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REMARKS BY MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS EX-STUDENTS ASSOCIATION  
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AWARDS BANQUET

Governor Connally and Distinguished Guests:

This is a proud moment for me and the thing that makes me proudest is the fact that this honor comes from the Ex-Students' Association of my own University.

It is my University, because the University of Texas always has been, and always must be, a highly personal experience to every student. Each of us who has spent time on the Forty Acres left with a sense of allegiance -- a legacy of "it belongs to me" -- that the years do not dissolve.

The University was mine in the days of the Depression, when old B Hall and the venerable Women's Building were campus landmarks and Dillingham's Pasture, Mount Bonnell and Bull Creek Road were scenic delights every student knew. Our student body was small by today's standards, and we came mostly from small towns all over Texas. But we counted ourselves fortunate that we could study with a faculty that boasted such intellectual giants as Dr. Bob Montgomery, Dr. Walter Prescott Webb, and J. Frank Dobie.

What did the University mean to me, a student from a very small town in deep East Texas? It seemed then -- and it still seems now -- that all of the doors of the world suddenly swung open to me. Here I discovered that college is only the beginning of learning, and that one new horizon only opens the door to still another.

By chance, I took a Geology course and my whole perspective of the life of man on this physical planet was stretched and broadened. It happened that I minored in philosophy which, for me, was not an ivory tower sort of subject, but a new yardstick by which I could measure and try to understand the differing values mankind has used during the centuries of his existence. And, very happily, I majored in history -- which gave me a background of irreplaceable value in measuring these few decades I have lived through, and shall hopefully live through, in our country.

And then, because I liked the University so much, I stayed on and took another Degree -- a Bachelor of Journalism. I don't think I need to tell you the many ways I have found that useful in the years since, although I find myself on the other end of the pencil from the reporter.

Why am I being personal? Because to each of us who went here, the University of Texas is, I believe, an intensely personal experience. And, because even though my own college days are long past now, my interest in this University is not. As I meet visitors to the White House, and as I travel about this country and the world, I hear about what other colleges and universities are doing and I am grateful for the contribution they are making for the benefit of all of us. And yet I must confess that my mind always turns back to Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar and his rather Jehovian phrase, "There shall be established a university of the first class ...", and I measure my University against the standard he laid down.

Not long ago, at the White House, I heard the head of a great Eastern university outline what he believed to be the role of a state university in its state and its community. He told how such a university studies the economics of the state and its industrial muscles and tries to determine how it can best fit its students to live in, and carry forward, the economy of the area in which they will live and work.

I go to the University of Oklahoma's Kellogg Institute and hear the statement by a high official that everybody with a professional degree who has been out of school for more than ten years is out of date in his profession. And so, Oklahoma invites these alumni back for summer seminars lasting from two weeks to two months to take courses that range from how to sell real estate to the latest methods in the profession of dentistry, because that university wants to bring these adult members of society abreast of the new frontiers in their fields.

The University of California, through vacation camps operated by its alumni association, provides its graduates with an opportunity to take non-credit courses in music and painting and some of the cultural things they may have missed while working toward a specific degree. And Radcliffe College, aware that educational institutions today have a continuing obligation to their alumni, offers a course that shows a 45 year-old graduate who wants to get back into the labor market how to refresh her skills.

I am glad to read in the ALCALDE that our own Ex-Students' Association is converting a Hill County dude ranch into an off-campus continuing education center where University of Texas alumni can have some of these opportunities.

Rather possessively and in a proprietary fashion, I want to see this University excel in all things. And I am grateful, as I know all Texans are, that Governor John Connally is giving to Texas education at all levels the kind of leadership that is needed if we are to have not only a University of the first class, but first class schools from kindergarten through college. The report of the Governor's Committee on Education Beyond the High School is a blueprint for excellence unlike any document ever presented Texas before, and I hope that we all will work hard to make suggestions a reality.

The University of Texas is more than just a good school. As I travel this land and visit other campuses, I am proud when educators tell me that my University already is one of the best and is constantly becoming even better. Great forward strides are being made here and even greater achievements are to come, and all of us who are Texas Exes can be proud of that.

There are 24,000 students now where there were only 5,000 when I was on the campus. For them, and for all of the thousands that will follow in the decades to come, I want my University to be the sort of place that it was for me -- where all the doors of the world swing open.

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