

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, March 31, 1964

This marks a first in my life. The first honorary degree I ever received!

We flew to Austin and then got on a Press plane, a rather rickety old plane, with some 15 or so members of the Press, Bess and I, and arrived at Denton at 10 o'clock where we were met by Dr. Gwynn, President of TWU, and Winifred Jones (Mrs. John T. Jones) who is chairman of the Board of Regents. It was a bright, warm, sunny Texas day, the sort that made me wish that we were going to stay at home longer.

We drove to the Administration building, across a campus dotted with red ^{bud} ~~wood~~ trees, went in and donned the black robe and the mortar board hat, and then lined up for the convocation.

John and Nellie had come up for the affair, and I walked down Redbud Lane between Dr. Gwynn and John, to the main auditorium where the honorary degree was to be conferred.

The road was lined with students, ^I with cameras, many of them waved and smiled, and for once, ^I I felt a little uncertain of how to respond. The black robe rather inhibited me.

There are 3200 students on the campus from 25 different nations and there was a goodly sprinkling of the brilliant costumes of Korea, Pakistan, Japan.

Inside the auditorium, on the stage, I found myself seated beside

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, March 31, 1964

Page 2

Dr. Gwenn, John, regents of the University, ^aRagen Houston, /John Hazelwood, Mrs. Randall Jackson, and Mrs. H. J. L^utcher Starke, also a member of the board of Regents and the first person to receive an honorary degree from the institution.

Nellie was on the stage, and Mrs. John Jones was by my side all the time. Happily enough, my part of the program came very early, Mrs. Jones introduced me, with very considerable poise and authority. I envied her. She placed the purple hood of the Honorary Doctor of Laws degree around my neck, I received a handsomely illuminted diploma, which was read by the President, Dr. John Gwenn, and a framed, hand-lettered scroll which endowed me with infinitely more graces and contributions to mankind than I have any right to.

And then I made my 13 or 14 minute response. The main theme of it was "You were born at the right time. This is a good time to be alive. This is a good time to be a woman, because this is the period in history of mankind ¹exceeded not even by the Rennaissance ¹when there is much happening and more potential good can happen. And it is a good time because never before have there been such opportunities unlimited, ²for you to help it happen."

And then I made a reference to the 93 women whom Lyndon has appointed since January 1st to jobs, including two Ambassadorships, and the first women

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, March 31, 1964

Page 3

member of the Atomic Energy Commission. — Dr. Mary Bunting of Radcliffe from their own society of the learned.

Out front, I faced the faculty that had marched in the processional with us... On the left a goodly portion of the Texas House of Representatives and Senate, who had come up for the occasion and very flattering it was, indeed, to me.)

And right behind the faculty, the graduating class of this year. There were quite a few members of the state Democratic Executive Committee, including Nancy Negley, the ^{Gene} Jean Lockes, ^a Frank Erwins, and lots of friends who had just come up for the occasion. — Ann Clark, Dolly Bolton, Kathleen Fisher. I would be cold and unfeeling indeed, if I weren't really thrilled that such an occasion was all prepared for me, and if I failed to say so.

The first honorary degree I've ever received, and one of the nicest little parts about it was that my part of the program was over soon! I could sit down and relax and listen and John, and thank heavens I had at the last minute, remembered to insert in my small words of greeting, my very earnest acclaim for John. — That he was a wonderful example of the transfer of leadership from campus to the government, and that how natural as well as foresighted that he should make education a top priority of Texas business.

John, without notes, and looking so handsome, he could really have gotten by with saying the A, B, C's, made an eloquent speech with some dear things about me, but the line that I liked best was, "Married to a man,

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, March 31, 1964

Page 4

born to leadership and decision, 'I expect his coming and Nellie's coming was planned as something of an answer to the newspapers, and the would-be trouble makers and divisive forces, in saying our friendship has cooled these last few months.

I don't need to be reassured, but knowing how much I appreciated having him there, will serve to remind me that sometime I am doing the same sort of thing for other people, when I attend their big day.

After the convocation, I had a chance back stage, in the Green Room of the main auditorium, to meet a few of the students... The President of the University student council, a group of foreign students.

Then we went to Hubbard Hall for the luncheon, to which all the out of town guests had been invited, and a representative number of students. And once more, I was aware about what a great deal of trouble they had gone to. Little souvenirs had mocking birds on them, and were charmingly lettered. It was a delicious but very heavy lunch, going from shrimp cocktail to filet mignon, to frozen fruit salad, strawberry Romanoff, and reminding me after all, that this is a woman's school, and very well known for its courses in Home Economics.

Right behind us, at a focal point, was an enormous great seal of the State of Texas, there were yellow roses everywhere, there were even make-believe yellow roses in the potted trees beside the door that were used as decorations. And then, as luncheon went along, there was a delightful

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, March 31, 1964

Page 5

series of gifts. A girl from my home town of Harrison^[County], Mary Lynn Drosseau presented me with some handcrafted gifts, a necklace for me and some LBJ cuff links for Lyndon.

The Young Democrats Club, represented by Jeff Crosslyn, gave me a bouquet of roses; there were water color paintings for Nellie and for Mrs. Preston Smith; and cuff links for Lt. Governor Smith.

But the most hilarious moment of the day, was when a very pretty little girl, and incidentally each one of these young students who got up and made these presentations, was well dressed, poised, well spoken and one of the prettiest, was this Karen Russell, from Floresville, John's home town, who got up to make the presentation to John. "We hope," said Karen, "that this set of handcuffs - ah - ah - ah, I mean this pair of handcuffs - ah - ah - I mean these cufflinks, will bring happy thoughts to you of this memorable occasion." Everybody roared, but in perfect good humor. And the little girl had no reason to feel bad about it, because actually she stole the show. John, quick on the trigger, and a southern gentleman, responded, "I shall remember this memorable day, and I think that you'll remember it to, but don't be upset Miss Russell, because of your little mistake. I wouldn't mind a bit being handcuffed to Texas Woman's University."

After lunch, we had a tour of the campus, beginning with the little chapel in the woods, for which I have a feeling of nostalgia because I have seen a picture of it hanging in Jesse's office, all my life, it seems.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, March 31, 1964

Page 6

It was built during the early days of the NYA, although I think it was probably just on paper, when Lyndon, himself, left the NYA. But after all, I took a little credit for my speech. Dedicated by Mrs. Roosevelt, and with charming, stained glass windows, designed by the students themselves, to represent all the different Arts that they learned there. . . Nursing, Music, teaching,

Then we went to see a most unusual experiment. Dr. Pauline Mock, has a laboratory in which she is conducting an experiment for NASA, on whether and how much the human body loses calcium when it is totally inactive. She had four young men, volunteer guinea pigs for the experiment, lying in hospital beds, where they would remain for a period of two weeks. I don't know how they consumed their meals, because they were never even supposed to lift their head from the pillow. . . I guess through straws, and something as soft as gruel. They looked at TV through some sort of prismatic lenses, where they could see lying flat on their backs.

The calcium loss of course, is measured by what comes out ^[...] urine and excreta, and it is enough to induce weakness, even bone damage over an extended period of time. There is a theory that the condition of weightlessness adds to this, and therefore it may be a sizeable peril to astronauts and we must learn how to overcome it by diet.

Dr. Mark is a formidable looking old lady, some 70 I believe, and

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, March 31, 1964

Page 7

Dr. Gwen n told me that during the 14 years or so that she has been with TWU, she had brought in her wake, ^gother scientists, doctors, some endowments, and thus had added greatly to the prestige of TWU.

From there we went to see the Art exhibit, no landscapes and almost no portraits, just brilliant splashes of color, sometimes very beautiful color, in futuristic pattern.

We left Denton a little past three o'clock, after five very eventful hours there, flew back to Bergstrom, Lyndon had arrived five minutes before, we got on his plane, and do I notice the difference between a rather junky chartered plane and Air Force One! . . .

Had drinks and dinner, a chance to turn my mind toward what must be happening to Lynda and Luci in Washington.

It's the afternoon that Erich Leinsdorf is coming down, bringing 36 of his musicians, ⁴the Boston Symphony Orchestra, ^gto present a program of all Strauss for 200 young guests, the teenage children from Embassy row. The first time such a program is going to be televised by NBC.

Later on I learned everything went delightfully. Luci made a little speech, welcoming everybody and introducing Erich Leinsdorf. I expect this is our outstanding event in the music world, ^gof our first four months, and I am so pleased to be able to offer it to the youngsters.

Bess said later, that they all looked delightful in their native costumes, especially the fragile, silken girls from Asia. And I read in Marie Smith's column, ^gthat Luci Baines had made her way completely around the room,

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, March 31, 1964

Page 8

stopping to chat to groups as she went along. I'm so glad of that, I want her to learn to do her part, both to share and enjoy, and to fulfill her duties. I don't believe she's in any danger of becoming unduly crushed by this job. For instance, she stopped and chatted with the reporters and said this, "I don't really realize I'm a President's daughter, and that I represent American youth. If I did, I would go out of my mind trying to represent the best of the American youth." She said she thinks it's best to be yourself, even if you sometimes make mistakes, as I may be doing right now, talking to you. // She also said, when asked about her school work, "I am basically interested in science. I'd like to be a laboratory technician, but you know there are the haves and the have nots, I'm among the have nots, scholastically." Bless that little lamb's heart, she is improving and she stands a good chance of making all "C"s this session.

We got back to the south lawn, about 9 o'clock, to be greeted by some snow still on the ground, by Him and Her, ^garing at the end of their chain, and Lynda, Luci and Warrie Lynn, waiting for us eagerly.