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Remarks of
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FINAL
DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

I am most pleased to share in this historic celebration.

It is--in fact--a special coincidence that The School of Fine Arts at Miami University and I were born very close together.

- o Both of us first saw the light of day here in Southwest Ohio
- o and we were born just a year apart.

It is, however, enormously embarrassing to compare the two of us after 50 years!

- o I have turned grey and somewhat wrinkled
- o while The School of Fine Arts seems to have grown younger and more virile every day!

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In 1929 when Dean Kratt and President Upham first shaped this institution--the faculty consisted of six individuals

and there was--according to the history books-- only "a handful of students" in each program.

- o Today 98 full and part time faculty are involved with over 700 students.
- o And today, The School of Fine Arts enriches every corner of this distinguished university.

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We should remind ourselves, however, that there was art activity on this campus long before The School of Fine Arts was born.

- o For example--the Miami University Glee Club began in 1912--that's 17 years before The School of Fine Arts was founded.
- o And obviously the Glee Club was a great success to launch its 1912 season and the college bulletin announced the Glee Club as follows:
 - o "An entertainment--given in an informal way--peculiar to college men by a real, live, well trained college glee club --is always a genuine treat.
 - o Such an entertainment the Miami University Glee Club promises to give its patrons."

The announcement went on to say that:

"The 1912 Club promises to be the best ever turned out by the university.

- o The different sections are well balanced--and the voices blend.
- o The details of good part-singing are worked out with unusual finish.

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And it will be no surprise to this audience that the Miami University Glee Club received rave reviews.

The Hillsboro Dispatch read as follows:

"A large audience in Bell's Opera House Friday night, was more than pleased by the Miami Glee Club Concert. The variety of the selections rendered, as well as the meritorious character of the work and the pleasing presentment of the thirty young college men, left an agreeable memory with Hillsboro society, which has not seen a similar performance in several years."

Here's what the Greenville Courier said after a Miami University concert:

"The entertainment was a great musical treat. The club is composed of the university students, all fine looking, bright and cheerful young men. Besides being "full" of fun, and they 'get off' many stunts on this latter score that only break the monotony of music--you know some people don't like music 'straight'--but delight everybody. The program was universally approved, and its rendition met with unstinted and high praise."

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And here's one more--from the Hamilton Republican-News:

"An audience that taxed the resources of the large rooms adjoining the auditorium of the First M.E. Church, last evening, applauded approval of the Miami University Glee Club from the beginning to the end of their program. And the club deserved much appreciation for the selections rendered, in quality and variety, were wonderfully well-chosen, and the boys sang in fine voice and with the virile Miami spirit that is always theirs."

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(Well, from that small beginning this campus moved forward to become a distinguished leader in the arts.

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Tonight in celebration of a half century of distinguished leadership I wish to set forth a simple, yet essential proposition. I wish to make it very clear that the arts must be a central part of education for three very fundamental reasons.

First, the arts belong with education because art is an essential part of language.

As Commissioner of Education I often was asked to define the "basics" in school.

My response was quick and unequivocal.

- o Language is our most essential function.
- o The sophisticated use of symbols separates the human race from all other forms of life
- o and if students do not learn the effective use of language they will fail--not only educationally but socially as well.

But here I must insert a most essential caveat.

Language is much more than symbols on the forming--orally--of something we call poemes.

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Language at its very best includes the arts, dance, theatre,
music, painting, poetry
because these express deep thoughts and deep emotions
and these too can stir a deep response in others.

Indeed it is more than a cliché to say that art
is the universal language.

and through the arts we extend richly
our ability to communicate.

Murray Sidlin, the gifted conductor of The New Haven
Symphony, reminded us that:

- o when words are no longer adequate
people turn to art.
- o "Some go to the canvas and paint
some stand up to dance.
- o But we all go beyond our normal
means of communicating -
and this is the common human experience
for all people
on this planet."

Sidlin went on to say that--in music for example:

"No matter how long or short the composition,
or in what medium it is performed--be it voice or
string or wind instruments; a nose flute; a french horn;
a two-string bamboo pole; or a five-string double base;

a solo chant sung on a hill with a tear in the voice and wide vibrato; or a simple sustained quiet melody of a mother's lullaby; (love and comfort_ in a tune; whether it's Nina Simone singing "Mississippi Goddam"; or Louie playing "Kansas City Blues"; or hundreds of thousands joining hands with Martin Luther King to sing "We Shall Overcome"-- the same inner-reflection, spirit, passion, and message. (the common human experience, as expressed by the order and relationship of pitch, rhythm and color of tone organized into completeness, into music) is possible. One need only listen through one's own senses to know what it all means, regardless of language or specific artistic or sociological intent--because it is an unusual language-- with universal meaning."

We must have a language as broad and as creative and as imaginative as thoughts and feelings and emotion and this must include the arts.

Indeed, I am convinced that the central test of civility of any culture is its breadth of language,

- o The degree to which it not only uses groons and gestures, words and facial movements but ~~the extent to which~~ it also conveys inner thoughts and feelings through
music
dance
theatre
and the visual arts.

The point is this: We must sustain the arts in our learning institution because the arts represent language at its very best.

Second, the arts are essential to education because they impose upon our schools and colleges standards of excellence and coherence.

Two hundred eighty-five years ago the nation's colleges and schools had a very clear notion of what they were supposed to do.

o For example,

• The charter at William and Mary College of 1693-- one of this nation's oldest institutions-- said quite clearly that the goal was

- to train the ministry,
- provide pious education in
- "good Letters and Manners,"
- and finally "to convert the Indians."

To achieve those noble ends, a common curriculum was established--

- o starting with Latin and Greek;
- o moving on to "Rhetoric, Logic, Ethics, Physics, Metaphysics, and Mathematics;"
- o and concluding with Scriptures and Hebrew.

In those days standards were assumed. The curriculum was rigidly prescribed, and promotion from one tier of courses to the next was strictly monitored.

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And for years education in this country was guided by a "vision of coherence."

- o The classical curriculum that prevailed from the founding of William and Mary to the Revolution was based on the notion of:
 - o and a common belief in God, an afterlife, the church, and the "rights" and "wrongs" that should govern life.

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- o The modest, general education reforms from the Revolution to the Civil War did not challenge coherence. They reinforced it.
 - o Science and technology and modern history were added to the rigid curriculum because the society's self-image had expanded, not fragmented.

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- o And paradoxically the race toward "free" electives which followed was in its own way rooted in "commonality."
- o But what was "common" was the freedom of self-determination:
- o what was "shared" was the right to be autonomous and unique.

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In recent years, however, we have no such confidence about the purpose of education. There is no vision of coherence.

And when general education languished and finally died on many campuses it was largely because

- o the commonality of self
- o triumphed over the commonality of substance.

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Now let me make one point very clear.

I certainly agree that students must be free

- o to follow their own interests,
- o to develop their own aptitudes,
- o and to pursue their own goals.

But I also believe that a truly educated person

- o must move beyond themselves
- o must gain social perspectives,
- o must see themselves in relation to other people and times.

And an educated person must confront such old fashioned notions as quality and coherence.

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And this brings me back to the role of art in the academic enterprise.

The arts, I'm convinced, not only extend our capacity to communicate they make demands upon us as well.

To put it as bluntly as I can:

- o The arts subject themselves to sharp critique
- o and they demand quality in a very special way.

In the arts it is still possible to hear that a performance is "acceptable" or "unacceptable."

That music is rich and full or flat and _____.

That dancing is either inspired or mechanical.

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I recognize, of course, that there is and must be great experimentation in the arts

- and greatness in the arts must continue to evolve
- and, of course, we seek more popular participation in the arts.

But there is another truth as well. That when all is said and done if the arts do not stand uncompromisingly for standards and for excellence they do not stand for anything at all. And in this regard they present a message of great urgency in our colleges and schools.

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Wallace Stevens, in his poem Anecdote of the Jar, put it this way:

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made that slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.

Art, the jar in Tennessee, can tame the slovenly wilderness of modern life. It can order and shape the chaos and demand of us that we share its special patterns of meaning and great beauty.

The arts not only give expression to the profound urgings of the human spirit but they validate our feelings in a world that deadens feeling.

They also organize our perceptions and give meaningful coherence to existence.

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III

There is a third--and perhaps still more essential reason to link education and the arts--

In the days ahead the arts may help us reorder our world where we must confront increases not consumption constantly.

They may help us turn more to our inner resources which give special meaning to life and are endlessly restored.

Several years ago--when this nation was preparing to send the Voyageur spacecraft toward Jupiter and beyond and continue its voyage into outer space for perhaps 300 million years.

NASA established a committee to select "earth sounds" to convey to those in outer space

who we were--

who we are,

what we feel and

what we want to become--to capture the soul of

this small planet earth.

Again Murray Sidlin--in reporting this remarkable experience reports that all of our essential meaning could be conveyed through the sounds and mystery of music.

He said that:

This committee was--by extracting two hours of collective sounds from life--able to reaffirm--on tape--a strong belief in ourselves and in our inner worth.

He was, he said, quite insistent that we send adequate representation of western art music to space. I saw nothing wrong in a little boasting that we have had Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Stravinsky, Debussy, Berlioz, Haydn, and Shoenberg. Now did you really understand what I just said? I said that we on earth have had Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Stravinsky and others; that the human race produced these giants of art and that we were sending their sounds, their statements from earth, to represent all that has happened here as some of the best that we have produced. We were embarking on an attempt to summarize the entire human experience through music. We selected music of the whole world representing diverse musical languages in the same way delegates of the United Nations all said hello in peace in the opening of the recording in their respective tongues. We selected chants from African life, chants of Turkish life, Blink Willy Johnson moaning through his own guitar strings about the pain down deep; and all of this is perceptable without a lyric. We hear it and we feel it, and we know and identify with it because we have experienced it. The Bulgarian wedding song has a joyous sound; while the Indonesian lullaby is a comforting one. We can listen to the entire recording, not understand one word from those songs or even know explicitly the motivation behind this specific composition, and yet it is all perceivable by its character of sound as to what was intended by composers

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If we, today, were asked to choose the sounds which most represent our life on earth

would we choose - the sounds of work

- the traffic in New York

- the roar of the D 10's

which destroy and consume

or would we include--at least give equal billing to--

- the sounds of joy and creativity

which are universal and conserving?

IV

Now, more than ever, students need the capacity to see clearly, to hear acutely, to feel sensitively the space which is all about us, and within us. These skills are no longer just desirable; they are now essential if we are to survive together with civility and joy.

We must--in short--help every student achieve what on another occasion I have called "the educated heart."

The educated heart means: an expectation of excellence, a reaching for beauty without arrogance, a dedication to fairness and social justice, a precision in speech and thought, and a love for graceful expression and audacious intellect.

These may be lofty goals, but they are, I am convinced still within our grasp.

In his poem The People, Yes, Carl Sandburg put it this way:

Once having marched
Over the margins of animal necessity,
Over the grim line of sheer subsistence
Then man came
To the deeper rituals of his bones,
.....
To the time for thinking things over,
To the dance--the song--the story
Or to the hours given to dreaming
Once having so marched.

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During the long years of recorded history--and with all of the agony and expectancy of birth--civilization has marched over the margins of animal necessity, has moved beyond the grim line of sheer subsistence.

Now the time has come for us to turn to the deeper rituals of our bones.

In November 1920, at the annual meeting of The National Association of State Universities in Washington, President R. M. Hughes of Miami University was assigned the indefinite topic: "The Most Important University Problem."

President Hughes in response to that open ended question declared that:

"It may not be the most urgent problem from the University standpoint, but tremendously urgent from the point of view of the country."

He proposed that the university become the pattern of creative artists and bring great art to campuses.

The press response was enthusiastic:

Walter Lippman called it
"a most enlightened business."

Colliers called it
"A New Hope for Artists."

and The Christian Science Monitor said that"

"For a bold step forward of the
progressive ideal....

Keep an eye on the
little town of Oxford, Ohio."

Sixty years have passed since that bold idea was first introduced
and 50 years have passed since The School of
Fine Arts was launched.

I congratulate you for your success and vision.

I'm convinced that
during the next 50 years
those who care about education and the arts
will continue to
"keep an eye on the
little town of Oxford, Ohio."

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