

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP AWARD DINNER - 25th yr

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

MAY 23, 1966

18 yrs ago here
I am deeply honored once again to receive your National Fellowship Award.

~~The Fellowship Commission is known throughout America as one of the most dynamic and effective human relations groups carrying forward our struggle against discrimination, prejudice and bigotry.~~

If anything, my feelings of gratitude and pleasure ^{appreciation} exceed those I felt 16 years ago upon first receiving this award.

I want to talk to you about our Country - its purpose - its conscience - its ~~history~~ promises
Sixteen years ago we knew the challenge of civil rights commanded priority attention.

and we wondered
~~But we could honestly wonder~~ whether or not America

would respond to the urgent cry for justice and freedom.

↳ Today one fact is clear: ~~that~~ ^{*did respond - America*} America has come to grips with racial discrimination.

↳ We have responded to the challenge of civil rights with an intensity and conviction few would have predicted 16 years ago.

↳ And yet, despite our victories, ~~we find ourselves not unlike those friends and members of the Fellowship Commission who gathered 16 years ago~~ → We still see civil rights as the principal domestic concern facing the people of this land.

↳ In all candor we must ask these questions:

Will America be capable of finishing the job so nobly begun?

Can we truly achieve the goal of "freedom now" --
~~the affirmation of the civil rights movement~~ which ~~also~~ sums
up so eloquently the foundations of our democratic faith?

The promise of freedom is like ^{the} rays of the rising
sun dispelling the shadows of night.

and Today these rays are reaching into the darkest corners
of our urban ghettos and rural slums.

Hi-noon But we must now persevere until the sun has ~~risen~~ ^{risen to}
completely -- until the hopelessness and despair of the long
night of bondage is transformed into a shining day of
freedom and opportunity.

The encouraging progress of the past 16 years has
been the product of three major forces:

• Americans of all races and colors, often acting against
tremendous odds, have fought with courage ^{+ Tenacity} to secure simple
justice for millions of Negro Americans and other minorities
who have lived for generations in the shadows of segregation
and discrimination.

↳ The great institutions of our democracy -- the Presidency . . . the Congress . . . the Supreme Court -- have taken equally dramatic action according to their respective procedures and traditions.

↳ This 16-year period began with the series of historic Supreme Court decisions culminating in the historic proposition, set forth in the Brown case, that segregated education is inherently unequal.

↳ This period includes passage of ~~the~~ Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

↳ And today Congress is considering another series of historic civil rights proposals, advanced by President Johnson, dealing with jury trials, protection of civil rights workers, school desegregation, and equal housing opportunity.

↳ A handful of courageous organizations -- the NAACP and the Education and Legal Defense Fund, CORE, and the

Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, among others -- have waged this struggle for human dignity and freedom in the courtrooms, schoolrooms, lunch counters and voting booths of this land.

Yet, the ^{True} story of the past 16 years is dramatized ~~most~~ ~~clearly~~ by countless acts of individual heroism and courage.

We recall the courageous seamstress of Montgomery, Alabama -- Mrs. Rosa Parks -- who, in 1955, decided she would no longer tolerate the segregation of that city's bus system.

~~And during the historic boycott of those buses,~~ the voice of a young unknown Baptist minister -- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ^{who} spoke out forcefully in support of nonviolent action to win the minds and consciences of America in support of freedom and equality.

↳ We remember the turmoil which resulted from the unsuccessful attempt to admit Miss Autherine Lucy to the University of Alabama in 1956. But, we also recall the successful entrance of Miss Vivian Malone in 1963.

↳ We remember the quiet dignity and courage of the Little Rock youngsters as they filed into Central High School between rows of National Guardsmen in 1957.

↳ We remember the fortitude and dignity of the students from North Carolina Agriculture and Technical College as they conducted the first "sit-in" in Greensboro in 1960 -- and the ~~remarkable~~ spread of this nonviolent procedure to root out the evils of segregated lunch counters and restaurants.

↳ We think of the Freedom Rides of 1961 and the tumultuous events surrounding the admission of James Meredith to the University of Mississippi in 1962.

↳ We remember the non-violent demonstrations of Dr. King and his followers in 1963 to bring before America a variety of local injustices relating to public accommodations and equal job opportunity in Birmingham. *and,*

↳ We recall, ~~of course,~~ moments of great individual sorrow and tragedy -- the bombing of the church in Birmingham and the death of four young girls attending Sunday school . . . the murders of Medgar Evers; Lemuel Penn; William Moore, the white Baltimore postman on his Freedom Walk; Reverend James Reeb; Viola Liuzzo and, of course, Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney.

↳ We cannot forget the dozens of bombings, savage beatings and assaults, church burnings, and other acts of terrorism and intimidation which have marked these turbulent 16 years.

↳ But ~~we also recognize that~~ these sacrifices have not been in vain.

↳ For out of the heartbreak and tragedy has come not only hope and faith for a ~~just~~ ^{better} tomorrow but heartening changes in the conditions of life for the Negro American.

yes. "we shall overcome"
↳ Today we see hundreds of thousands of new Negro votes where in certain states 16 years ago there were few indeed.

↳ We see hotels and motels operating without regard to race or color in all areas of the country.

↳ Each fall we see a heartening increase in the rate of school desegregation, even though we recognize that much more must and will be done.

↳ In all areas of life we are witnessing barriers of race giving way to appeals of reason and justice.

↳ Looking back over ~~the~~ the past 16 years, what conclusions can we draw?

(1)

↳ First, this country has spoken out decisively against the barriers of legal segregation which were so evident 16 years ago.

↳ The product of a vicious social and economic system designed to impose the stamp of inferiority upon all Negroes -- and based upon the bankrupt philosophy of "separate but equal" -- these barriers are now being systematically torn down.

↳ Decisions of the Supreme Court and the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 have been the major weapons in this assault.

↳ We cannot claim total victory at this stage. We recognize that segregation is still encountered in certain schools, hospitals and public facilities. But President Johnson has voiced his determination to complete this task and this mandate is being carried out under the personal direction of the Attorney General.

↳ But let the record be perfectly clear at this point:
Segregation has no place in the public life of this nation.
It must, and will, be eliminated.

(2) ↳ Second, we have learned that laws, however skillfully
drafted and implemented, constitute only the beginning of
the process of constructing a total environment of freedom
and equality.

↳ No, civil rights legislation and the Supreme Court decisions
have not ended the civil rights struggle.

↳ As President Johnson noted last year at Howard
University -- paraphrasing Winston Churchill -- these actions
were not the end; they were not even the beginning of the
end; but they were perhaps the end of the beginning!

↳ Laws and court decisions can point the way. They
can establish criteria of right and wrong. And they can
provide a basis for eventually rooting out the evils of bigotry
and racism.

But, — They cannot

↳ ~~But~~ they cannot wipe away ^{generations} ~~centuries~~ of oppression and injustice, however much we might desire it.

↳ Our task now is to move beyond equality in law to equality in fact, to build this total environment of freedom in which all men can exercise meaningful choice in the vital areas of life.

(3)

↳ Third, we have recognized the essential role which government must play in the struggle to combat discrimination and promote equal opportunity ~~throughout our society.~~

↳ ~~Without the involvement and support of the federal government, as well as the governments of many states and localities, the civil rights record of the past 16 years could never have been written.~~

↳ But, we have also learned there are limits to the burden the federal government can and should bear.

~~It is in the very nature of a free society that a concept~~
~~the~~ equality of opportunity for all citizens -- if it is to
become a "reality in practice" and not just in theory or law -
it must have the active support of the American people!

↳ The full mobilization of that support has now become the
great challenge in civil rights. This task will be at the top
of the agenda for the White House Conference "To Fulfill
These Rights" scheduled for next week in Washington, D.C.

↳ But let us not delude ourselves as to the magnitude
or difficulty of this challenge.

↳ An automobile ride of just a few minutes' duration
brings us to neighborhoods in Philadelphia -- or in any
major urban area -- where our fellow citizens live in
unspeakable poverty . . . where hope is extinguished in
the hearts of the young and where their parents know no
hope.

- This is Poverty of the Spirit -
as well as the Purse!

It is Slumism - Poverty, Disease, illiteracy, deprivation, cynicism, that is the enemy within our gates 13 -

We cannot rest until these neighborhoods of despair are transformed into communities of hope and opportunity.

President Johnson has committed this Administration to the long-term struggle against deprivation and discrimination.

Declare war on Slumism
But each community must accept ultimate responsibility

for mobilizing the local support which is essential in developing workable, effective programs in housing, education, jobs, and health services. And all segments of the community

must be involved in this planning -- especially those people affected by the programs.

Business leadership needed!
doors of community planning and action, to the poor, the victims.

In housing, there is a critical need for metropolitan-area planning so that urban core areas will be livable, open, healthy, modern communities ~~no longer be little more than prisons.~~

~~We must declare war~~

People of all races and backgrounds must have the opportunity to purchase or rent housing, without having to brave insult, indignity and even violence.

Discrimination in housing can and is dividing the city, not only along lines, but destroying people and property.

~~The Democrat and intensity of~~

Let ~~us~~ we must increase substantially the supply of decent lower and middle income housing in all parts of the metropolitan area. -

There are ways the federal government can assist in this process -- ~~procedures suggested in the Demonstration Cities bill now pending in Congress and found in the rent supplements program~~ offer practical answers. And the President has proposed

legislation to guarantee every American the right to equal opportunity in the purchase and rental of housing.

so necessary

Federal assistance is obviously essential. But the impact of this assistance can be magnified a thousand-fold if a community is fully committed to the goal of decent, non-segregated housing for all its citizens -- if the community is developing its own new ~~creative, bold, new~~ approaches to meet the housing crisis of urban and rural America. Save your

City - It is here that you will have decent or slum housing - good or poor schools - Right here!

⑩ America - Government and People must ~~do~~ wage war on Slavery as Slavery - Poverty, Squalor, Illiteracy, deprivation, that is the enemy within our Country.

In employment, there are vast opportunities for local communities to take the lead ~~not only~~ in preventing discrimination in hiring and promotion, and job training, ~~but also in~~ promoting positive steps.

In a growing number of cities, Plans for Progress companies are establishing local merit employment councils which offer a variety of services to local businesses and unions. There is a special need for company-sponsored training programs which reach into the ghettoes for new job enrollees -- and for government training programs to do likewise.

And It is also vital that our young people be given the motivation and incentive which can only come from the promise of a real job -- a job which permits them to take their place in the world with self-respect.

We must relate Training & Education to Jobs for today + Tomorrow!

↳ This requires close coordination between our schools,
public agencies, businesses and labor unions. And it
requires hard, patient, unremitting effort.

↳ But consider the benefits -- thousands of Americans
saved from lives of idleness and despair . . . the opportunity
to break the downward spiral of poverty and prejudice . . .
the chance to bring hope and fulfillment to those trying
to survive in our urban ghettos.

↳ In education, we hold the key to "freedom now" for
those millions of Americans so long denied. And we can open
this door of opportunity by providing quality education now
for all the children of America.

~~I believe our educational system should know only
one standard -- that of excellence, whatever the location of
the school building.~~

↳ We must do other things to relieve the terrible overcrowding of our ghettos -- overcrowding in homes, schools and recreational facilities that make learning, or just plain living, almost impossible. ↳ But let us not draw back from the task of erecting cathedrals of education in our central cities as we pursue these other things.

Education

↳ I know that much of this work is underway in Philadelphia -- and a great deal is under the sponsorship of the Fellowship Commission.

It has been my great privilege to spend the day observing many of the exciting programs that your Board of Education has planned for next year. ↳ This is hard, visible evidence of what an aroused and compassionate community can do when it rolls up its sleeves and gets to work.

↳ In all of this, our task is one of providing to each individual maximum opportunity to exercise freedom of choice in the vital aspects of life.

optional

Water Time

↳ The urban ghetto is little more than a highly complex ingrained and self-sustaining system which ruthlessly and systematically denies to residents of these areas any opportunity for meaningful choice in housing, education, jobs, welfare and public services.

↳ And it is this inability to choose -- this denial of the right to chart one's destiny and to be a real participant in the social, economic and political life of this country -- which produces the frustration, bitterness, hopelessness and outrage we encounter today in the urban ghettos of America.

↳ In breaking this pattern of denial and discrimination, we will be transforming our entire social and economic structure into something quite different from what exists today.

↳ Make no mistake about it: The casting aside of artificial barriers of discrimination -- the mounting of large-scale housing, education and employment programs -- will touch the lives of every American.

↳ Sacrifices will be required -- and we will know times of turmoil and failure.

But I profoundly believe this nation possesses the moral fibre -- and the heart -- to make good on our promises of liberty and equality.

*One nation, under God, indivisible
with liberty & Justice for all.*

↳ We surely understand why it is so vital for every American to have that sacred chance to reach for the stars . . . to win or to lose . . . to stretch his mind and his talents to the fullest . . . most importantly to have the chance to simply to be somebody.

*And, We Need everybody -
America Needs you.*

Yes, in the words of the great American author
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 his vision
Can combine to make him.

This . . . is the promise of America."

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

TO: RUTH FELT
FROM: SANDY JENNETT

Attached is a transcript
of the Vice President's remarks
in Philadelphia at the Fellowship
Award Dinner on May 23, 1966.

Shannon
Humphrey's remarks
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY:

Thank you, Dr. Fordham. Thank you first for your own inspiring message and, very subjectively and personally, thank you for the award and the citation that you have just presented to me. And to my friend, Charles Simpson, and to his co-worker who has been so helpful in this program, Gus Amsterdam, to my good colleague of the United States Senate, Senator Joseph Clark, my good friend, Mayor Tate, and Richardson Dilworth, and to each and everyone of you a thanks for a wonderful, wonderful day here in Philadelphia. And, may I express a word of special appreciation to Reverend Nichols for having been with us this day, not only giving me encouragement but really a sense of feeling that I was a member of the community and to Reverend Anderson tonight for your message that succinctly and so precisely summarizes the work of the Fellowship Commission and gives us the challenge to move ahead. I must say to my friend, Sam Daroff, that it's always reassuring to have you on any programs, Sam, that it makes us know that it's going to be a success, and truly this city is privileged to have you as one of its civic leaders. I was delighted tonight to see the governor of this state, an old friend of mine here, Governor Leader, and there are so many that I could take time this evening, to pay my respects to, but I'm sure that you'll understand, Mr. Mayor, Governor, and Senator and the President of our School Board, here, and all the Members of the School Board and the Members of the Fellowship Commission, that we're here for some other purpose than the encomiums that we might give to one another, these words of congratulations and thanks and appreciation. The best thing that I can do to show you how much I appreciate your kindness, your fellowship and your friendship, is to get on with my message this evening, because I want to talk to you very seriously.

I know that I dare not take any of the risk that Charlie took tonight when he started telling these stories about Baptists and Presbyterians and Episcopalians. You can see that he's not a candidate. I was looking over the room and I noticed every man of public light just sort of breathing easily.

Philadelphia is a very special city to me. I have often been accused of sentimentality and I plead guilty. I have been accused of sometimes being, oh, bordering upon a super-patriot and I plead guilty. I love the history of this country. I think this great city of Philadelphia will live in the pages of American History forever and as has been said from this platform tonight, "If there ever was a city that should set the example for fellowship, for understanding, for brotherhood, for all that these beautiful words mean, it is this city. So you have a special obligation. And how pleased I am to see tonight right here the leaders of this community, yes, the leaders in depth, not just the name leaders but all of the leaders, business, labor, education, the professions, from the many different ethnic religious groups of this community, great spiritual leaders of our country represented here tonight. And, this is the way that it must be, because the work of building a nation indeed the work of achieving brotherhood is not the special prerogative or duty of any one, it is the privilege of all and the responsibility of many. So, tonight, I have before me the people that symbolize in this nation the hope of America, for building the kind of America that we really want, the America that is just and the America that is fair, and the America that is free. Eighteen years ago, I was in this city on a little political conclave, I hope Tom McCabe won't mind if I mention that, after all Tom did fill in for me up in New York not long ago. It shows you how bipartisan we can be around here, but eighteen years

ago I attended a little convention over here in the Philadelphia auditorium and on that occasion I said, "It is time for America to walk out of the shadows of state's rights into the bright sunshine of human rights," a phrase but a conviction, a commitment. Sixteen years ago, I was awarded, as has been indicated here tonight, your Fellowship Award. That was a great honor, particularly for a freshman Senator, or any citizen, but if anything, my feeling of gratitude and appreciation tonight exceeds that that I had sixteen years ago, even though, I suppose in public life, one gets awards, most of which are undeserved, but all of which are much appreciated. But tonight, I feel exceedingly happy and yet at the same time, I feel very serious about our contry. And, I want to talk to you tonight about America. I want to talk to you about its purpose, its conscience, and its promises. Sixteen years ago we knew challenge of civil rights commanded priority attention and yet we wondered whether or not America could or would respond to the urgent cry of justice. Today one fact is manifestly clear, America did respond and America has come to grips with racial discrimination. We responded to the challenge of civil rights with such intensity and conviction that few would have even dared predict sixteen years ago. And yet despite our victories and they've been many and wonderful, we still see civil rights, human rights, as the principal domestic concern facing the people of this land. In all candor tonight, we must ask ourselves these questions. Will our America be capable of finishing the job so nobly begun? Can we truly achieve the goal of freedom now which sums up so eloquently the foundations of our democratic faith? The promise of freedom, oh what it means to so many! The promise of freedom is like the rays of the rising sun dispelling the shadows of night and today those rays are reaching into the darkest corners of the urban ghettoes and the rural slums of our city and those rays are also

penetrating other areas of the world and creating a restlessness and a desire for freedom which will persist until it is achieved. The encouraging progress, however, the past sixteen years has been the product, as I see it, of three major forces, Americans of all races often acting against tremendous odds, don't forget the odds that we've had to face, have fought with courage, tenacity, to secure simple justice for millions of negro Americans and other minorities who have lived for generations in the shadows of segregation and discrimination. The great institutions of our democracy, the presidency, the Congress and the courts have taken equally dramatic action according to their own respective procedures and traditions. This sixteen year period began with the series of historic Supreme Court decisions culminating in the historic proposition set forth in the Brown case, namely that segregated education is inherently unequal. This period includes the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1957, 1960, 1964 and your senator and your speaker here tonight have been in the midst of these fights and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. And even today, Congress is considering another series of historic civil rights proposals that need your help, need your blessing, need your support, advanced by President Johnson, dealing with jury trials to preserve the sanctity, the integrity of our jury system, the protection of civil rights workers, the violence, school desegregation, and equal housing opportunities. A handful of courageous organizations, the NAACP and the education and legal defense fund, CORE, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, among others and there are many others, have waged this struggle for human dignity and freedom in the courtrooms, the schoolrooms, the lunch counters, the department stores, the voting booths of this land, yet the true story, the real true story of the past sixteen years is dramatized by the countless acts of individual heroism and courage.

Recall with me just a moment, a courageous seamstress of Montgomery, Alabama, Mrs. Rosa Parks, who in 1955 decided she would not tolerate segregation of the city bus system any longer, one woman against a system and she prevailed; the voice of an unknown Baptist Minister, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who spoke out forcefully in support of non-violent action to win the minds and consciences of Americans in support of freedom and equality; one voice, but one to be heard. You remember the turmoil, don't you, that resulted from the unsuccessful attempt to admit Miss A. Lucy to the University of Alabama in 1956. It seems so long ago, but we also recall the successful entrance of Miss Vivian Malone in 1963. We remember above all, let your mind's eye go back now for a little while, the quiet dignity and courage of those youngsters in Little Rock as they filed into Central High School between rows of National Guardsmen in 1957. It just doesn't seem like it could have happened here. We remember the fortitude and dignity of the students from North Carolina Agriculture and Technical College as they conducted the first sit-in in Greensboro in 1960. And the spread of this non-violent procedure to root out the evil of segregated lunch counters and restaurants, and we think of the freedom rides in 1961, and the tumultuous events surrounding the admission of James Meredith to the University of Mississippi in 1962, and we remember the non-violent demonstrations of Dr. King and his followers in 1963, to bring before our America a variety of local injustices relating to public accommodations and even job opportunity at Birmingham, and we recall moments of great individual sorrow, tragedy, the bombing of a church in Birmingham and the death of four young girls attending Sunday School, the murder of Edgar F. Evers, Lemuel Penn, William Moore, the white Baltimore Postman on his freedom walk, the Reverend James Reed, Viola Leosa and, of course, Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Cheny. We remember these things and we cannot forget the dozens of bombings, savage beatings

and assaults, church burnings, other acts of terrorism and intimidation which have marked these turbulent sixteen years. My fellow Americans, I've recited a sorry picture but maybe it puts some of the other problems of this world in proper perspective. Maybe when we see on our television what other people do in other places, we'll remember that some of it happened here, even in this rich, powerful America, where justice is supposed to be the living symbol of our life. But, I'm happy to say that these sacrifices haven't been in vain. Most everything that's worthwhile comes out of pain and agony for out of the heartbreak and tragedy has come not only hope and faith for a better tomorrow but heartening changes in the conditions of life for the American Negro. Yes, it is a fact. We shall overcome and we have, much. Today, we see hundreds of thousands of new negro votes where in certain states sixteen years ago, there were only a few indeed, and the power of that ballot will not only change office holders but change patterns of economic and social conduct. We see hotels and motels operating without regard to race or color in all areas of the country and each fall we see a heartening increase in the rate of school desegregation even though much more remains to be done. In all areas of life where we are witnessing barriers of race giving way to appeals of reason and justice because of people like yourself. Looking back over these sixteen years, what conclusions do we draw. Well, first, this country has spoken out decisively against the barriers of legal segregation which was so evident sixteen years ago. The product of a vicious social and economic system designed to impose the stamp of inferiority on all negroes based upon the bankrupt philosophy of separately equal, these barriers are now being systematically torn down. We cannot claim total victory, though, nor should we. We recognize segregation as still encountered in many areas, in schools, hospitals, public facilities. But I ask

you to let the record be perfectly clear at this point. Segregation has no place in the public life of this nation. Your president and this government is committed to its elimination and it must and it will be eliminated. We have learned that laws, however skillfully drafted and implemented, and my, we have written some good law, constitute only the beginning of the process of constructing a total environment of freedom and equality. Civil Rights Legislation and Supreme Court decisions have not ended the civil rights struggle. President Johnson noted last year in Howard University, paraphrasing Winston Churchill that these actions were not the end, they were not even the beginning of the end, but they were perhaps the end of a beginning. We have begun. We've taken the first steps. Laws and court decisions can point the way. They can establish the criteria for right or wrong and they can provide a basis for eventually rooting out the evils of bigotry and racism, but they cannot and I repeat, they cannot wipe out generations of injustice and oppression, however much we may desire it. We cannot be content, my fellow Americans, by the fact that we passed a law which seems to be an old habit of Americans, pass a law against it and relax. To pass a law is the one sure sign that there is no relaxation ahead. Our task, now is to move beyond equality and law, to equality in fact, to build a total environment of freedom and freedom must have an environment in which all men can exercise meaningful choice in vital areas of life. Then, too, we've recognized the essential role that government can and must play in this struggle for human rights but we have also learned that there are limits to the burden that the federal government can and should bear. Equality of opportunity for all citizens, if it is to become a reality in practice and not just in theory or in law, must have active support of the American people in this community, every community. The full mobilization of that support has now become the great challenge in civil rights and this is the task of the challenge that will be

discussed in the forthcoming White House Conference to fulfill these rights. But let us not delude ourselves now as to the magnitude and the difficulty of the challenge. I've traveled in your city today and I've loved every minute of it. How well I recall these schools and the children and the teachers. And it has meant so much to me and it has lifted my spirits. All I can say is, "What a wealth, what wealth of resources are here in these young people. What an opportunity for this community and how honored I am tonight to be the recipient of the award that I received at Central High." These things mean so much. But I can say to you without in any way offending you that just a few minutes ride from this fine hotel will bring us to neighborhoods in Philadelphia or if it were in any other city in any major urban area, where our fellow citizens live in unspeakable poverty, where hope is extinguished in the hearts of the young, and where their parents know no hope. And I speak not tonight now of just the poverty of the purse, the easiest form of poverty to overcome particularly in a rich country, but I speak of the poverty of the mind and of the spirit and of the soul. The poverty of frustration and bitterness and hatred, of hopelessness that is a kind of poverty a virus of poverty that infects far too many people in this nation. We cannot rest for a moment until these neighborhoods of despair are transformed into communities of hope and opportunity. The President of the United States, the Congress, have committed this government to a long term struggle against deprivation and discrimination. And I said this afternoon in answer to a student at Central High that our enemy within was "Slumism" not just Communism. Communism evil, yes, a denial of every basic tenet of our faith, a denial of human dignity itself, but Slumism is here in every city and I'm not talking only about the dilapidated physical structures of our slums; I'm talking about the people that are within them; people who live in despair;

the slumism of poverty, of disease and of illiteracy, of deprivation and cynicism, this is the enemy within our gates. My fellow Americans, it is this enemy that can tear this nation apart unless we win the struggle against slumism, unless we make it clearly a fact that in America, there is an opportunity for everybody and that there is an environment in which freedom can grow and be nourished. This is not just the task of Washington or of great men or of community leaders. Each community and all of its citizens must accept ultimate responsibility for mobilizing local support which is essential for developing workable, effective programs in housing, education, jobs, in health services and all segments of the community must be involved in the planning, in this hope for tomorrow, the rich and the poor, people of every ethnic and racial and religious group. This is an American problem and we must settle it here. In housing there is a critical need for metropolitan area planning so that the urban core areas will be livable. Cities ought to be beautiful. Cities should never be unlivable. And yet the American cities of today face a crisis, our cities are becoming obsolete not only in physical structure but in human living conditions. And we're running away from the city and we're actually running away from ourselves. These cities must be open, healthy and modern. People of all races and backgrounds must have an opportunity to live in these cities, the opportunity to purchase or rent housing without having to endure insults and indignities or even violence. I say in warning and in friendly warning, to you as I have to others, discrimination in housing can and is dividing the city. Destroying the people and property. Now, we must increase substantially the supply, therefore, of good housing, middle income housing in all parts of our community. The demonstration city is one hope. This is a trial that we hope to undertake, rent supplements for the low income groups another possibility, and we must try it. Federal

assistance is obviously essential, but the impact of this assistance can be magnified a thousand fold if a community is wholly committed, if you are committed to the goal of decent, non-segregated housing for all people, if the community is developing its own approaches to the problem to beat the housing crisis of urban and rural America. I don't think we need it all from Washington. I think we have the way and means of doing this where we live. I don't want Americans to look always to the nation's capitol for the solution to every human problem. These problems of human relations are family problems, city problems, community problems, neighborhood problems. They're ours and the only place to settle them is here and the only way to do it is to recognize that the way you treat your people is the way you treat your God. Once you understand that, then religion and spirituality and politics takes on some meaning. So, save your city. It is here that you'll have decent homes or you'll have slums. It's here that you'll have good schools or bad ones. It's here that you'll have happy people or people that are angry. In employment, too, there are vast opportunities and I know that you are doing something about it. Plans for Progress are establishing local merit employment councils. There is a special need for company sponsored training programs for our youth and for those who are the victims of obsolescence, so to speak, in industry and your federal government and your local and state government can work hand in hand, and our young people, all these wonderful young people, they must be given the motivation and the incentive which can only come from the promise of a real job, a job which can permit them to take their place in the world with self respect. I say to the educators tonight, let's make our education relevant to modern living. Let's not be afraid to teach people how to do things so that they might live a little better. Sometimes when I see the staggering problem of the school dropout, I wonder whose fault it is. It appears

to me that some young people drop out because there doesn't seem to be anything going on within that means much to their lives. Now all of this requires great coordination between schools and public agencies, businesses, trade unions and requires hard and unremitting effort, but consider the benefits, the lives that are saved from despair and idleness, the opportunity to break the downward spiral of poverty and prejudice, the chance to bring hope and education, that's the key to freedom, that's it for those millions of Americans so long denied and has been said here tonight, let's make education quality education. Let's have but one standard for American education, excellence, the best. This is the richest nation. This is the most powerful nation. This is the nation that boasts of its technology and its achievements, then let everybody share in it, because to do less is to weaken the nation that today is rich. We need to do other things, too. Let us not draw back to the past of erecting cathedrals of education in our central cities, the best schools where they need them the most, the finest teachers, the most capable teachers amongst the students and the families that need them the most. Let's not have education upside down, where the best schools are where they need them the least, and I know that much of this work is underway right here. I've been with your school board today and I know much of this work is under the sponsorship of the Fellowship Commission. I've seen visible evidence of what an aroused and compassionate community can do when it rolls up its sleeves and goes to work. In all of this, our task is one of providing each individual and I repeat, each individual, not mass, that's an ugly word, everybody is important, each individual, maximum opportunity to exercise freedom of choice. The urban ghetto doesn't leave you much freedom of choice. No meaningful choice of education or jobs or welfare, and it's this inability to choose, this denial of the right to chart one's destiny, to be a real participant in the social

economic and political life of this country which produces the riots, the outrage, the frustration, the bitterness, the hopelessness that we encounter all too often today in the urban ghettos of America. I say once again we must build cities to make them livable. Man was intended to live in a wholesome environment, and those who deny them a decent and wholesome environment really, if you please, desecrate man, violate all that is important. Make no mistake about it, casting these artificial barriers aside of segregation and discrimination, the mounting of these programs of housing and education, employment, they'll touch the lives of every American because none of us are better than those that surround us. Sacrifices, yes, and we will know times of turmoil and failure and those of little faith will turn back, but I profoundly believe that this nation possesses the moral fiber and the heart, yes, the sense of fair play and compassion to make good on our promises of liberty and equality. Twice today I have heard the Pledge of Allegiance and I want to believe it. I want to believe it as a part of my life. I want to believe that this is one nation and not two, the nation of the affluent and the nation of the poor. I want to believe that this is one nation, not two, the nation of the white and the nation of the black. I want to believe that this is one nation under God, not under archaic, obsolete structures and institutions that have no place in the twentieth century, one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all, everyone, because if it is less than for all, then it is for none. I think we understand then, why it is so vital for every American to have his sacred chance to reach for the stars, to win or to lose, to stretch his mind and his talents to the utmost, and most importantly, to have the chance, simply to be somebody, to be wanted, to be needed, and to be important. My message is summarized in the words of that American author that many of us read in the 1930's, Thomas Wolfe, and this is in a sense the

creed that I wish to give you, the secular scripture for the evening,
"To every man his chance, to every man regardless of his birth, his
shining golden opportunity. To every man, the right to live and to
work, to be himself and to become whatever things his manhood and his
vision can combine to make him. This is the promise of America."
That's the America that I believe is the America Beautiful, the America
that we love, that American which is filled with promise and hope for
generations yet unborn. May I thank the Fellowship Commission tonight
for your great work in keeping this hope and this image of America a
life image, a real image, the fact of our kind. Thank you very much.

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