

by "What America Expects of today's Youth" radio
Admiral Harold R. Stark, 1941 February 5th address

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OF
TODAY'S YOUTH

By ADMIRAL
HAROLD R. STARK
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

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ADMIRAL HAROLD R. STARK
Chief of Naval Operations

*A radio address over the Mutual
Broadcasting System upon the occasion
of the celebration of the Ninety-Fifth
Anniversary of Bucknell University.*

February 5, 1941
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania



ADMIRAL HAROLD R. STARK

PRESIDENT MARTS' INTRODUCTION OF ADMIRAL STARK

OUR first speaker will be Admiral Stark, the top-ranking officer of the greatest navy in the world. He is a warm friend of Bucknell; on the campus of our Bucknell Junior College at Wilkes-Barre stands a beautiful building as a memorial to his sister, Mrs. Ellen Stark Chase. Admiral Stark is a warm-hearted friend of *all* youth. America is fortunate in having at the head of our Navy an officer who is not only a genius of naval strategy, but who also understands the human qualities of the men and boys who man our great naval machine and who knows that *their* courage and *spirit* are the *real* power of the American Navy. In the studio with Admiral Stark at the nation's capital, are Dr. Eugene Farley, Director of Bucknell Junior College, and many Bucknellians of Washington and vicinity who are celebrating Bucknell's 95th Anniversary.

I am proud to present the Chief of Naval Operations. You will now hear Admiral Harold R. Stark, speaking from Washington.



OLD MAIN — BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY,
LEWISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

WHAT AMERICA EXPECTS OF TODAY'S YOUTH

by ADMIRAL HAROLD R. STARK

PRESIDENT MARTS and gentlemen of Bucknell University, and your guests:

I regret I could not have joined with you in your anniversary celebration in New York tonight, but I do consider it a great honor to be asked by you to speak on the theme you have chosen, namely:

"What America Expects of Today's Youth"

I have spent most of my life at sea, working with young men drawn from the length and breadth of our land. For these young men the Navy demands the best in materiel, that science, research, and mechanical ingenuity can devise; but the Navy realizes that even more important than materiel, is the character of the youth who make up its fighting strength, where discipline, cheerful obedience, intelligence, sound bodies and wholesome minds are essential to the individual and to the team play required.

Recent history gives merciless proof that any country which makes ready **ONLY** for material defense is preparing itself for defeat. Hope of security also demands the upbuilding of national character into more heroic stature.

We talk much of our material production, of bottle-necks, strikes, etc., — We have need also to check up on our *spiritual progress* — our *National character*.

The character of our youth is the bed rock upon which the Country must build for the future. It will always constitute our first great line of defense.

If we are to depend on our youth to carry on and maintain those things which are dear to us, we must give them an ideal.

Youth is a time for ideals and if these ideals are to endure they must be sound, must inspire faith and allegiance, must command loyalty. If they do this, then the running start which youth gets in its teens and early twenties will serve as a firm foundation which will guide them aright in the confused issues of the present day, and the tougher days ahead.

I cannot help contrasting, for a moment, youth's situation today with what I faced in my school days.

In those days, there was a reasonable measure of security in the world. The father of a family could lay down general directives for his children based on his own years of experience and observations in a world fairly well stabilized. He could plan for their careers and make provisions for their guidance. A young fellow plotted his future, with some certainty that, granted good behavior and average good fortune, he could steer the course he had set for himself.

It is not that way now. The world is not secure any more, in anything. Social revolution, and industrial

revolution, and new ideologies have precipitated vast social and military convulsions and are now tearing the old world to pieces, and threatening the democratic institutions of the Western Hemisphere.

In our own Country, we face great uncertainties, and more disturbing dangers, than ever confronted our fathers. The events in Europe and Asia and Africa, and the measures for security which we in our Republic are now taking, will affect, in one way or another, the life of every person alive today in this Country.

No one can tell just what the future holds. But it must be plain to all of us that in these times, and in more critical times to come, every American must be prepared to sacrifice for the common good.

Some undoubtedly will have the privilege and the honor of serving our Country in arms. All, in whatever work engaged, will find a large proportion of their energies diverted, directly or indirectly, to National, rather than to individual needs. All must hold themselves ready to meet this changed life with courage, and to give the best that is in them for our Country and all that we hold dear.

In times like these, people want something to hold to, something that stands firm in a changing world. And, therefore, I am going to ask you to think about character; to think about the age old fundamental human virtues of courage, loyalty, perseverance, generosity, sacrifice, initiative, enthusiasm, the Golden Rule, common sense, and hard work. These are the elemental

things that make character. They were good when man did his fighting with bows and arrows. They are good now, in the vast complexity of modern life.

We live in the machine age but if all the power plants go out, and all the gadgets cease to function, we will still be men and women, and it is *character* upon which we will stand or fall.

If we are to expect much of youth we must give them much in their early training. The all encompassing great essential is character and if our youth have that, and love of Country, they will give what America expects, that is, continuance and security of those things which have made us great as a nation, and which, if guarded, will make us greater — and preserve our way of life.

Our way of life is not something static. It is something adaptable to changing conditions as time goes on. But, its foundation of freedom, individual initiative, equal opportunity, freedom of speech, the Bill of Rights, the obligation of the individual, self-discipline, fair play, and a square deal, are as important now as when our forefathers fought and won them for us in 1776.

Our way of life will continue, *only* if our youth and the oncoming generations believe in it. Therefore, that way of life must be the beacon light whose path shines out as so much brighter, so much better and richer,

than any other way, that our youth will be willing to give their all to see that it endures.

Abraham Lincoln referred to America as:

"The last great hope on earth."

To help nurture and sustain that hope, I should like to see hanging in every school and in every college and in every home of the United States, the American's Creed, so forcefully and beautifully written by William Tylor Page:

"I believe in the United States of America as a Government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a Republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign states; a perfect Union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my Country to love it; to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag; and to defend it against all enemies."

What a Nation this would be if every boy and girl were reared with an intense loyalty to that Creed — a loyalty that would carry on through life.

I previously mentioned loyalty and courage and some of the elemental points of character — I should like to touch on just a few of them very briefly — they are

simple to comprehend, but difficult to stick to unless and until solidly welded into character.

I shall speak of *Courage* first: It is a military virtue, but it has a wider application. It is the thing that stiffens your backbone when you are afraid — afraid of being hurt, afraid of tomorrow, afraid of failure, afraid of being afraid. Courage is more than the absence of fear.

To set one's course, and to follow it, regardless of personal consequence, that is courage.

As for *Loyalty*: The loyal man serves; he does not merely follow his own impulses. This is well exemplified in one of the greater social passions such as patriotism. It fixes our attention upon a cause, bids us look outside ourselves to serve that cause, makes it one of the keystones of our life, our will, our devotion. It comes first, regardless of strain or labor; it sacrifices in the service of the ideal.

Loyalty means "Giving one's self to the cause, and the art of giving is learned by giving."

Perseverance is the ability to take it when it hurts — to hang on when 'twould be so easy to quit. It is refusal to be licked. It was exemplified when John Paul Jones with his ship apparently hopelessly beaten, was called upon to surrender, and replied: "I've not yet begun to fight."

Sacrifice — I like to think of this all essential virtue in the words of the late Theodore Roosevelt, who said: "There never was a *SERVICE* worth rendering that did not entail sacrifice — and no man renders the

highest service if he thinks over much of the sacrifices—".

Common Sense — is the capacity to see and take things in their right light. It is the exercise of sound judgment. It is the saving salt of realism. It looks facts squarely in the face and deals with them according to the means at hand. It cuts the cloth to suit the garment.

There is no substitute for common sense — nor is there any for *hard work*.

Some of the other homely virtues that go to make up character are: generosity, tolerance, charity, patience, kindness, courtesy, the Golden Rule, giving of one's self to help another, looking for the good rather than the bad — realizing that there is a "Window in every life if we can only open it", remembering that it takes only a moment to administer a rebuke but a long time to forget it.

Youth is born with certain tendencies but their character is something which they make themselves as they go along — and it is by their character that their associates will judge them. It is by their character that they will succeed or fail.

If, in their bringing up, youth are indulged in the soft ways of life they will ultimately fail; and the Nation with them.

There can be no compromise between *self-indulgence* and *self-preservation*.

Last year a young man asked me if a conscientious hard-working person could reach the top without influ-



CHASE HALL AT BUCKNELL JUNIOR COLLEGE,
WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

ence, or, as he put it, "pull". I told him, "Yes". "Pull", which is to say favorable influence exerted at critical times, has its place in human affairs — but the best that "Pull" ever does is to get a man an opportunity. It can't do his job for him. If his character doesn't lift him through, the influence is wasted and the opportunity will go to the next man.

The uncertainty, the insecurity in the world of today, will not appear so disturbing to the present generation as to the older one because youth of the present day are being brought up in its atmosphere, and it may be that they are fortunate.

The calls that will be made upon them will stimulate their energies and draw from them qualities that they may not even know they possess.

Their forefathers won the things that have made the American way of life, by *self-denial*, by *hard work in peace*, and by *hard fighting in war*.

If our youth have the traits of character I have touched upon, and I have an abiding faith that they have — they will maintain our way of life at all costs.

The youth of this generation will bear a heavy share, for they not only have to deal with the uncertain present, but also with the more uncertain future.

They may be proud that their generation has the opportunity to serve in such a critical period in the world's history.

If their actions are directed by courage, armored with hope, sustained by determination, enthusiasm, and the

will to sacrifice and the will to win, our Country will have nothing to fear from any enemy, within or without, and they will justify their lives and their heritage, and will carry forward.

In the successful accomplishment of difficult tasks youth will also gain the greatest of all treasures, — that inner reward that comes only from difficult tasks — *WELL DONE.*





