

Remarks for Leonard L. Haynes III
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Commencement, Ohio State University
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GOOD MORNING, AND THANK YOU _____ FOR THAT WARM WELCOME.

BEFORE I BEGIN, LET ME ASK THE PARENTS, CHILDREN, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF THE GRADUATING CLASS TO STAND FOR A MOMENT.

FOR EACH ONE OF YOU GRADUATING TODAY, A DEBT IS OWED, AND THANKS MUST BE GIVEN, TO THOSE WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE. AND I DON'T MEAN JUST BY TUITION. BUT MOTHERS, FATHERS, SISTERS, BROTHERS, GRANDPARENTS, CHILDREN, FRIENDS, TEACHERS AND COLLEAGUES ALL STOOD BEHIND YOU AND OFFERED THEIR MORAL COMMITMENT TO YOUR STUDIES. LET'S GIVE THEM A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO YOUR EDUCATION -- THEY HAVE DONE MUCH OF THE WORK.

WELL, HERE I AM, BACK HOME AGAIN. AND IT DOESN'T FEEL THAT MORE THAN A DAY OR TWO HAS PASSED SINCE I WAS SITTING WHERE YOU ARE..

...WAITING FOR THE SPEAKER TO FINISH.

SERIOUSLY, IT IS GOOD TO BE HERE (ANECDOTE ABOUT YOUR FIRST DAY AND YOUR BROTHER AT THE GAME)

SUBSEQUENTLY, AS A STUDENT AND MEMBER OF THE SENIOR STAFF, I WAS REMINDED THAT THE TASK OF A GREAT STATE LAND GRANT UNIVERSITY IS TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THE STATE IN WHICH IT IS DOMICILED. OHIO STATE IS THIS KIND OF INSTITUTION, AND, AS A RESULT, IT IS AMONG THE WORLD'S LEADING UNIVERSITIES.

I AM NOT GOING TO BORE YOU WITH A RECITATION OF LIFE IN WASHINGTON; SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT WASHINGTON HAS INFLUENCED SUCH FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES AROUND THE GLOBE THAT DEMOCRACY IS FAST BECOMING THE FIRST LANGUAGE OF THE WORLD.

HAD I SPOKEN TO THIS CLASS ONE YEAR AGO, I WOULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED SUCH CHANGES TAKING PLACE WITHIN A MERE TWELVE MONTHS, YET IT SEEMS THAT WITH EACH SPIN OF THE PLANET THE SUN RISES OVER A NEW LANDSCAPE. FROM EASTERN EUROPE TO SOUTH AFRICA TO SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA, CITIZENS OF ONCE-OPPRESSED NATIONS ARE LONGING TO REPLICATE THE AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM.

EVERY DAY MY STAFF HEARS FROM ANOTHER FOREIGN MINISTER OF EDUCATION WITH A COMMON PLEA: HELP US LEARN ABOUT DEMOCRACY. POLAND, HUNGARY, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, LITHUANIA, NICARAGUA...THE LIST GROWS WITH THOSE SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND THE ECONOMICS OF A FREE MARKET, BALANCED GOVERNMENT, ENGLISH AS A LANGUAGE OF COMMERCE, AND SO MANY OTHER AMERICAN VALUES.

OUR NATION HAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE AND DIRECT THE COURSE OF WORLD HISTORY IN THE NEXT CENTURY. BUT WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE CHALLENGE. THE SUCCESS OF THIS NATION IN THE WORLD MARKETPLACE HINGES ON OUR ABILITY TO GRADUATE BRIGHT, MOTIVATED, AND INNOVATIVE CITIZENS FROM OUR POSTSECONDARY SYSTEM OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

YOU ARE THE FIRST GRADUATES OF THAT DECADE. TEN YEARS FROM NOW, YOUR SEATS WILL BE TAKEN BY A CLASS THAT IS ONLY JUST NOW COMPLETING SIXTH GRADE. THINK ABOUT WHAT THEIR WORLD WILL BE LIKE! THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN GIVE OF YOURSELVES TO INSURE THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2000 A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.

DURING THE LAST DECADE WE LEARNED MOST PAINFULLY THAT CERTAIN GOALS, GOALS CENTERED ON SELF AND PERSONAL GAIN, DO NOT EQUATE WITH HAPPINESS AND FULFILLMENT. THE WALL STREET MAGICIANS, THE CORPORATE RAIDERS, THE CHEMICALLY BOOSTED ATHLETES - THESE EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS AT ALL COSTS DO NOT REPRESENT THE TRUE AMERICAN SPIRIT.

THEY DO NOT REPRESENT THE VISION YOUR PARENTS AND YOUR FAMILIES HAD FOR YOU AS YOU BEGAN YOUR JOURNEY HERE AT OHIO STATE.

WE CANNOT HAVE PEACE AND SECURITY WITHOUT INTELLECTUAL STRENGTH; WE CANNOT APPRECIATE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR WITHOUT FIRST APPRECIATING OUR OWN INTELLECTUAL CAPABILITIES; WE CANNOT MEET THE ESSENTIAL HUMAN NEEDS OR IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE HERE OR ELSEWHERE WITHOUT MEETING FIRST OUR OWN EDUCATIONAL NEEDS; AND WE WILL CERTAINLY NOT MEET THE CHALLENGES OF AN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY WITHOUT A WELL-EDUCATED CITIZENRY.

IT COMES TO THIS: SHOW ME THE GRADUATE, AND I WILL SHOW YOU THE FUTURE.

AND THERE YOU SIT. YOU ARE THE FUTURE. DIPLOMAS SOON IN HAND AND OPPORTUNITY JUST WAITING IN THE WINGS. WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THAT OPPORTUNITY? I HAVE SOME ADVICE: TEACH THE WORLD ABOUT AMERICA. LIVE THE GREAT EXPERIMENT TO THE FULLEST. SHOW THE FUTURE THE STUFF OF WHICH YOU ARE MADE.

THAT PARENTS' VISION I SPOKE OF A MOMENT AGO -- I KNOW IT WELL BECAUSE I HAVE FOUR CHILDREN OF MY OWN, INCLUDING A SON NOW IN HIS SOPHOMORE YEAR IN COLLEGE -- THAT VISION IS WHAT MOVES THIS NATION FORWARD. LET ME TELL YOU A STORY ABOUT VISION.

MANY YEARS AGO, IN A VILLAGE AT THE BASE OF A GREAT AND SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAIN, A WELL-LOVED AND RESPECTED KING CALLED FOR HIS THREE SONS. "I AM GETTING ON IN MY YEARS," SAID THE KING. "IN SIX WEEKS, WE WILL HAVE A GREAT CEREMONY IN THE VILLAGE. AT THAT TIME I WILL RETIRE AND GIVE TO ONE OF YOU MY CROWN. IN ORDER TO BE FAIR TO EACH OF YOU, I OFFER THIS CHALLENGE: TO THE SON WHO CLIMBS HIGHEST ON THE MOUNTAIN BEYOND, AND WHO BRINGS BACK PROOF OF HIS CLIMB, WILL GO THE CROWN."

ONE AT A TIME THE SONS SET OUT ON THEIR QUESTS, UNDAUNTED BY THE TASK AHEAD, THOUGH LEGEND HAD IT THAT ONLY ONE BEFORE THEM HAD OVERCOME THE MOUNTAIN'S TREACHEROUS HEIGHTS.

TWO WEEKS PASSED BEFORE THE FIRST SON CAME BACK TO THE VILLAGE, BRUISED AND BATTERED FROM HIS EXPERIENCE. ALMOST EXHAUSTED, BUT CLEARLY ELATED, HE MADE HIS WAY TO HIS FATHER. "FATHER, I HAVE CLIMBED TO THE TIMBERLINE, TO THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE CLIFFS AND TREES. AS PROOF OF MY CLIMB, I HAVE BROUGHT A PINECONE FROM THE UPPER REACHES OF THE FOREST."

THE KING HELD THE PINECONE AND SAID, "YOU HAVE CLIMBED HIGH, MY SON, AND SHOULD YOUR BROTHERS FAIL TO REACH THE TIMBERLINE, YOU WILL WEAR THE CROWN."

TWO MORE WEEKS PASSED BEFORE THE SECOND SON, STAGGERING DOWN THE PATH FROM THE MOUNTAIN, WAS SPOTTED BY A GUARD ON THE VILLAGE WALL. THE BOY WAS IN TERRIBLE SHAPE, CUT AND BLEEDING. NEARLY FAINTING FROM HIS ORDEAL. BUT HE TOO, LIKE HIS BROTHER, COULD NOT HIDE HIS TRIUMPH. ESCORTED TO HIS FATHER, HE SAID, "I HAVE CLIMBED ABOVE THE TIMBERLINE, ABOVE THE CLIFFS THAT GUARD THE SUMMIT, TO THE EAGLE'S NEST. TO PROVE MY CLAIM, I HAVE BROUGHT ONE EGG FROM HER NEST."

THE FATHER HELD THE EGG AND STUDIED IT, THEN SAID, "MY SON, YOU HAVE, INDEED, CLIMBED HIGH. HIGHER THAN YOUR BROTHER BEFORE. IN TWO WEEKS, SHOULD YOUR OTHER BROTHER NOT RETURN OR SHOW EVIDENCE OF A HIGHER CLIMB, YOU WILL WEAR MY CROWN."

THE FINAL TWO WEEKS CAME AND WENT, WITH NO SIGN OF THE THIRD SON. AS THE VILLAGERS PREPARED FOR THE CEREMONY TO CROWN THE SECOND SON, THERE WAS A SHOUT FROM THE WALL. THE THIRD SON WAS LYING, COLLAPSED, ON THE PATH TO THE VILLAGE, TOO TIRED AND BROKEN TO ENTER THE GATE. THE VILLAGERS RUSHED OUT AND, LIFTING HIM GENTLY, BROUGHT HIM TO HIS FATHER'S SIDE.

AFTER SOME TIME, THE SON WAS ABLE TO WHISPER, "I CLIMBED BEYOND THE TIMBERLINE, BEYOND THE EAGLE'S NEST, HIGHER THAN THE CLIFFS AND ON TO THE SUMMIT, FATHER, BUT I CANNOT OFFER PROOF, FOR AT THE PEAK THERE WAS ONLY SNOW AND UNBROKEN ROCK."

THE FATHER LOOKED AT THE BOY AND SAW A LIGHT IN HIS EYES HE HAD NOT SEEN IN HIS OTHER SONS. "TELL ME, MY SON, WHAT DID YOU SEE FROM THE SUMMIT?" "OH FATHER, I SAW THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN, A RICH GREEN VALLEY BELOW, AND A LAND OF PROMISE AND HOPE STRETCHING BEYOND TO THE HORIZON. I COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED SUCH A SIGHT IN ALL MY DAYS BEFORE CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN."

"YOU HAVE GIVEN PROOF OF YOUR CLIMB, THEN, BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN TO THAT SUMMIT AND I, TOO, HAVE SEEN THE OTHER SIDE AND ACROSS TO THE HORIZON BEYOND." AND WITH THAT, THE KING GENTLY RESTED HIS CROWN ON THE THIRD SON'S HEAD.

YOU BEGAN YOUR CLIMB FOUR YEARS AGO...PERHAPS LONGER FOR SOME OF YOU. THROUGH PERSEVERANCE AND AN INNER DRIVE, YOU ARRIVED TODAY AT THE SUMMIT. I KNOW, AS DO YOUR PARENTS, PRESIDENT JENNINGS, AND THE FACULTY OF THIS GREAT INSTITUTION, WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD WAITS FOR YOU OUT TOWARD THE HORIZON.

YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED IN YOUR QUEST. IT IS EDUCATION THAT LIFTS US TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN AND LAYS BEFORE US THE WORLD IN ALL ITS COLORS AND WONDERS. I ENVY YOU FOR THE DISCOVERIES THAT LIE AHEAD, FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES NEEDING NEW IDEAS AND YOUTHFUL VIGOR.

BUT, BEFORE YOU PACK YOUR BAGS, TAKE THOUGHT OF THOSE WHO WILL FILL YOUR CHAIRS IN TEN YEARS. GIVE BACK, IN EQUAL MEASURE, WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN SO GENEROUSLY GIVEN.

IT IS YOUR TURN TO TAKE THE HANDS OF AMERICA'S CHILDREN AND GUIDE THEM AS THEY BEGIN THEIR CLIMB. THE FUTURE OF THIS GREAT NATION, INDEED THE WORLD, AWAITS AT THEIR SUMMIT, AND THEIR FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS.

I LEAVE YOU WITH THESE WORDS FROM H.G. WELLS, WRITTEN SEVENTY YEARS AGO:

"LIFE BEGINS PERPETUALLY. GATHERED TOGETHER AT LAST UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MAN....UNIFIED, DISCIPLINED, ARMED WITH THE SECRET POWERS OF THE ATOM AND WITH KNOWLEDGE AS YET BEYOND DREAMING. LIFE, FOREVER DYING TO BE BORN AFRESH, FOREVER YOUNG AND EAGER, WILL PRESENTLY STAND UPON THIS EARTH AS UPON A FOOTSTOOL, AND STRETCH OUT ITS REALM AMIDST THE STARS."

THANK YOU, GOOD LUCK, GOD SPEED, AND GOD BLESS AMERICA.