

Baccalaureate address by Michelini,
draft 1974 May 26

BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS - MAY 26, 1974

I AM HONORED TO SHARE WITH YOU, THIS FINAL CEREMONY MARKING YOUR COMMENCEMENT FROM WILKES COLLEGE. I AM EMOTIONALLY MOVED FOR TWO BASIC REASONS: FIRST - THE RECOGNITION THAT THIS MARKS THE FIRST COMMENCEMENT EVER HELD AT WILKES WHERE ITS FOUNDING FATHER, DR. EUGENE FARLEY, IS NOT PRESENT. ^{the memory of him} ALTHOUGH ~~HIS MEMORY~~ IS NOT AS SHARP OR CLEAR TO YOU AS TO MANY OTHERS OF US HERE, YOU SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT YOUR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE VISION AND SACRIFICE OF DR. FARLEY AND THE MANY MEN AND WOMEN ^{who} ~~THAT~~ SUPPORTED HIM IN THAT VISION.

THE SECOND REASON IS MORE PERSONAL. FOUR YEARS AGO I WELCOMED YOU AS FRESHMEN. THAT WAS MY FIRST OFFICIAL ACT AS PRESIDENT OF WILKES COLLEGE AFTER SUCCEEDING DR. FARLEY. ^{you and I} WE SHARED MANY HOPES AND DREAMS THAT DAY. FOUR YEARS LATER WE CAN ALL SAY WE NEVER ^{came close to imagining} ~~DREAMED OF THE~~ ^{vanity} CHALLENGES THAT WOULD FACE US. MANY DID NOT MEET THOSE CHALLENGES AND ARE NOT HERE. MANY MET THEM AND MADE DIFFICULT CHOICES THAT DIRECTED THEIR LIVES IN OTHER PATHWAYS. SOME HAVE DIED - LIKE BOBBY MCBRIDE - AND IN THEIR UNTIMELY DEATHS SHOWED US ALL OUR MORTALITY AND TAUGHT THE LESSON OF THE NEED FOR FAITH IN MAN'S IMMORTALITY. [#] WE DID NOT DREAM OF MANY OF THE CHALLENGES THAT WERE PRESENTED AND WERE MET. THE FLOOD OF JUNE 1972 POSED QUESTIONS OF THE VERY SURVIVAL OF YOUR COLLEGE. NO INSTITUTION HAD EVER SUFFERED SUCH DESTRUCTION AS WAS VISITED UPON THIS COLLEGE AND ITS COMMUNITY. ^{this area} ALL OF ~~US~~ ^{HERE}, TO THE VERY TOP OF THOSE BLEACHERS, WAS UNDER WATER JUST TWO YEARS AGO. SURVIVAL? NOT JUST SURVIVAL - BUT A RENAISSANCE OF SPIRIT RESULTED FROM THAT DISASTER. MORE WAS LEARNED ABOUT THE HUMAN SPIRIT, THE LIMITED

VALUE OF MATERIAL POSSESSIONS WHEN WEIGHED AGAINST THE HUMAN VALUES OF LOVE, COMPASSION, UNSELFISHNESS AND FRIENDSHIPS. YOU STUDENTS - OUR FACULTY - OUR ADMINISTRATORS, OUR STAFF PERSONNEL - ALL STRUGGLED, AND WORKED TO BRING YOUR COLLEGE BACK TO CONTINUE ITS MISSION. SUPPORT CAME FROM ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES ^{from} FRIENDS, ^{businesses} COMPANIES, ALUMNI - AND IN 89 DAYS - AND THESE 12 AND 14 HOUR ^{work} DAYS, EVERY DAY - ^{dormitories} ~~DORMS~~ WERE OPEN - ACADEMIC BUILDINGS FUNCTIONING - AND YOUR EDUCATION CONTINUED. SO OUR FOUR YEARS TOGETHER HAS BEEN A SERIES OF CHALLENGES - IN THE CLASSROOM - YES - BUT ALSO IN THE LESSONS AND TRIALS THAT ARE PART OF LIFE. THESE SHOULD HAVE EMPHASIZED FOR US ALL THE MARKS OF AN EDUCATED MAN - THAT THE FACULTY FORMULATED AND ADOPTED MANY YEARS AGO AS THE GOALS THEY SET FOR THEIR EFFORTS - WHAT WILKES COLLEGE HOPES TO ACHIEVE IN THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION. LET ME REVIEW THESE FOR YOU AND ASK YOU TO CONSIDER IN RETROSPECT WHAT UNDERSTANDING AND COMMITMENT YOU HAVE MADE TO BECOMING "AN EDUCATED MAN."

AN EDUCATED MAN ...

...SEEKS TRUTH, FOR WITHOUT TRUTH THERE CAN BE NO UNDERSTANDING;

...POSSESSES VISION, FOR HE KNOWS THAT VISION PRECEDES ALL GREAT ATTAINMENTS;

...IS AWARE OF THE DIVERSITY OF IDEAS AND BELIEFS THAT EXIST AMONG MEN;

...HAS FAITH IN THE POWER OF IDEALS TO SHAPE THE LIVES OF MEN;

...KNOWS THAT MAN'S PROGRESS REQUIRES INTELLECTUAL VIGOR, MORAL COURAGE, AND PHYSICAL ENDURANCE;

...CULTIVATES INNER RESOURCES AND SPIRITUAL STRENGTH,
FOR THEY ENRICH HIS DAILY LIVING AND SUSTAIN HIM IN TIMES OF CRISIS;
...HAS ETHICAL STANDARDS BY WHICH HE LIVES;
...RESPECTS THE RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS OF ALL MEN;
...PARTICIPATES CONSTRUCTIVELY IN THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC,
CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY;
...COMMUNICATES IDEAS IN A MANNER THAT ASSURES UNDER-
STANDING, FOR UNDERSTANDING UNITES MEN IN THEIR SEARCH FOR TRUTH.

IF THESE IDEALS EXPRESSED AS STATEMENTS HAVE MEANING TO YOU -
certainly
THEN YOUR YEARS AT WILKES HAVE ~~CERTAINLY~~ CHARTED NEW DIRECTIONS FOR
YOUR LIFE.

THE BACCALAUREATE IS TRADITIONALLY A SPIRITUAL CHARGE - AN
EMPHASIS PLACED ON OUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE VALUES THAT TRANS-
scholarships
CEND INTELLIGENCE AND GRADES - ~~BUT THAT~~ *values which,* IN TRUTH ARE THE GOALS WE SEEK
IN EDUCATION.

In these four years
AND SO WE MARK THE END OF OUR FOUR YEARS TOGETHER. *triumphs and tragedies,* WE SHARED
CHALLENGES TO ~~OUR~~ *TO* INTEGRITY, ~~OUR~~ AUTHORITY - EXPERIENCED THE SLANDERS
AND LIES THAT BRING PAIN - BUT ~~WE~~ *we* ALSO SHARED THE FUN - THE SUCCESSFUL
ACHIEVEMENTS - THE JOY OF A HEARTFELT "THANK YOU", AND *awareness and* THE CONFIDENCE
THAT THE FINAL JOY COMES FROM THE ABILITY TO LIVE WITH YOURSELF IN
PEACE AND WITH PERSONAL INTEGRITY. NOTHING ELSE MATTERS IF YOU CAN
COUNT ON THAT FAITH IN YOURSELF TO MEET ALL CHALLENGES THE FUTURE
MAY BRING - JUST AS WE HAVE SHARED AND MET THE MANY CHALLENGES OF THE
PAST *four years.* GOD BLESS YOU ALL *and thank you.*