important choices one must make emerge slowly, sometimes obscurely. Often, they are choices that you must make again and again.

Once in a great while a person is confronted with a choice or a dilemma, the implications of which are so profound that its resolution might affect your life forever. But that happens rarely and to relatively few people. For most people, life is long enough, and varied enough to account for occasional mistakes and failures.

F. Scott Fitzgerald is often recalled for his observation that “there are no second acts in America.” It's a pity that such a gifted writer is frequently remembered for this one observation, which in my opinion couldn't have been more mistaken. There are a great many second, third and fourth acts for Americans in all walks of life. I have had two or three already, and some would say I should be looking for another right about now.

I can think of a great many people throughout our nation's rich history whose lives refute Fitzgerald's argument. Indeed, our history would not be so rich absent the presence of many thousands of politicians, generals, religious leaders, artists, businesspeople, inventors, scientists, who had gained historical prominence after failing, some times more than once, to make much of a mark in the world.

You might think that I am now going to advise you not to be afraid to fail. I'm not. Be afraid. Failing stinks. . . . Just don't stop there. Don't be undone by it. Move on. Failure is no more a permanent condition than is success. “Defeat is never fatal,” Winston Churchill observed. “Victory is never final. It's courage that counts.”

As I observed earlier, few of you have reached the point when your parents and teachers expect you to have plotted your life in detail or even to have defined your ambitions. What they hope they have done is help develop within you the wherewithal to make the race; to choose well; to confront challenges intelligently and forthrightly; to overcome mistakes and failures in a way that diminishes the likelihood of your repeating them. In other words, all those who care about you and feel responsible for you hope they have helped you build the one thing you must possess—strength of character.

Bad people can occasionally do good things. Good people can occasionally do bad things. But those things are anomalies in a life that is defined by opposing acts. People of bad character will never reach the end of life satisfied with the experience. People of good character will never waste their life, whether they die in obscurity or renown.

“Character,” said the 19th Century evangelist, Dwight Moody, “is what you are in the dark.”

I have always found that the most difficult choices between honor and dishonor occur when no one is watching. For a politician that presents something of a dilemma. We like to have our virtue affirmed in the public spotlight. But no matter how clever you are in crafting a public image of integrity, if it is a false image, the truth will emerge and usually sooner than expected.

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The lessons I learned as a young man and officer have sometimes helped me withstand the temptations of public life to cut a few corners here and there for the sake of ambition. And sometimes not. I wouldn't want anyone here to be fooled into thinking that I am the example of rectitude I pretend to be to my children.

But events I have witnessed and the example of others have taught me that it is far preferable in one short lifetime to stick by truths that give more meaning to life than fame or fortune.

God grants us all the privilege of having our character and our honor tested. The tests come frequently, as often in peace as in war, as often in private as in public.

For me, many of those tests came in Vietnam. I knew no one who ever chose death over homecoming. But I knew some men who chose death over dishonor. The memory of them, of what they bore for us, helped me see the virtue in my own humility. It helped me understand that good character is self-respect, and courage and humility are its attributes.

Many years have passed since I learned that lesson. But I have not let the comforts and privileges of my present life obscure the memory of what I witnessed then. And in recent years when I have faced difficult decisions and chosen well, the choice was made easier by the memory of those who once made harder choices, and paid a much higher price for the privilege. And when I chose poorly, their example made me ashamed and left me no explanation for my failure other than my own weakness.

When I was a young man, I thought glory was the highest ambition, and that all glory was self-glory. My parents tried to teach me otherwise, as did the Naval Academy. But I didn't understand the lesson until later in life, when I confronted challenges I never expected to face.

In that confrontation, I discovered that I was dependent on others to a greater extent than I had ever realized, but that neither they nor the cause we served made any claims on my identity. On the contrary, they gave me a larger sense of myself than I had before. I discovered that nothing is more liberating than to fight for a cause larger than yourself; something that encompasses you, but is not defined by your existence alone.

In America, our rights come before our duties, as well they should. We are a free people, and among our freedoms is the liberty to care or not care for our birthright. But those who claim their liberty but not their duty to the civilization that ensures it live a half-life, having indulged their self-interest at the cost of their self-respect. The richest man or woman

possesses nothing of real value if their lives have no greater object than themselves.

Should we only claim our rights and leave to others our duty to the nation that protects them, whatever we gain for ourselves will be of little value, it will build no monuments to virtue, claim no place in the memory of posterity, hold no brief with aspiring nations. Success, wealth, celebrity gained and kept for private interest is a small thing. It makes us comfortable, eases the material hardships our children will bear, purchases a fleeting regard for our lives, yet not the self-respect that in the end will matter to you most. But sacrifice for a cause greater than self-interest and you invest your lives with the eminence of that cause.

We are not a perfect nation, a perfect union. Prosperity and power may delude us into thinking we have achieved that distinction, but inequities and challenges unforeseen a mere generation ago command every good citizen's concern and labor. What we have achieved in our brief history is irrefutable proof that a nation conceived in an idea, in liberty, will prove stronger and more enduring than any nation ordered to exalt the few at the expense of the many or made from a common race or culture or to preserve traditions that have no greater attribute other than longevity.

As blessed as we are, as empowered by liberty as we are, no nation complacent in its greatness can long sustain it. We are an unfinished nation. And we are not a people of half-measures.

I ask you to take your place in the enterprise of renewal, giving your counsel, your labor, your passion in your time to the enduring task of national greatness. Prove again, as those who came before you proved, that a people free to act in their own interests will perceive their interests in an enlightened way, will live as one nation, in a kinship of ideals, and make of their power and wealth a civilization in which all people share in the promise of freedom.

Although you were born in the last century, you will spend most of your life in this one. You are 21st Century Americans. I am not. I don't know how far humanity will progress in this century, but I expect great things, great things, indeed. I envy you so for the discoveries you will experience. Be worthy of your times and your advantages. Be worthy of your country. Serve a cause greater than yourselves and you'll know a happiness far more sublime than pleasure.

Will you be tomorrow's leaders? I don't know. But I would be proud if you were. You are blessed. Your opportunity is at hand. Make the most of it.

Thank you for the honor of addressing you.

## Pursuing Interesting Ideas

*Remarks at Commencement by David B. Hackney, Chair of the Faculty Senate*

Greetings, Class of '01. Although I am speaking as Chair of the Faculty Senate, the following comments do not necessarily reflect the opinions of that body. I hope you found the last few years to be interesting, rewarding and fun. This leads some people to feel sadness at the end of their formal education. After all, when else will you have an extended period of time during which your primary responsibility is to intellectual pursuits of your own choosing? Well, don't worry, life gets better after college.

As time goes by, you may be among those who look back on college as an interesting, but overly long and confining culmination of an extended childhood. Entertaining in a limited sense, but, at least by the end, too narrow, too superficial, and too homogeneous.

To those of you who did not make the borders of the campus the limits of your lives, congratulations. You already know what I mean. To everyone else, you have something to look forward to. Life is about to open up geographically, culturally, and intellectually. While you were in college, the list of things to which you were expected to devote your mental energy was found in a course catalog. This served as a handy compendium of what the University chose to teach and thus, what lines of study were sanctioned, guided, offered for credit, and, most importantly, graded on your transcripts. However, the simple act

of defining a course requires emphasizing some ideas within a field and de-emphasizing or ignoring others. When you were in college, you had to put up with this. Now that you are out, you can pursue those interesting ideas that came up in your reading, but were never discussed in class. In college, if it will not be on the final exam, you have to turn your attention elsewhere. Now you can learn what you want, or need, as interest and circumstances dictate, without the artificial constructs of terms, courses, and grades.

The irony is that if you really liked this introduction to one approach to an intellectual life, you may find yourself back in the student role in graduate school. Of course, many of the faculty at this University did not go to graduate school at all. We were pre-professionals in college, there to get our tickets punched and then to move on to professional studies in medicine, law, or other areas. For me, things worked out as planned, college gave me what I asked, and I have no complaints. On the other hand, almost all of my education has taken place since I finished college, and it has been a lot more interesting.

So, in contrast to the usual graduation exhortation to continue your education once you leave college, I am suggesting that it is time to begin. Again, greetings and congratulations, this should be a wonderful day, have a great time.