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## "A Picture For Your Future" by Franklin J. Lunding, UND Spring Commencement: June 11, 1948

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Commencement Address  
University of North Dakota  
June 11, 1948

### A Picture For Your Future

Franklin J. Lunding

This is the day that marks the beginning of your search for the rewards of a full, mature life. You now have experience gathered from books. Such is but of the nature of learning. That which you will gain from actual living after your fine preparation here at the University of North Dakota will be of the nature of wisdom. Your future, based on your sound educational foundation, from this point on, will depend upon your accumulation of a store of worthwhile experience. It is my hope that I shall be able to paint for you a composite picture for your future; a wordpicture map showing the roads that lead to the real satisfactions of life.

When you leave this auditorium tonight, you will have two very valuable assets. A diploma testifying to the successful completion of an important project in your life, and the most valuable asset the world has to offer, OPPORTUNITY:-- opportunity for every individual. I have read that there is no synonym for this truly American word in the Russian language or the German or even in the Swedish language. But here in America we have in this one word the foundation for our contribution to the advancement of civilization, the basis for our way of life that guarantees those individual freedoms that make a people and a civilization strong and happy.

It is doubtful if any group of college graduates in recent history has stepped out into a world of greater confusion than does the class of 1948 of our colleges and universities, the country over. World War II ended nearly three years ago. Instead of resuming our normal life and progress with confidence and a sure sense of direction, we find ourselves groping in a world in which the very atmosphere we breathe is charged with suspicion, hostility and uncertainty.

It is this situation that worries us; but it should also give us courage. I believe it is no exaggeration to say that the entire future of the world depends upon how wisely we use the next ten years - the first decade in which your influence will count to a measurable degree.

If we cannot penetrate the fog which obscures the world's future, at least we can attempt to crystallize our own hopes for our future as individuals. The more effective we can make our own lives, the happier and more useful we will be as citizens, and the greater influence each of us as individuals will have on our times.

First, then, we should face the future with a sound and hopeful philosophy. I know of none better suited to the times than that expressed by the late Dr. Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, who at an advanced age attributed his long, serene life and his many accomplishments to being blessed with a calm temperament, expectant of good. If we do not naturally possess such a temperament, we can consciously cultivate Dr. Eliot's wise philosophy.

But to cultivate a wise philosophy is not enough. One's philosophy merely serves as a lubricant to make life roll more smoothly. We have greater need than any previous generation has had, to work to a picture: a picture of what we, as individuals, want our own future to be, set in the broader picture of the community, the state, the country, the world in which we want to live. The two

pictures are inseparable, for what we do in our personal and home lives influences the life of the community in which we live; and the community's influence spreads to the state, the nation and the outside world. Few of us realize the cumulative impact of our individual actions.

We cannot escape our individual responsibility, and we should not overlook our opportunity, to fashion a better world. We need not - and should not - accept the world as it is, but rather work to a picture of the world as we would like it to be.

The young man or woman with the clearest picture of this better world, and the part he or she wants to play in it, will make the swiftest personal progress, and exert the greatest influence on our times.

I appreciate that few college graduates know, in advance of their exposure to life, exactly the kind of work they are best fitted to do. As an example, I started as a lawyer and have become a business man.

There is no telling where any of us will eventually end up, so far as our life work is concerned. But I am convinced this makes less difference than you or I may think. The important question is: What kind of a picture are we working to in our daily lives?

Do we see, in our mind's eye, a better world? Do we visualize a still better America, where our children will have scope and opportunity to work out an even finer life than our own generation is enjoying? Do we keep before our eyes a picture of the better community in which we want to live?

If this seems to you to be visionary, suppose we bring the problem down to your personal plans as you leave this auditorium, following these graduation exercises.

You young men can start working to a picture such as I have sketched simply by thinking of yourself, not merely as starting to work in a good job, but as setting out to live a good life.

And you young ladies who look forward to a home and children are wise enough, I am sure, to realize that you are in quest, not merely of an attractive mate, but a good life-partner with whom you can work to a picture that will demand your finest home-making abilities. One of the greatest forces in the world is the support, sympathetic understanding and encouragement given so freely by the mothers and wives of America.

The key question is not, What can I get out of life? but - What can I put into it through the best use of my education, my time, my energy and my talents?

Fix before your eyes the place in life you want to occupy. Do not be too modest about it. Then set out for your destination, not necessarily a particular position or calling, but in terms of the kind and quality of life you want to live.

You can know in advance that to arrive at your pictured objective will take patience. You cannot avoid hard work. It will be difficult to escape periods of discouragement. It will take time to accumulate the benefits of experience. But if you keep the picture of your choice before you, you are bound eventually to enjoy the gratifications of a full life.

And now a word as to your manner of life. It will make less difference where you live than the spirit in which you adjust yourself to your surroundings.

If you have a choice between city, town, or country - settle where you want to live, whether it be a large city or its environs, a small city or town, or on a farm or ranch.

In large cities wage and salary rates are relatively high; but so are living costs. There are a great many wonderful advantages, but you have to buy many of your pleasures, at a city scale of prices. There is little neighborliness; you live pretty much to yourself, in the midst of thousands of people who are indifferent to your existence.

In a small city or town, living costs are lower, but so are wage and salary rates. There may be no theatres, night clubs, museums, or city-type amusements. But it is easier to engage in sports and community pastimes. You live among people who are interested in you for yourself, and not for what you have. You can more easily cultivate fine friendships. Life is simpler and more leisurely, with less tension. And you can visit some larger city occasionally to sample its excitements.

Life on a farm or ranch has its limitations, and the money income may be relatively small. But money is not so necessary to the living of a good life. The whole out-of-doors is yours to enjoy, at little or no cost. Neighbors are not plentiful, but they become close friends, with a true community of interest. With the automobile and the airplane, the advantages of the nearest city or town are available as desired.

So, if the choice is yours, plan to live where your natural inclination dictates, realizing that it is your life you are living.

On the other hand, if your job or profession dictates the place you must live, or in the case of you young ladies, if the man you marry must locate in a place not of your choosing, there are advantages in every location to offset the disadvantages.

In any event, wherever you may live, through choice or necessity, make up your mind to like the place for everybody and everything in it that is likeable. Take an active part in local affairs. Do everything within your power to make every worthwhile community project successful. You can make a good life anywhere if you do an intelligent job of living.

I stress your stake in community life because, it is becoming increasingly important that all of us learn the fine art of living and working together. In the course of a generation something has taken place which has attracted less notice than its significance warrants; this country - and indeed the whole world - has graduated from the era of inadequate self-sufficiency of the individual into an age in which large numbers of men and women must work together toward a common aim or goal.

Applying this to nations, we see today the beginning, perhaps, of a United States of Europe, to replace a score of what were, day before yesterday, very independent nations. Not from choice, for nationalism dies hard, but for security and progress, men are being drawn together to work to a picture of the international future.

In the lives of individuals, men have learned that by pooling their ideas and abilities, and by combining their resources, they can multiply themselves to their mutual advantage.

In the fifteen years from 1885 to 1900, working in woodsheds or small machine shops, Elwood Haynes, R. E. Olds, Henry Ford, Alexander Winton (to mention but a few of the pioneers) developed the automobile. Today our automobiles are produced by large groups of skilled men working together under managements responsible (almost without exception) to large groups of stockholders who own the vast mass-production plants without which the cost of a motor car would be prohibitive.

In the field of agriculture, too, men have learned the strength of pooled interests. Not so many years ago most fruits and vegetables were taken to market by the farmers who raised them. Today we have associations of growers of citrus fruits, apples, prunes, nuts, and a score of other products of nature, which process, package, advertise and in some instances market the crops of their members.

These groups, in turn, deal with canners, packers and frozen food processors, who mass-market the growers' products.

Not so many years back, the public health was served largely by the family doctor, a general practitioner. Today the trend is toward medical centers around which are gathered physicians and surgeons of all skills and specialties, with equipment and resources such as no individual doctor could command.

Does grouping of men's energies and interests mean that in the future of a man or woman with a new idea, a unique talent, or some special genius will have no chance; that there is no longer any place in the scheme of things for the bold thinker or the daring dreamer? Or does it mean that there is no need for the small business, or for the individual practitioner in the professions?

By no means! The world moves forward on bold ideas and daring dreams. The business world needs many acorn-businesses to grow into tomorrow's industrial-oaks. And the individual practitioner of today may set a new pattern in his science or art that will advance his profession. It is to be hoped that some of you young men and women will build small enterprises of your own - retail shops, service or manufacturing businesses. And that others of you will be general practitioners in medicine, the law, and the sciences.

But it does mean that you of the new generation will do well to learn to work with and through groups of men and women who are moving in the same direction as you are traveling. They will help you to carry out your ideas, to make your dreams come true, more surely, and often more swiftly. You, in turn, may supply the ideas or impetus to motivate the group.

If you will bear this in mind as you step out into the world to work out your future-picture, you will have little trouble adjusting yourself to the world of business, or building a clientele in one of the professions, or making a successful place for yourself in your special art or science or in your home. You will find it easier, also, to fit into the life of the city, town or rural community where you may live.

You cannot be as effective or as important, alone, as your father and grandfather were. But you can be more effective than they were - if you will set out to learn to multiply your personal skill and ability and energy by the skills and abilities and energies of the people among whom you live and work. The importance of learning to work and live with others cannot be over emphasized. I read recently that 87% of all persons who lost their jobs lost them because they can't get along with other people.

This is the Art of Living which you must master. It offers pioneering opportunities for those of you who have, or can develop, the ability to solve the problems of group living and working which are responsible for today's international

tensions, and for labor and political strife in our own country.

Too many men and women of the present generation are living on the edge of life. Instead of living out in the stream, they let themselves be crowded close in to shore, and cling to security for all they are worth. Only the daring have the courage to let go and push out into the current, where they experience the full sweep of life. Yet that is where the satisfactions are.

I should also like to leave with you an encouraging statement made by Admiral Richard E. Byrd, who in his Anarctic explorations had the fullest opportunity to test human endurance and capacity. He said: "Few men during their lifetime come anywhere near exhausting the resources dwelling within them. There are deep wells of strength that are never used."

And now let us take one last look at the picture of your future - and the future of our country - and the whole confused world.

In childhood doubtless all of you read the Arabian Nights story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp.

You will recall that the possessor of this magic lamp had but to rub it to summon a genie who would grant his every wish.

You will recall, also, that an African magician, desiring to possess this fabulous lamp, bought a dozen shiny new lamps, put them in a basket, and paraded before Aladdin's palace in his absence, crying "Who will change old lamps for new?"

One of the slaves ran to her mistress in great excitement to tell her of the wonderful offer, recalling to her an old lamp on a shelf in the absent Aladdin's robing room.

"If the princess chooses," said the slave, "she may have the pleasure of trying if this fool is so silly as to give a new lamp for an old one."

Not knowing the magic of Aladdin's lamp, the princess ordered it exchanged for a new one - with the unhappy result known to all of you.

That fable is being repeated today in our national life. There are people, some of them merely ignorant, others with evil design, who continually urge us to accept a new ideological picture in exchange for our fine old symbolic painting of Independence Hall, Birthplace of our Freedom. With the inspiration of this freedom-picture, and in its spirit, our country has developed a way of life, and achieved a measure of well-being, which the rest of the world envies.

Let other nations work to whatever picture they wish, no matter how new or alluring, or how craftily varnished with transparently false promises. Our freedom-picture has the magic to keep our country worth living in.

You are fortunate to be starting your new life in the United States of America. But our American Freedoms cannot safely be taken for granted. If you are to be free to work out your personal picture for the future, you will have to stand out staunchly against repeated attempts, often by well-intentioned people, to restrict these freedoms, usually on the most plausible pretexts, and nearly always with the promise that the restrictions will be only "temporary" on account of some particular "emergency."

In short, the picture for your future and the future of America, will be bright only so long as you and all of us live up both to our opportunities and our responsibilities, in our business or professional lives and as citizens.

You will be surprised to discover how much you can do, and what a good life you will have, as a result of investing yourself fully and hopefully.