

REMARKS OF VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY
JOHN KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1968

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Arriba Kennedy High School.

(Applause)

Buenos Dias, mes amigos. Gracias.

(Applause)

Now, isn't that pretty good for a fellow from Minnesota?

(Applause)

Let me a wonderful Congressman you have here in this fine gentleman, Henry Gonzalez. He's a great one.

(Applause)

A great United States Senator, Ralph Yarborough.

(Applause)

And now, even though he is from Laredo, I want you to know that Congressman Kazen is a good one, too.

(Applause)

And Congressman Eligio de la Garzo -- I am sure you know him.

(Applause)

And Congressman Jim Wright, from over in Fort Worth.

(Applause)

You know, when I came -- (Shouting) --- now, you see, what you want to do is to tumble the Tigers; what I want to do is tumble the Republicans.

(Applause)

I'll tell you -- I hear a lot of good news about these young man in green and white here, this great, great football team that you have. The Kennedy Rockets -- believe me, they are on their way.

(Applause)

Well, dear friends, you have given us such a wonderful welcome this morning that you have made my day already -- no matter what happens from here on out.

(Applause)

By the way, did you like Chubby Checker?

(Applause)

And the Jondells -- you like them, too?

(Applause)

What do you think about my friend, that wonderful American, that great athlete, that fine gentleman, Rafer Johnson?

(Applause)

I want to put him up as an example for every young man in this audience.

Rafer will come back to this platform here in a minute.

He is the man that was the decathlon champion for our U.S. Olympic team some eight years ago.

(Applause)

Now, I will take just a little while of your precious time.

You were kind enough to invite me four years ago, on October 24, to let me come to this same auditorium. I came here for one reason. I came because the man that should have come to dedicate this school and would have loved to have come, because the school is named in his honor, that man was taken from us, and he could not come.

I have been privileged to be John Kennedy's leader in the United States Senate.

(Applause)

I remember -- I remember how President Johnson said to me -- he said, "Hubert, we are going to see that every promise, that every commitment that John Kennedy made to the American people is carried out."

(Applause)

You know something wonderful happened to this country eight years ago, and we have been trying to have it continue. A whole new spirit came to the American people.

There had been eight years of rather dull, stodgy, old-fashioned kind of politics. The American people had not been on the move. Many of our young people were not getting an education. Many of your parents were without jobs. Many a city was in trouble.

And then you remember, some of you, if you talk to your parents about it they will tell you, there was a young voice -- the team of Kennedy and Johnson went across this country, and they said to the American people "Let's get this country moving again".

And since 1961 this great America of ours has been moving, and it has been moving forward, it has been moving in the right direction.

What do I mean by that? I mean it has been moving as an American family, where people of all races, creeds and colors can work together, where they can build the kind of an America that you and I want, where they can go to school together, where they can work together, where they can play-together, where they can live together, and where they can work for this democracy together.

And in fact many of them even from this school have died for this democracy together.

This is the kind of an America that we are going to build.

And we built it right here in John F. Kennedy High School, and we are going to build it all the way across America -- an America for all Americans no matter what kind of Americans; an America that belongs to the young people and that belongs to the young people and that belongs to people of every race, creed and nationality.

(Applause)

You know, friends, sometimes we -- we in public life have a little difficulty convincing some of the people of our own age the kind of a country that we need. But not you. I think the young people of this country know we have to have a nation in which we can live together, in which we can trust each other.

I think you know that there isn't any one group in this country that has a particular monopoly on talent. When I think that four out of seven of the Congressional Medal of Honor winners in the State of Texas came right out of this school -- right out of this one school -- and many of them are people that have lived in the memory of this state, that will live in the memory of this state forever.

When I think, as I look at the olympics in Mexico City, and I see our Americans there, there they are fighting -- Mexican-Americans, and all kinds of Americans -- but they are Americans, and they are carrying the banner of the United States of America.

And that is the difference between this country and any other country. We are a country of many faces, we are a country of many peoples, we are a country of many talents, we are a country of many cultures.

And when you have many faces, many talents, many cultures and many peoples, you have something that is the greatest thing in the world. And we have got to take care of it -- every one of us that are young at heart and young of spirit --- take care of our America.

(Applause)

How are we going to do it?

We are going to do it by giving people -- not giving people hand-outs as such, but extending the hand of fellowship, extending the hand of help.

Most people are very proud. They do not want to be supplicants, they don't want to beg for help. But they want a

chance. And that is why we have programs like Project Stay here in the school; that is why we have projects like Project Upward Bound. That is why we have the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and that is why we have Job Corps centers; that is why we have training programs of all kinds. That is why we are pouring into these schools of ours millions and millions and millions of dollars of money. And why? Because it is an investment in the greatest resource that this country has.

Let me tell you, my dear friends - the greatest resources of Texas are not in minerals and oil and land and property; the greatest resource that Texas has is right here in this room today -- the young people of this State, the young people of every different family, of every different group and culture in this State.

And we are going to develop those resources.

Look what has been happening. Ten million people in the last five years have come up out of the slums of poverty to stand on their own feet, earn their own way -- their children being able to come to good schools. Just think of that -- ten million of them.

Think of what happened in the last few years in this country. Thousands of new classrooms built, all across America. In the last ten years college enrollment doubled -- doubled. In the last few years we have been able to help young people go to college -- over three-quarters-of-a-million of them, on student loans, student guarantees. We are going to do more of that. We know that it works.

And when I become your President, I want every boy and girl in this room to know that if you want to go to college, you are going to have a chance to go get advanced training, because America is going to invest in you, because you are the best investment we can make.

(Applause)

Now, let me just give you a word of warning.

There are going to be many voices speak to you. On occasion you are going to be disappointed, on occasion you are going to be angry, on occasion you are going to feel that someone has not done right by you. And sometimes when those voices of hate and suspicion and doubt and fear and anger speak to you, you may listen. But remember we cannot build a better America through hate. We cannot build it through racial prejudice, through religious bigotry. We will never be able to build a better country for yourself and for those who come after you, you will never be able to build it out of suspicion, fear of each other, distrust.

This country must be based upon a common trust. And there must be a great pride in our citizenship.

You know, I have travelled this world over. I have been in every one of the major countries at least with few exceptions. I have travelled four times in the last four years to the continent of Asia, twice to the Continent of Europe. I have been twice and three times in my Senate career to Latin America, and to the countries of Central and South America. I have been to Australia and New Zealand. I have been in the countries of Africa. I have seen the people, poor and rich, mighty and lowly. And let me tell you that there isn't a single place on the face of this earth that even comes close to comparing with what we have here.

And this isn't to say that we cannot make it better. It is just simply to say that what we have is very precious. It is simply to say that we have got to take good care of it.

And I know that the students of this school feel that way.

I saw the young men outside in the ROTC.

I know the mettle of the student body.

I see young women here that have had a chance for the first time some of them in their lives for a good education.

My good friends, in the days that lie ahead, education is as imperative as good health. Develop your mind, develop your talents, develop your skills, take care of your body, take care of yourself.

These are going to be essential things for us -- because you know our best days as Americans are yet to be lived.

We have got a great history. But let me tell you something. To read history is one thing. To learn history lessons and even be graded on it is another thing. But to make history, to make it in your time, to make it like those men in Apollo 7, Walter Schirra and his fellow astronaut -- they made history -- they didn't read about it; they made it.

And we are going to be making history -- every one of you -- because in the next 25 years in this country fantastic things are going to happen.

Let me just give you an idea of what is going to happen.

In the next 25 years you will be able to have from this platform or in any one of your classrooms the leading teachers of the world in direct television communication with you, through communications satellite. Every place in the world connected as if it were a neighborhood in San Antonio, every place -- instantaneous translation so a professor that is speaking in Tokyo Japan in the tongue of the Japanese will have instantaneous translation into two or three languages that you might want to hear in this classroom or in this auditorium.

This isn't only a dream -- it is already a practice, it already works. It is only a matter of doing more about it.

What else are we going to do?

We read about the great Dr. DeBakey down here in Texas, one of the great surgeons. We read about heart transplants.

My dear friends, in another 25 years this will be commonplace surgery. We will be able to do things that no one ever dreamed was possible.

We will be building whole new cities, in which there is a wholesome and clean environment. And we will be able to build cities in which people can have living space, in which they can have playground space, in which they can have jobs close to their homes.

The possibilities of this country are unlimited.

By 1972, four years from now -- that is all -- we will have a trillion dollar economy -- think of it -- a trillion dollars.

You know that your country last year produced almost fifty per cent of everything that is produced in this world, with less than six per cent of the population. Do you know that we consumed forty per cent of everything that was consumed in the world?

That tells you what the rest of the world has as compared to what we have.

Now, this doesn't mean that we should be selfish. It means that we should be grateful. And what's more it means that we must build and build. We can never be content -- not to have discontent as our motivation, but a restlessness for a betterment of human environment.

And what is the thing that we are really talking about? We are talking about how we are going to live together. And I am going to make a prediction from this platform. I predict that the greatest talent of America is yet to be discovered. I predict that the greatest talent in science, in education, in literature, in the drama -- I predict that the greatest talent in engineering, in medicine, in all the great fields, will come from the children of the poor. And there is a reason for it.

When they get a chance, they work harder. And there is a great sensitivity there, born out of pain.

You realize today that some of the great people of your country, the great people in a host of fields, were the sons and daughters of people who lived in abject poverty? And we are now coming up as a new people. This is what I meant by saying that there is a new day coming for America. And I tell you it is going to be a glorious day, if we can keep this America working together.

That is why I said to you -- reject those voices of anger, spurn those people that try to set one group against another. Remember that in a growing America, in an America of better schools and better colleges and more jobs and a growing economy, all of which we can have, there is room for you and room for your sister and room for your brother, and room yet for children yet unborn. There is plenty of room for everybody to make something out of his life -- unless we destroy what we have through fear and suspicion.

And the young people of America represent its hope, because you, as yet, have not accepted the bad practices of yesterday. Somebody may teach them to you, and if they try, tell them to get away from you. You don't win these football games, you don't win these contests by going around and checking a man's color of his skin. You win by checking only his ability.

And what we are going to do in this country of ours is judge Americans, not on the false standards of how they spell their last name or pronounce it, or what church they attend, or what is the color of their skin, or what is their cultural background. We will judge Americans on the ability of what they do, their capacity, their performance. And we will also judge them on one other thing -- the fact that they are an American, that they are American citizens -- means that they shall have every right, every duty, every responsibility, every privilege, every chance that anybody else ever had or ever hopes to have in any country on the face of the earth.

(Applause)

I want to leave one last message with you.

You can make a difference in this election. I know you are not twenty-one. But I know this --- if I had my way, you would vote at age 18, I can tell you that. I happen to believe in that.

(Applause)

But you can make the difference. And how can you do it? You can talk to your parents, talk to your older members of your family. You can spread the message -- with a sense of happiness and joy in your countenance, you can talk for our ticket.

Let me tell you that Senator Ed Muskie and myself want to represent you. We want to represent the American students that need a chance. We want to help represent this country and guide this country's destiny.

I can tell this audience here what I would tell your parents. We are up against a powerful machine. We are up against big money. And you know it, you have read it in the paper.

But let me tell you what we have got, the most important thing of all. We have you, if you will help us. And I want you to make it your business now to see to it that every person of voting age in your home, every person of voting age in your area, in your block, wherever you live -- I want you to go up to them and say on election day "Did you vote?" You don't need to tell them now to vote. They will make up their own minds. Of course, if you want to mention Humphrey and Muskie it will be alright with me.

(Applause)

You go up there and say to them "Listen, I want to know just one thing -- did you vote". If that person says no, you say "Alright, you have no faith in me". Because remember the election of 1968 votes for the future. And anybody that does not participate in it has already said they don't believe in the future.

We want your help. I want every one of you to be a campaign worker for a get-out-the-vote drive.

I want you to make it your business to see to it that this precious right of citizenship for which members of this school have died on the field of battle, for which four Congressional Medal of Honors out of this school gave their lives ---I want you folks in this school to make sure that every person that you know in your family and amongst your friends is a citizen in the first meaning of the word, a voting citizen. And you do that for yourself -- not for me. You do that for your country. You do that for your future.

And if you do, I will not worry at all what the outcome will be. It will be alright. It will be victory. It will be victory.

So I leave you now with -- Viva Kennedy High School.
(please)

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