

Office of the Press Secretary to  
Mrs. Johnson

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TEXT OF REMARKS BY MRS. LYNDON B.  
JOHNSON AT CONVOCATION, TEXAS  
WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY, ON RECEIPT OF  
DOCTOR OF LAWS DEGREE, MARCH 31,  
1964

President Guinn, Mrs. Jones, members of Board of Regents, of the faculty, the alumnae and student body, I am deeply grateful for the honor you have paid me today. Receiving this degree -- the first honorary one I ever had -- gives me special satisfaction for many reasons because of the spirit in which it has been so generously bestowed. Then quite frankly, it is very nice to receive a degree without taking the exams.

I feel a special nostalgic pride in coming here too -- and if you indulge me -- I will tell you why.

Across the way, there is the chapel in the woods which has been such a part of the life of this college for a quarter of a century. But it was the part of many other lives, too.

A tall and enthusiastic friend of mine had a hand in it. As the state director of the NYA, at a time when our Nation was broke, he helped get boys off boxcars and set them to work building the chapel and other structures like it around this State -- a chapel by young people for young people.

You could see before your eyes what you were able to do. But that experience made a lasting impression.

Looking at you, I am mindful of the aims of this University and I can see that these aims have noble emissaries in you. We need expanding horizons for a great growing State, a State I am always proud to call home.

It has been many years since I walked through the groves of academe. Like you, I carried my books and my dreams. As a young woman, reared to respect knowledge and eager for its enriching gifts, I stood, as you do now, on the threshold of opportunity. It gives me a very warm and reassuring feeling to realize that so many of you are ready to seize this opportunity. As graduates of Texas Woman's University, you will do so with practiced skill. You will have the advantages that disciplined minds and a good grasp of the tools of learning can give one.

On occasions like this, the years between touch us lightly -- with all the happy omens and the important events which broadened our worlds. I remember so well that terrific sense of adventure that I felt driving from my own small world of Karnack, Texas to Austin to enroll in the University. It seemed all the gates of the world were swinging open.

That is the feeling of great adventure which you have today. The future of young women like you looms bright. Your horizons are not finite. You were born at the right time. It is a good time to be a woman. It is a good time to be alive.

It is a good time to be a woman because this is a period in the history of mankind, exceeded not even by the renaissance, when there is much

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happening and more potential good can happen.

It is a good time to be a woman because never have there been such opportunities unlimited for you to help it happen.

We've conquered so much in technology. We've learned to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter with a minimum of time and a minimum of energy.

What we haven't learned is how to get along together. Technology can be the prop -- the aid -- but it still is the human machine -- the mind and the heart of each individual -- which spells success or failure in this. It is a good time to be a woman because there are so many roads to take.

Two recent experiences have brought me in contact with the broad range of fields open to women.

One evening in Greece, where I went to attend the funeral of King Paul, I spent some time with several American women at the United States Embassy, and I was conscious of how many were holding really important jobs in the political and economic sections of our Embassy.

Fresh out of their colleges and universities, they'd attended the Foreign Service Institute, boned up on languages, taken the exams, and today -- we depend very much on them to know the score and to give a first rate performance for our country.

Just last week I spent a day in Huntsville, Alabama, at the gigantic Marshall Space Flight Center -- the birth place of the Saturn.

Walking through those tremendous fabricating rooms where the parts of the vehicle which will one day carry us to the moon were being tested, I met women ranging from a 70 year old lady who is a draftsman to a young University of Alabama chemist who is literally spinning from air the polyesters which will line our moon rocket.

I mention these two because they are fresh in my memory. And because they illustrate how much women are doing to turn hand and brain for our national destiny.

Your own future looms bright. On graduation day, you will find the world beckoning you to the textile company in Dallas, the hospital in Oklahoma, the Apollo Center in Houston.

One measure of the success of a university is how it gives itself to the needs of its area. The job opportunities awaiting you graduates prove this University has met the test.

Before you is a wide range of selectivity which no other generation has had.

We here in our little corner of the world, in our little crowded hour of history, are not alone in our rising status. Of the 112 member nations of the United Nations, 95 have granted full and equal political rights to women. And, the country does not exist, however remote, where you are without the revolution of rising expectations of women.

I think women want to help their countries find the way to peace more than ever before. And that is why I hope we in this country -- you in this audience -- more fortunate than any women in any nation in the world will not settle for less than all your talents demand.

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Perhaps you know the lines from Robert Frost:

"Two roads emerged in a wood and I  
took the one less traveled by,  
and that made all the difference."

Let your reach exceed your grasp always. And make your little plot in this world whether it is in Athens, Texas or Athens, Greece, greener because you walked there.

Every university belongs to a great tradition which teaches us that the world of scholarship must be guided by higher ideals than prevail in the world of affairs. But, a university is unworthy of its mission if it is content to be a remote shrine of learning, untouched by the cares and responsibilities of ordinary life.

In this country, we have come to depend on our universities for the scientists who will keep us first in the space age, for the business executives who will keep our national economy vibrant and progressive, and for the officials of government who will exert an indispensable influence in the development of national policy.

There is also a direct and urgent responsibility on every university graduate, no matter what her position may be, to remain faithful to the standards and ideals taught us at the university. We have long passed the time in the United States when men alone could be summoned to great duties. In almost every sphere, the influence of women is constantly growing, and with the downfall of ancient prejudices, it will be hard to set a limit to the achievements and opportunities that await our women graduates. May they always provide an example of responsible citizenship, shrinking from no burden that is essential to the advancement of our national welfare, but imposing no burden on anyone else that can be removed by foresight and cooperation.

What all of us can do, each in her own degree, is to dedicate ourselves to the high ideals of citizenship enshrined in the university tradition and resolve that we will never depart from that inspiration. Then will the university remember its children with gratitude and the country will remember its citizens with honor.

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