

Canisius  
Canisius College  
Speech

URGENT

5/15/14

Type & Send a  
copy to the  
College as soon  
as possible

5/15  
Eric  
Port

① ~~ATTENDING: JUST A SCOTT~~ BEAUTIFUL CAMPUS  
② ~~CHANGING SUBJECTS~~ PROFESSIONAL PRESIDENT  
I know that Commencement is one of the most cherished traditions on this campus.

And it's a very special honor for me to be with you today.

BUT I ALSO CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ARE HERE TO SEE THE GRADUATES NOT TO LISTEN TO A SPEECH

IN FACT - COMMENCEMENTS <sup>speeches</sup> ARE - I SUSPECT - AMONG THE LEAST REMEMBERED MESSAGES ON EARTH

AND I'M EMBARRASSED TO CONFESS THAT I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER WHO SPOKE AT MY COMMENCEMENT

LET ALONE RECALLING WHAT HE SAID

I'M JUST ASSUMING IT WAS A "HE"

~~SPEAKERS TYPICALLY / LEARNED A LOT ABOUT HUMANITY~~  
~~BE - ADDRESS HERE: MESSAGE FROM THE~~

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WELL -

HAVING PUT THE SIGNIFICANCE  
OF MY OWN PARTICIPATION IN PERSPECTIVE

LET ME CONFESS TO THE GRADUATES THIS  
MORNING  
THAT I HAVE BUT ONE MESSAGE TO CONVEY.

MY CONCERN IS THIS:

- I URGENTLY HOPE THAT YOUR EDUCATION  
HAS PREPARED YOU FOR PRODUCTIVE WORK
- I ALSO HOPE THAT - IN THE PROCESS -  
YOU HAVE GAINED A WORLD PERSPECTIVE  
AND DISCOVERED YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIP  
TO THE PLANET EARTH.

MY CONCERN ABOUT THE "BREADTH"  
OF COLLEGE EDUCATION  
WAS DEEPEINED SEVERAL YEARS AGO

WHILE  
~~WHEN~~ I WAS SHUFFLING THROUGH  
MY 3RD CLASS MAIL

~~STANFORD STUDENT~~  
THE STANFORD STUDENT NEWSPAPER NOTED  
THAT THAT  
INSTITUTION  
WAS PREPARING  
A REQUIRED COURSE  
IN WESTERN CIV.

In response to student  
EDITORIAL said that

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~~One morning several years ago while going through my  
3rd Class Mail - Stanford student newspaper.~~

"This new report proposes to remove from  
students the right to choose for themselves.

This is not to deny that courses in Western Civilization  
University are valuable but to require students  
to take a course, carries a strong illiberal  
connotation."

It imposes a uniform standard on non uniform people.

Frankly: I was startled by that statement.

It struck me as a staggering comment on our time that  
this student after 15 years of formal education,

- o rejected the idea of relationships and  
failed to understand that a search for  
our common heritage is in no way to be  
confused with something he called  
"uniformity."

This incident vividly revealed to me one of the tragedies  
of our time.

- o Somehow our notion of intellectual and  
cultural "connectedness" has snapped.
- o Somehow we ~~have lost touch~~ <sup>lost touch</sup> with our heritage  
and we do not ~~understand~~ <sup>and we have failed to emphasize</sup> our interdependence  
on each other.

SOMEHOW -

OUR NOTION OF INTELLECTUAL  
AND CULTURAL "CONNECTEDNESS"  
HAS SHAPED.

SOMEHOW.

OUR SCHOOLS HAVE FAILED  
ADEQUATELY TO TEACH  
OUR COMMON HERITAGE

AND - IN THE PROCESS -  
THIS INTELLECTUAL NARROWNESS  
AND PERSONAL SELF INDULGENCE  
HAS LEFT US FRIGHTENLY IGNORANT  
ABOUT EACH OTHER  
AND ABOUT OUR PLANET  
EARTH

- Today less than 1% of the college students are enrolled in any course on international affairs
- College enrollments in foreign language have dropped 40% in 7 years

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(in the process) - 2 - intellectual verbal  
 And this ~~isolation~~ narrowness and self-indulgence has also left us frightfully ignorant about our planet Earth.

o Today less than one percent of the college-age group is enrolled in any course which specifically features contemporary international affairs.

o College enrollments in foreign languages ~~are~~ <sup>have dropped</sup> off 40 percent in the last seven years.

o A recent national survey revealed that, even after President Carter gave his speech on energy, only <sup>me</sup> half of the public surveyed -- 52 percent to be precise -- even knew that America had to import oil from abroad.

o In recent years fifty percent of all twelfth-graders studied in a recent survey could not choose correctly an Arab country out of four choices they were given,

o and 40 percent of these twelfth-graders thought that Golda Meir rather than Anwar Sadat was president of Egypt.

Last year during TV coverage of the Sadat-Begin discussions, which, incidentally, were interspersed with coverage of the Chicago Bears football game

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- o ~~three~~ out of every four spectators interviewed at half time had never heard of Sadat or Begin,
- o but were all aware of the prowess of local hero, Walter Patton.

Recently while flying from New Orleans to Orlando, I read in the morning paper, the New Orleans Picayune

- o that University of California scientists had now concluded
- o that the earth's ozone band is being harmed by contaminants at twice the rate predicted earlier.
- o I thought it symbolic of our time that this important story -- perhaps a life-or-death story -- was reported in a single paragraph buried deep in section II.

o o o

Environmentalists are fond of talking about the "vulnerability" of our "ecosystem"

- o but I suspect that because of ignorance, it is "our own" life system, which may be most fragile and most threatened.

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Lewis Thomas, that marvelous science writer, in his remarkable book The Lives of a Cell, said,

o "It is illusion to think that there's anything fragile about the life of earth; surely this is the toughest membrane imaginable in the universe.

o We, the human species, are the delicate part, transient and vulnerable as cilia."

And yet with all our vulnerability

o we have assumed that in the name of something we call "progress," we could move ahead without understanding our connectedness to each other and to nature.

o And we have assumed that we could do so without understanding there is a "negative" price to pay.

In the social world as in the physical world there is no free ride;

o for every action there is an equal and equivalent reaction which inevitably must be faced.

o ~~There~~ <sup>the bomb</sup> may be a "delayed" ~~time bomb~~, but the equation somehow, sometime, will be balanced.



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Recently in my own office

I've developed a little tactic ~~in my office~~ which has temporarily stopped us cold. Whenever I get a proposition which someone says will improve the system, I send it back and say, "Give me the negative side of your assumed progress." What's the price we pay -- It may be worth it of course. - BUT THERE WILL BE TRADE OFF TO BE SURE

For generations we have assumed that we can gain and never lose. The assumption is false.

## II

But enough of these gloomy observations.

I believe that once again a new "sense of urgency" is beginning to emerge.

- o We are beginning to recognize that the human race is expanding at the rate of 200,000 people every day -- 73 million people every year.

Painfully we are now reminded

- o that our gas pumps are somehow connected to the Middle East;
- o that American industry is almost wholly dependent on foreign sources for chromium, for cobalt, for bauxite, for magnesium, and for tin;

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- o that 40 to 95 percent of our precious metals are imported from Third World countries;
- o that about one-third of the profits of American corporations come from exports or from foreign investments;
- o that one out of every six factory workers in this country is making something ~~for~~ *to send ahead* ~~home~~;
- o and that two million Americans are employed in foreign trade.

o o o

We are beginning to comprehend the fact that a child born today into a world of four billion people will, if he attains age 60, be sharing the earth with three times as many human beings.

Yogie Berra, that great American philosopher, said on one occasion, you can do a lot of observing by just watching.

And I suggest you can gain a lot of wisdom by discovering the unity of our world

- o not just in a physical sense
- o but in a social sense as well.

⑨

In a monograph published by the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, Robert Muller said

o "A child born today . . . will be both an actor and a beneficiary or a victim in the total world fabric and he may rightly ask,

o 'Why was I not warned?

o Why was I not better educated? Why did

my teachers not tell me about these problems and indicate my behavior as a member of an interdependent human race?"

To be specific:

I believe ~~classroom teachers~~ <sup>colleges, ~~university~~ ~~high school~~</sup> ~~do have an obligation to~~ <sup>not release the moral</sup> educate children about our interdependent world, so the <sup>shaking</sup> surprises in later life may at least be modestly reduced. <sup>as much</sup>

o o o

It's time to

o To be still more specific, our schools and colleges ~~should~~ <sup>to</sup> give a new priority to science

o ~~Emphasizing~~ <sup>we should have</sup> not just basic scientific principles <sup>a well</sup> but emphasizing also the way science and technology now shape our world.

If Three Mile Island taught us anything at all it taught us how ignorant we are.

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DURING That crisis  
we heard in the news about

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~~We were introduced to a whole new set of vocabulary words,~~  
like rems, containments, and cold shutdowns, which were for  
most of us a foreign language.

Three Mile Island also taught us we cannot trust "PR"  
promoters who in times of crisis seem more concerned with  
image than with truth.

~~I BELIEVE THAT SOMEHOW ALL THIS RELATES TO EDUCATION~~  
Students must learn more about the world we have created

In 8,

o so that our society will be driven more  
by understanding than by fear.

o And so that we will be better able to  
decide the awesome moral choices which  
must be made.

Several months ago <sup>Sesame Street</sup> Joan Ganz Cooney, the National  
Science Foundation, and I announced a new television program,  
which will focus on "science" technology and the  
environment.

o It's going to be targeted to junior high  
school children, 10 to 12.

o It's going to be offered in the middle of  
the school day so it can be shown in class-  
rooms.

o And it will be offered in the late afternoon  
and evenings so parents and children can  
watch it.

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We're also financing ~~the preparation of~~ teaching materials -- teachers' guides and student materials --

- o so that what is presented on TV with all of the power and imagination it can provide can also have followup studies which only classroom teachers can do well.

Incidentally, Joan sent me some disturbing findings the other day.

In doing some of their preproduction research -- they tried to find out what understanding junior high school students have about their world.

She found that some children when asked,

- o "Where does electricity come from?" said "the switch."
- o When asked, "Where does the water come from?" they said "the faucet."
- o "Where does the garbage go?" You guessed it . . . "down the chute."

A bit humorous, perhaps, but startling in ~~that we have~~ <sup>as well</sup> ~~increasingly~~ <sup>WE HAVE</sup> developed a culture in which we ~~are limited~~ in our sense of "connectedness" ~~to~~ that which we can see, and feel, and touch.

you about a  
far

not just to acquire knowledge) but

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III  
BUT IN THE END WE NEED MORE THAN  
Again we must begin to learn more about the world  
science and technology has created. SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

But scientific knowledge is not enough.

The goal must be to ~~change~~ <sup>shape</sup> attitudes as well.

o President Sadat observed that the mis-  
understandings between his country and  
Israel were 70 percent psychological, 70  
percent a state of mind.

The power of changing attitude was dramatically  
illustrated just a little over a year ago

- o when President Sadat said he wanted to  
address the Israeli Parliament.
- o The world was stunned and days later  
millions of people sat transfixed as an  
Egyptian plane touched down on Israeli soil.

It is not to diminish the political impact of that visit  
to say that

- o none of the words that were exchanged,
- o none of the speeches,
- o none of the documents,
- o none of the private meetings,
- o and none of the toasts --
- o none of these was as significant as the riveting

Dr. Jee  
and y  
conclude

WE MUST  
BEGIN TO  
RECOGNIZE  
ON EVERY  
CAMPAIGN  
THAT WE  
HAVE  
VALUES  
TO PROTECT

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~~riveting~~ of the whole world's attention  
on one single breathtaking symbolic  
image when two former enemies shook hands.

Instantly, 500 million people -- and they tell me that's  
how many saw that encounter -- 500 million people felt their  
connectedness."

Instantly their "perspective" was expanded and, momen-  
tarily at least, the world was brought together in <sup>me</sup> grand  
gesture on behalf of peace.

## IV

~~Well what does all of this mean?~~

And this ~~is~~ brings me back to my central message.

to The Class of 79

I hope that during your collegiate years you have devel-  
oped special skills -- <sup>skills</sup> to help you get a job.

o I also hope that during your collegiate  
years you have developed a greater respect  
for the planet Earth and a greater under-  
standing of our dependence on each other.

o o o

When our first astronauts came back from outer space  
with those marvelous photographs of the planet Earth,  
Archibald MacLeish wrote in the New York Times --  
" to see the Earth as it truly is  
small and blue

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beautiful/in that eternal silence where it floats  
is to see ourselves  
as riders on the earth together

~~Brothers~~

~~who see now that they are~~

~~together~~

As a member of the Class of 1979 I congratulate you and  
wish you ~~well~~ <sup>much success</sup> -- as you continue your journey -- as riders  
on the Earth ~~together~~

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