

FROM: Mayor Hubert H. Humphrey

GRADUATING INTO THE COMMUNITY

No one needs to tell young people that they are entering an uneasy and unhappy world. War, famine, and fear still stalk this troubled universe.

But someone does need to tell young people that these enormous problems can be solved and that they can help to solve them.

What can you do? What can you do to earn peace, abundance and freedom for yourselves and your children?

Let's start out with a definition of the word democracy.

Democracy is government of the people, by the people, and for the people. I think the most important part is "by the people." Because if government is not by the people, it will not be of the people or for the people.

What do I mean?

I mean that if people don't run their government for their own benefit, someone else will run it for his benefit. Dictators promise everything in return for complete power. But once they get power they give very little in return. Men with absolute power are corrupted by it, and they always end up doing great evil to everyone including themselves.

Democracy is a system that makes it possible for the people to control and direct the men who hold political power--the elected officials of government. While our public officials are not perfect, they do have to toe the mark; if they don't, too

many plain citizens find out about it and vote against them at the next election.

Democracy, we think, is the best political system, but it is also the most demanding system. It demands that all of its citizens spend time and energy in learning about and participating in the processes of government. This is not impossible. The history of democracy shows that the ordinary citizen can become an active part of his government.

However, the place where he must start is in his own local government. It is here where he can see, hear, and feel the problems. It is here where he can learn the delicate techniques of cooperation and leadership. It is here that he must first show that he can make democracy work in his own community.

So I am saying that you (all of you) must make democracy work. If you don't, no one else will. And you must make it work first in your own local government.

If you can't build a sound and good political house in your own neighborhood, you will never be able to go on to build the imposing structure of world peace and happiness.

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