President Fawcett
Members of the Graduating Class
Members of the Faculty
Distinguished Guests
Parents and Friends

I am delighted to be here in Columbus this morning, for the
occasion affords me an opportunity to renew old as well to make new
friendships, and to visit a university whose dedication to the cause of
academic excellence and opportunity is a source of admiration for
us all. As a representative of Miami University, this occasion also
provides me an opportunity to give public expression of appreciation
for the excellent spirit of cooperation which has existed between our
two institutions, perhaps best typified by a jointly administered
doctoral program in thirteen areas and by our common management
of and concern for the Wright State Campus near Dayton, soon to
emerge as the Wright State University. I know of no one in higher
education in this State who has so consistently and so sincerely
worked for closer and more meaningful cooperation among Ohio's
colleges and universities than your President, Novice Fawcett.

It is significant that within recent weeks, as President of the Ohio
College Association, he has appointed a committee to examine the
possibilities of still further inter-institutional cooperation. All of
us applaud the leadership he has shown in this direction.

In preparing my remarks for this occasion, I sought the
services of the Miami University Library. In it I found several
histories of The Ohio State University, including one written by
Alexis Cope and another by James E. Pollard. From these some
interesting information was gleaned concerning our two universities:

First, I found that a century ago, in 1866, after the Morrill
Act had made available federal lands for the establishment of an
Agricultural and Mechanical College in Ohio, the Board of Trustees,
charged with the initial task of locating the new college, received a
committee report calling for its location in Oxford at Miami University. Four years later, another committee selected Columbus instead.

Had that first report been adopted one hundred years ago, I would not have had so far to drive last night.

Second, by September 17, 1873, when seventeen students assembled for formal instruction at the new college, in Columbus, the older university at Oxford had been compelled to close its doors due to the financial paralysis stemming from the nationwide Panic of '73, and two of the new school's original seven faculty members came to it from Miami. They were Joseph Millikin, who left the Chair of Ancient Greek Language at Miami to accept the Professorship of English and Modern Languages and Literature, and Robert W. McFarland, for seventeen years Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at Miami, who was given a somewhat similar title at Ohio State. Pollard comments that Professor McFarland was a most industrious man, and cites as an example of his industry the fact
that McFarland computed the form of the earth's orbit and the
longitude of its perihelion for a period of five and a half million
years. This was said to have taken him, according to Pollard, four
hours a day, six days a week for four years apart from his regular
duties as Professor of Mathematics, Civil Engineering, and Astronomy,
and Superintendent of Grounds at Ohio State! (Dr. Fawcett, what do
you and I do with all our spare time?)

McFarland remained at Ohio State until 1885 when, eighty
years before I came on the scene, he became President of Miami
University, which had been closed since 1873.

Walter Havighurst, years later, recalled that when McFarland
returned to Miami he occupied a home on Spring Street, where the
University Center presently stands. "A solid brick house, softened
with English ivy, it had a white doorway and a white railed platform
at the peak of the roof. Up there President McFarland kept a telescope.

Once a week he led his Astronomy class up the steep attic stairs.
Together they studied the starry sky, trying to understand their
place among the infinities."

Doubtless there are persons in this arena today who were
alive when Robert McFarland and his students pointed that tiny
telescope above the Miami campus as they struggled together to find
the meaning of the universe. Possibly there are even some present
who were young boys and girls when Professor McFarland witnessed
the first Ohio State commencement in 1878, when four students of the
original seventeen who had started in 1873 finally graduated.

What a kaleidoscope of change has been wrought in the span
of years--years of a single lifetime--between the era of Robert
McFarland and the present! Look to the changes wrought in this
nation: from 30 million people then to nearly 200 million now; from
a land essentially of farmers to a land now of city-dwellers; from an
agrarian, hand-labor economy to an automated industrialized one;
from the mathematical computations of Professor McFarland, which
required four years of his life to plot the orbit of the earth, to the
computerized calculations of the present which can accomplish the
same task in literally seconds!

We need look no farther than this great University to see
dramatic evidence of this change: from the 17 students of 1873 to
the 40,000 at present; from the seven faculty members of McFarland's
day to more than 3,500 now; from the four graduates of 1878 to the
1,400 whom we honor today. Indeed, there are nearly as many
students, faculty, and graduates here at Ohio State this year as were
to be found in all American colleges and universities one hundred
years ago.

This increase in college enrollment is not merely a result of
greater population. It has become the accepted thing to go to college.
The college degree is within reach of more people today than ever
before. And more people realize the value--indeed, the necessity--
of a college education to understand today's world and to succeed in
it.

Along with greater population and a higher percentage of
young people in that population, then, we also have a greater percentage
of our youth going to college. So it is not surprising that even being
a college student today has ceased to have much of the unique or the
exciting about it. Martin Meyerson has written recently that America's
college men and women are becoming an egalitarian near-majority.

"Soon most American families will have one or more members who
have had some college or university education . . . This transforma-
tion of the college man and woman from the rarity to the commonplace
is having and will have extra-ordinary effects upon the society . . .

The status which came from college attendance has been diluted.
The college student is no longer one of the happy few--he is one of
the frustrated many."
Truly, were McFarland to have had his telescope focused

on Ohio State and Columbus today, he would have been no less startled

by the transformation than he would have been to have witnessed

life on Mars or the Moon in the 1870's and 1880's. And he would

have denounced as absolutely incredible any talk of a man from his

own planet landing on the Moon eighty or ninety years later.

Yet here we are in this fast-paced, absolutely incredible

age of ours, accepting Cape Kennedy launchings as calmly as Robert

McFarland countenanced trips between Oxford and Columbus.

Is it little wonder today, in light of the profound transforma-

tion which has occurred, that many of us feel as though our individual

lives have lost meaning in the infinities of time and space?

Professor McFarland, whose attic was his laboratory and

whose simple homemade telescope constituted his principal research

tool, would be as amazed today by the advance of scientific research
on the college campuses as he would by the increase in students.

When he probed the heavens, less than $10,000,000 was being spent on all forms of research in the United States by all agencies, public and private, governmental, industrial, and educational. The figure today is approximately 2,000 times as great, or nearly $20,000,000,000.

And yet, as impressed and amazed as Professor McFarland might be today, I am sure he would be more than a little saddened. He would be saddened by the frustrations of size and complexity felt by many of the students styled by Meyerson the "egalitarian near-majority." For so many of these, the salt of academe has lost its flavor.

Professor McFarland would be saddened also, I am sure, by the green-stamp approach found on many of our campuses to courses and credits which, when the student has accumulated the necessary number to fill his little green stamp book, enables him to exchange the stamps for a diploma.
Perhaps most of all, however, Professor McFarland would be dismayed by the voices of discord, of division, of disunion which are being raised among his countrymen today. As a veteran of the Civil War, he had fought to preserve the nation and end bonded servitude. He would be dismayed by the atmosphere of negativism and cynicism abroad in this land of ours, about the intellectual climate in which we are presently immersed, about the denial of values, standards, and traditions which is so evident all about us.

Too many of us see only what is wrong with our world, not what is right and good and decent. Too many see only the flaws and not the fabric. Even a casual reading of the daily newspaper will confirm the suspicion that we as a nation have come to regard as newsworthy, at least on page one, only that which is negative, violent, corrupt, or macabre.

To the nihilists, the cynics, and the negativists, Professor McFarland would probably have this to say: it is far easier to destroy
than to build, but it is more useful to build. There is an oak on
this campus which was quite a tree when this University was founded
in 1870. It could be cut down in a matter of minutes in order to get
rid of a diseased limb or a decayed branch. But how much better it
would be to get rid of the disease or the decay--and save the tree.
All of us can readily see evidences of disease or decay in the limbs
and branches of the social, economic, and political trees about us.
Let us work together to get rid of the diseased limbs of our society,
but let us save those institutional trees which have sheltered and
sustained so many generations so well for so long.

Though he was not a contemporary, Professor McFarland
would probably have found a latter-day historian of the Civil War,
Bruce Catton, much to his liking. No finer expression of faith in
our national destiny has been rendered than that written by Mr.
Catton in a lead issue of the American Heritage when he said: "The
fabric of American life is a seamless web. Everything fits in somewhere. History is a continuous process; it extends far back into the past, and it will go on—despite today's uneasy qualms—far into the future. Our American heritage is greater than any of us. It can express itself in very homely truths; in the end, it can lift up our eyes beyond the glow in the sunset skies."

Indeed, the fabric of American life is a seamless web. Everything does fit in somewhere. Our history will go on, despite today's uneasy qualms, far into the future. As a nation, we shall determine which of our traditions, our institutions, and our customs are worth preserving, worth defending, and worth improving instead of merely scuttling. And the Professor McFarlands and their students—you and I, our children and our children's children for generations to come—will continue to study the starry skies, study them from space ships, perhaps, rather than through puny homemade
telescopes, as we continue to try together to understand our place among the infinities.

Thank you, good luck, and God bless you each and every one.