

"The Joy of Achievement"

Address Delivered by

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at the

CLASS DAY EXERCISES

THURSDAY, JULY 28, 1960, CAMPUS GREEN

In Connection with the

Ninety-Seventh

Annual Commencement Celebration

BRYANT COLLEGE

of Business Administration

Providence, Rhode Island



Founded 1863

“THE JOY OF ACHIEVEMENT”

It is not always, or perhaps even often, that a speaker can feel certain his subject will appeal to everybody in his audience. However, I venture to feel that way today.

Why? Because I am going to talk about achievement, and it is unlikely that any of you would have persevered through semester after semester of study, or sought to enter Bryant College in the first place, had you not had a deep desire to achieve something.

There is no achievement, of course, without a contest. The contest may be against other men, against nature, or against one's own handicaps of body, mind, or character, or against a combination of these.

The editors of **FORTUNE** magazine have compiled a unique book on the very subject which I wish to discuss with you today, **THE ART OF SUCCESS**. The book contains no enticing success formulas but rather describes the lives of several successful contemporary businessmen and shows the divergences of age, background, interests, hobbies, and—yes—even looks. There are, however, two characteristics which are common to all of them—success qualities which can be developed by all of us—integrity and drive.

Probably no time in the history of our country have there been more attractive opportunities in the field of human endeavor than at the present—particularly in the fields of specialization. We cannot help but contrast the change in times from the days when our forefathers suffered great hardships and seemingly insurmountable obstacles that future generations might enjoy freedoms and comforts of life unbeknown to them to the present when opportunities are endless. Little could these pioneers look ahead to the age of free enterprise, automation, air conditioning, electronics, and television—all of which we are apt to accept in a matter-of-fact way. We owe it to these selfless pioneers, to our country, to ourselves as individuals, and to our families—many of whom happily sit among you today who

have often sacrificed that you may be better prepared for life. We need to make the most of the opportunities of our free world where the individual is a personality and does not exist for the state, but where the state exists for the individual.

Equality of opportunity, therefore, prevails in our American way of life, the very thing for which our forefathers fought. Any man or woman can rise as high and go as far as his or her talents and capabilities permit, with the admonition that no victory is worth a dishonorable means to attain. By dictionary definition the idea of "achievement" seems to bear no clear moral connotation, yet we know this is as important as the act itself.

As far as your own individual contribution to our free world is concerned, you can try to improve yourself in every way—mentally, spiritually, and physically. You who have a special preparation in Business Administration, Business Teacher Education, or Secretarial Science can make a unique contribution to business, which is the life stream of our country. There is a prayer in my heart this morning—an earnest prayer—that the new blood you bring to the life stream of business will be clean and fine and strong—strong in integrity of character, efficiency, and purpose.

It is my sincere hope also that you will go out into the world of business with confidence. I do not counsel you to be over-confident, but I would have you realize the value of the education you have, just as you realize the value of any of your other possessions. Of course, the value of education depends largely upon you, upon the application, work, and character you have brought to the course you have taken; and if you continue in the same earnest preparation that you have shown in your studies, you will go far in your chosen profession. The great beauty and fascination of achievement lie in the fact that opportunities are innumerable and are open to all.

Most of us are not required to confront heroic necessity, nor is heroic opportunity presented to us. Yet we have abundant chances to achieve something of significance to ourselves and to others and experience the joy that comes of such achievement.

It has been my good fortune to watch the development of many hundreds of young men and women while students at Bryant College and later on as businessmen and women. The successful ones applied themselves diligently to the very best of their ability to their studies and later on to their work, having steadily tried to improve themselves in every possible way. They are respecters of work and know that there is no development without effort, and effort means work.

In one respect all this may be discouraging to the young man or woman about to enter upon adult life. Have all the prizes been won? Is it any use to try?

Fear not. Life never runs out of opportunities; it only runs out of persons to recognize and accept them. At this very moment some determined unknown is rising from rags to riches. The voices that will be recognized and revered tomorrow are now struggling to be heard. A saint is being canonized by his or her deeds, though not yet known to the world.

The successful person looks forward to a challenging career and accomplishing what he sets out to do and then sticking with it until it is completed. He learns to cut his cloth to suit his purse and live within his income. He sticks to the job until he has mastered it, no matter what discouragements arise in the course of going ahead. There are certain characteristics common to all men who make a success of work. They try to do the job a little better than seems necessary, and they do not count hours but rather accomplishments. It is this type of man or woman who eventually comes to the attention of the employer for promotions.

There is nothing more pathetic than to talk with people well along in years who regret the fact that they had not made more of themselves in their younger productive years. I hope that you will remember this and take heed as you strive to make a place for yourself in this world of ours. At times you will be confronted with problems undreamed of by you, and for a time you will not know which way to turn. I would like to pass along to you a proverb which

has helped me through thick and thin; and as you become discouraged or perturbed, perhaps you, too, may find it helpful: "When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hold on."

Be not content, young men and young women, just to "get by" but seek to bring out resources within yourselves that can be improved and developed by effort, work, and devotion. Those of you who desire to become an accountant, an executive assistant, a salesman, a teacher, or a secretary can make a name for yourselves in positions of esteem if you are not content merely to do "just a day's work." Success does not come that easily. It is that *extra* effort, *extra* work, and *extra* determination that comprises success and reaps the joy of achievement.

If you would have a life rich in joy, resolve to achieve something every day. Then you will be on the road to a double profit from a single investment, for the keeping of your resolve will be an achievement and whatever you do to keep it will be another achievement.

I personally feel confident that many of you will go far in the business world, that your name will be added to the scroll of thousands of Bryant graduates who bring efficiency and integrity to high executive positions. It makes me happy and at the same time gratified to believe that our alumni found their education at Bryant College fruitful and that the ideals and standards of our College have aided them in growing steadily and in becoming successful citizens.

Tomorrow when I have the great satisfaction of awarding degrees and diplomas to you, the Class of 1960, I will do so with pride and affection and with a fervent prayer for your future happiness and success in the joy of achievement. I wish you Godspeed.