

Choir, orchestra

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

BOYS TOWN, NEBRASKA

MAY 28, 1967

Mrs. Nicholas Wegner
of Humphrey, Neb.
(famous Baseball
Pitcher)

Harold Crawford

~~Archbishop~~
~~Berger~~

~~7th~~ ~~Humphrey~~
50 yrs ago
50 yrs ago
11,000
South Dakota

I am honored -- and I mean honored in the

full sense of that word -- to be with you at Boys Town today.

Before going further, I want to give recognition

to Harold Crawford, the superintendent of schools here in Boys Town.

Harold was born a block away from Mrs. Humphrey's home

in Huron, South Dakota, where they were graduated from

high school. I've known Harold since those days in Huron

and we've kept in contact over the years.

I also want to give proper recognition to your

director, Monsignor Wegner. When I heard that he was born

in Humphrey, Nebraska, I knew that all the good reports I

had heard were true.

- famed baseball
Pitcher

Archbishop
Berger

Bishop Sheehan

Shoher

Randy

~~Shoher~~

Boys Town has a special meaning for most Americans. For Boys Town is the symbol of what our country is all about. It tells our story: That America is a land of opportunity where every single child -- if he has the talent and ambition -- may have the chance to one day be President of the United States. *or whatever he can make of himself.*

I have heard it said many times -- and it disturbs me -- that this is no longer true. I have heard it said that our society has become so big and so complex that future positions of leadership in our country will by necessity fall to representatives of a small percentage of our population.

recalled
I have heard it said, over and over, that we have seen our last log-cabin President ... or Vice President ... or Governor of a large state.

I hope that this is not so. It should not be so.

For if our America ever changes to the point where national responsibility and leadership are reserved to the few -- rather than opened to the many -- it will no longer be America. It will no longer be the country which stands in the world, before all others, as the one where opportunity is real.

The graduates of Boys Town are living proof that this is a land of opportunity.

Earlier this month Lt. Commander Lloyd Bucher, class of '47, took command of the U.S.S. Pueblo at commissioning ceremonies at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

A 1956 graduate, Captain Lowell Bittrick, was recently awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in Vietnam.

Boys Town
This country is filled with men who are leaders in their businesses, their professions, and their communities.

And, although no one from Boys Town has yet become President, I hope that this, too, may someday be so.

At least we must continue to build the kind of society where it can be so.

I remember being inspired, as a boy, by the Horatio Alger stories. In those stories, the young boy always rose to success from the humblest beginnings. Those young boys worked hard ... they worked earnestly ... and they succeeded.

But, if you read the stories closely, you also found that -- on the way to success -- they met a friendly millionaire, or just happened across a gold nugget in the street.

I learned very early in life that not many gold nuggets were to be found in the streets. In fact, I spent a good deal of my younger years watching hardworking, honest people lose their homes ... their hopes ... and their lives to the blowing, cruel winds of dust storm and depression.

} your responsibility

L I saw it in rural South Dakota in Nebraska too.

L Carl Sandburg saw it in the streets of our great cities:

"The man in the street," he wrote, "may live now
just around the corner from you trying to sell the only thing
he has to sell, the power of his hand and brain to labor for
wages, for pay, for cash of the realm. And there are no takers,
he can't connect."

~~L "Maybe he says, 'Some pretty good men are on the street.'~~

~~"Maybe he says, 'I'm just a palooka ... all washed up.'~~

~~"Maybe he's a wild kid ready for his first stickup.~~

~~"Maybe he's bummed a thousand miles and has a
diploma...~~

~~"Here and there a man in the street is young, hard
as nails, cold with questions he asks from his
burning insides.~~

~~"Bred in a motorized world of trial and error,~~

He measures by millionths of an inch,
Knows ball bearings from spiral gearings,
Chain transmission, heat treatment of steel,
Speeds and feeds of automatic screw machines,
Having handled electric tools
With pistol grip and trigger switch.

Yet he can't connect and he can name thousands
like himself idle ... He studies the matter of what is justice ...
He asks: 'Who owns the earth and why?'

And it was in those years that the men who led
our country determined that this should not happen again.

We made it our business in those years to start to
build an America where people might have some measure of
economic and social security -- where they would not become
helpless victims of larger forces beyond their control.

And, in those years, we began to see that it was not enough to say to young men: "There is opportunity; seize it." For those words were empty if they were spoken to the boy without education ... to the boy without health ... to the boy who lived in a town or city or rural area without jobs or hope.

We saw that opportunity meant something only if everyone had an equal chance to share in it. And we saw that the equal chance would never be created unless all of us became as concerned for those at the bottom of the ladder as we were for ourselves.

Franklin Roosevelt put it into words in his Inaugural Address 30 years ago. Looking out on a nation as he described it, one-third "ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished," ~~he said.~~ *and then he said —*

L "The test of our progress is not whether we add
to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we
provide enough for those who have too little." *This is the challenge*

so L How far have we come?

L We have come a long way. We need only look
around us. Our senses tell us what the world knows --
that this is the richest and the strongest society yet
created by man. ~~And this in 30 years.~~

L Yet we still are a long way from creating the
" equal chance every boy and girl in this country deserves.

L I have walked through the streets of our big cities,
and I have met and talked with hundreds of the hard young
men Carl Sandburg wrote about. They still exist. They still
can't connect. They are still asking what is justice, and who
owns the earth and why.

L Why is this so?

well L Maybe their skin is black.

L Maybe they got into trouble early.

L Maybe they have been raised, literally, on that street.

L Maybe they had to leave school to fight out a living
with their hands.

L Maybe they've been to Vietnam, and they are back,
and nothing's changed.

L They are there. And we cannot ignore them.

L For they are just as much a part of America as is the country
club dance on Saturday night.

L These are our people. And they need that equal chance.

L I am privileged to chair the President's Council on
Youth Opportunity. We are trying to find that equal chance
for them.

L We have in this country a war against poverty. It
ought to be called the "war for opportunity". We have manpower
training programs.

↳ We have massive new programs for the better health
and education of our people.

↳ We have Job Corps camps ... VISTA volunteers ...
~~upward bound -~~
~~and new techniques to provide low-cost housing.~~ ↳ We have new

laws to help break down discrimination and to help break
up the hate and doubt that still lives in too many minds.

↳ ~~all~~ We have these things. Yet we know they are still
not enough. We know they are only one more step in that
fight we began for the ^{equal} chance a long, long time ago.

↳ And now, let me get to the heart of it:

↳ Some people say: Stop. ↳ Some people say: Wait a
minute. ↳ Some people say: Not now, later. Some people say:
What more do they want? ↳ Some people say: We can't afford it.

↳ I say they are wrong. I say the only thing we
cannot afford is to halt now on that long, hard course of
*opening the gates of opportunity for
every American. First class
citizenship for every American -
to do less is to be unworthy
of our history.*

L We cannot afford the waste in human talent.

L We cannot afford the cost of turmoil and disorder.

Most of all, we cannot afford to turn away from the kind of America we believe in. - *One Nation, Under God, indivisible with liberty & Justice for all -*

L I say we have to stick with it. We have to keep moving. We have to keep working.

L If we do, some day everyone shall have his equal chance. And one day in the future it can be true not only that a poor boy may be President of the United States, but that any boy -- no matter what his name, his religion, or his color -- may become President, if he has the inspiration and the talent.

L That day, my young friends, will be the day that America has met its promise.

Thomas Wolfe
To every man his chance; To every man regardless of his birth, his shining golden opportunity, to every man the right to live, to work, to be himself and to become whatever things his manhood and vision can combine to make him - this is the Promise of America.

[Transcript]

ADDRESS
OF
VICE-PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
BOYS TOWN, NEBRASKA
MAY 28, 1967

Thank you, thank you. Your Excellency, Archbishop Bergan, my good friend, the distinguished Monseigneur Wegner, and my long time South Dakota friend, the Superintendent of Schools here at Boys Town, Mr. Harold Crawford, Bishop Sheehan, and the graduates of the high school and the eighth grade, members of the faculty, distinguished faculty members, ladies and gentlemen:

Let me say, first of all, that this is an occasion that Mrs. Humphrey and I have looked forward to for years. It is a most happy occasion, and you have truly honored us by your invitation, and I mean that we feel honored as seldom before, if ever before. How much we were inspired - I know I was, and I looked over to see Muriel, and I know she was - by the music of your orchestra and your band, the choir, and I have had the privilege of sitting with His Excellency, the Archbishop, and I know the great joy he has in the accomplishments of this wonderful school. To each and everyone of you, we say this afternoon just a special word of "thank you" for being able to be a part of this family in coming here to enjoy this commencement occasion with so many fine young men and their friends.

We are awfully pleased too, that our escort, Randy, is here at the platform with us. Randy is a good representative of the Boys Town boys, both of the secondary and elementary school. He presented Mrs. Humphrey with some of the loveliest flowers I have ever seen. He is going to make it tough for me from now on out. She'll expect all kind of favors from me!

My heart is so filled today with inspiration from the sight that I behold that it is indeed difficult to know just what to say.

First of all, I am well aware that this is the 50th anniversary of Boys Town, and Father Flannigan's Boys Home, and I recall because I was just told by Archbishop Bergan that there were five boys, is that right Your Excellency, fifty years ago.

Now over 11,000 have passed through these gates and have been touched by the inspiration of distinguished priests, teachers and fellow citizens, and hundreds of thousands that were never privileged to come to Boys Town have also been deeply affected by the good work of this great school, because it symbolizes so much of our country. I can remember of hearing of Boys Town years, and years ago, and I always wanted to come and pay a visit, and now I have that opportunity to not only pay a visit but to be sort of a member of the graduating class. I don't know whether I belong in the eighth grade or in the high school level, but maybe I can just bridge the gap between the two.

I am pleased to know that my South Dakota friend, Harold Crawford, is the Superintendent of Schools here. Harold was born just a block away from Mrs. Humphrey's home in Huron, South Dakota where they graduated from high school. I was a small town boy, Huron was a major metropolis. I think it had anywhere from 5,000 to 6,000 people, but I came from a town of around 600. I do want you boys to know that we cleaned them in football once, though. I got to know Harold Crawford later on when I moved to Huron, and two wonderful things happened in my life. I met Harold and grew to know him as a friend, and I met Muriel. It just proves how much good luck you can have in one town.

May I just say to these young men who are graduating and to some of you that are planning on marriage, one of the best things you can do is to get a nice wife who will help put you through college. It beats any fellowship you will ever get, and I had that good luck.

Then, let me say a word about Monseigneur Wegner. I have had a wonderful visit with him. He knows many of my friends in Minnesota, and we've been talking about things back home in Minneapolis, but when I heard that he was from Humphrey, Nebraska, I know that he is a great man. I understand that he was quite an athlete in his day, too. He was a great pitcher, and we could use him right now up there

with the Minnesota Twins if his arm is still good. We are so happy to be here in the presence of these wonderful friends, and our good friend, the former Governor of the State of Nebraska, Frank Morrison. I am so happy to see him.

Now, let me say a word to you about Boys Town. I am going to mix this up. Some of it is for you chaps down here, and some of it is for the others that are here. You pick and choose - you don't have to listen to it all. It's your choice today.

You know, Boys Town has a very special meaning for most Americans. You'd be surprised, You are graduating from one of the most important schools in the United States. You've heard about Harvard - it almost equals Boys Town. More people in America know about Boys Town, I really believe that or at least as many. Boys Town is the symbol of what our country is all about. Your school, the one that you are graduating from today, it tells the story of that flag, it tells the story of our country, it tells that America is a land of opportunity, where every child, if he has any talent and ambition, any get up and go, may have the chance to be whatever he can make of himself - yes, to be president of the United States which is the highest office within the gift of the American people. So, you young chaps have quite a load to carry. There have been thousands and thousands of your predecessors who have graduated from this school that have gone on to great records. When you walk out of here, I want you to stand high. As they say down in Texas, "ride high in the saddle". I always mention Texas whenever I go anyplace. You have a reputation to carry, and you had better live up to it as we are going to be watching you, but more importantly you will want to because yours is a school of honor. It's a school of tradition. It's a school that has been graced by great men.

Now, I have heard it said, and it disturbs me, that these days are pretty difficult for an ordinary fellow to really become a leader. In other words, everything is so big and so complex and so difficult that the future positions of

leadership in our country, some say, will go to just a small section of the American population - just a limited faction of us. I have heard it said over and over that we have seen for example, the last log cabin president. By that we mean a man of ordinary means - or vice-president, or governor of a large state. Well, I hope that this is not so, and it should not be so, and I don't think it is, for if our America ever changes to the point where National responsibility and leadership are reserved for the few rather than open to the many, it will no longer be America. They'll call it America, but it won't mean what America really means. It will no longer be the country which stands in the world before all others as the nation of hope and the promise as one where opportunity is real. I think you'd be interested in a little story. I don't have it written down here and don't have any notes about it but that's the other part of the speech that I give you - that comes free.

When I was in Russia, I think it was nine years ago, I had a long meeting with Mr. Khrushchev, and following that meeting I was privileged to be the first Westerner, or the first person from a free nation ever to appear on Soviet television - the first one, and that television network covered the entire Soviet Union, and all of their radio stations. I told the story of America on that radio and on that television, and I am happy to tell you that it was uncensored. I told about rural electric cooperatives, and small businesses, and big universities, about farmers and professors and politicians, about people. I mentioned, and by the way, all of it, of course, came in English and was translated into Russian, and then I mentioned that one thing which characterized America among all others was opportunity. You know what the interpreter told me? He said, "we don't have a word for that". That's the difference, my dear friends. Much of the difference. Not the entire difference but part of the difference between a society where man serves the state and a society in which the government and the institutions of men serve people.

We have opportunity, and that is what America means.

The graduates of Boys Town are living proof of what I just said. Earlier this month, Lieutenant Commander Lloyd Butcher, I believe that is the pronounciation, Class of 1947, took command of the U. S. Pueblo. At the commissioning ceremonies at Puget Sound Naval Yard, and I believe Monseigneur Wegner, you were privileged to be there, they tell me that the ovation for the Lieutenant Commander was tremendous. Why? Because he was one of you. He had "made it". He proved what this school stands for. In 1956 Captain Lowell Bitrick was recently awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in Viet Nam. He was a graduate of the Class of 1956, and he has become a hero on the field of battle in a far away place. These are but two of the proof. I could list you a hundred or more - men who have "made it", who have honored their school, their faith, their country by service. This country is literally filled with Boys Town men who are leaders in their professions and their communities. Although no one from Boys Town has yet become President, I hope that this too may some day be so, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if one of you will make it. Now, don't crowd me out, but hurry up and get on the job.

At least we must continue to build the kind of a society where it can be so. You know I remember of being inspired by Horatio Alger stories, and in those stories the young boy always rose to success from the humblest beginnings. Those young boys worked hard, they worked earnestly, and they succeeded, but if you read the stories closely, you also found that on the way to success, they generally met some friendly millionaire or just happened to cross the right girl or a gold nugget was found in the street, and they could have it. I learned very early in life that not many gold nuggets are going to be found lying around in the streets. In fact, I spent a good deal of my younger years watching hard working honest people lose their homes, their hopes, and their lives to the blowing cruel winds of dust storms and depression.

I saw it in rural South Dakota, and I saw it in Nebraska. Carl Sandburg, a great American poet, wrote about it, and he said he saw in the streets of the great cities, and here are the words that he said: "The man in the street may live now just around the corner from you, trying to sell the only thing he has to sell, the power of his hand and brain, labor for wages, for pay, for cash in the realm, and there are no takers. He can't connect." That was the problem thirty years ago when Harold Crawford and Hubert Humphrey, and others, and others, yes, and Father Wegner and others knew the depression. Yes, he couldn't connect, and he can name thousands like himself, idle. He studies the matter of what is justice, and he asks, "who owns this earth and why?" And it was in those years that men who led our country were determined that this should never happen again. It was in those years, may I say, that I heard the story of Boys Town, and the words, indeed the voice of Father Flannagin as he spoke to us over radio and from platforms. We made it our business in those years, to start to build an America where people might have some measure of economic and social security, and where they would not become helpless victims of forces beyond their control. In those years we began to see that it was not enough to say to a young man, "here's opportunity, go ahead and grab it", for those words were empty if they were spoken to a boy without an education. To the boy without health. To the boy who lived in a town or city or a rural area without jobs or hope. I'll tell you, fellows, that an education is the key to the gate of opportunity. Thomas Jefferson once said, "you cannot be both free and ignorant". You have to make up your mind early in life. This nation has made its choice - we want to be free, and that means that we must be educated. Now more than ever training is so valuable. You desperately need it.

We saw that opportunity meant something if only everyone of you had an equal chance to share in it. We saw that equal chance would never be created unless all of us become as concerned for those at the bottom of the ladder as we are for ourselves

or the few that are at the top of the ladder. President Franklin Roosevelt put it into words in his inaugural address thirty years ago. Looking out over the nation at that time, he spoke of us being ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill-nourished and then he said something that every American ought to remember. "The test of our progress is not whether we add abundance of those who have much. It is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." That's what it is all about. Those who have much will inevitably get more. The duty of government and schools and church and community is to see to it that those who have too little will have enough. Not by a hand-out, but by opportunity - chance to make something out of your lives.

How far have we come? I think we have come a long ways. We need only to look around us. We are the strongest and richest nation on the face of the earth. Yet we are still a long ways from creating what we really want - an equal chance for every boy and girl, an equal chance that every boy and girl in this country deserves. I have walked the streets of our big cities and in the rural areas of this nation, and I have met and talked with thousands of harding working men and women, and those who were like those who Carl Sandburg wrote about who never had a chance. They still exist, they still can't connect, and they are still asking why. Why is this so? Well, let me answer it. Maybe it is because their skin is black. Sometimes people are denied a chance because of that. Maybe they got in trouble early. Maybe they had been raised literally on "that street". Maybe they had to leave school early to earn a living with their hands, or maybe they had been off in Viet Nam fighting, and they are back and nothing has changed. Well, there they are, and we can't ignore them for they are just as much as part of America - this group which is not apparently wanted or for which there is no place as the country club dance on Saturday night. These are our people, and these people need that equal chance, and America needs them, too. I am privileged to serve as the

Chairman of the President's Council on Youth Opportunity. We have but one objective - we're trying to find that equal chance for every boy and girl. We have in this country what some people call a "war against poverty". I think it ought to be called a "war for opportunity". We had manpower training programs, we have massive new programs for health and education of all of our people. We have Job Corp camps and Project Upward Bound for young men to go on to college, and volunteers to work with the needy. We have many new laws to break down at long last discrimination, and help to break up hate and doubt that still lives in too many minds. We have all of these things yet we know that they are still not enough. We know that they are only one more step in that fight we began for equal chance a long, long time ago. I want every boy here graduating today to pledge to himself quietly and sincerely that he is going to see to it to the best of his ability that somebody else has a chance. It is the only way that we can win this struggle, so let me get at the heart of it.

Some people say we are doing too much already. They said, "wait a minute", they say "not now", they say "what more do people want?". And, then some say, we "can't even afford to do what we are doing". I say to you, they are all wrong. I say the only thing that we cannot afford is to wait, is to halt, on that long hard course. We need to open these gates of opportunity to every American. We need first-class citizenship for every American. We cannot afford the waste in human talent. We cannot afford the cost of turmoil, violence and disorder, and most of all we cannot afford to turn away from the kind of America we say we believe in. Every person in this audience has recited the kind of America that you say you believe in. You say you believe in one nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. If you say it, then we must act it, we must practice it. That's what Boys Town really means. It is the living testimony to the truth of our own pledge of allegiance. Here is one nation under God indivisible with

liberty and justice for all. If we believe that, someday everyone shall have his equal chance, and one day in the future it can be true that not only a poor boy may be President of the United States, but that any boy, no matter his name, his religion, or his color may become President if he has the inspiration and if he has the talent. That day, my young friends, will be the day that America has met its promise, and that promise was outlined in beautiful prose some thirty years ago by a poet and author by the name of Thomas Wolfe who wrote of those days of the depression and those days of vision. Let it be written here at this ceremony here is the promise and the hope to every man his chance. Just say to every boy his chance. To every man regardless of his birth, his shining golden opportunity. To every man the right to live and to work, and to be himself, and become whatever things his manhood ambition can combine to make him. This is the promise of America, and graduates of the Class of 1967, that promise is yours. I hope that you will go out and make the most of it. We salute you for a job well done. You give us inspiration and courage, and I for one, as your Vice-President, am so proud that you have let me come here today to share this important moment in your life when you have a commencement because you are just commencing the real part of your life. Make the most of it - it's yours and God's.

Thank you.



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