

T.O.Y.M. Speech - February 14, 1970

Kato Entertainment Center

Mankato, Minnesota

Opening Remarks:

Thank you very much President Downey. It's always nice to be introduced by a President. I've always wanted that to happen to me. It's very nice also to hear from President Willard. I must say that this banquet has a way of humiliating a fellow. You have two Presidents speak, then you have a renegade Irishman get up and tell you that there's nothing lower than being a Vice-President. But I sure want to thank you for the invitation-nice evening. I look out here to find one friend and I see my good friend, Congressman Nelson, and I just want Ancher to know that his presence here is appreciated. I thought it was rather unfortunate, although, Ancher, that Paul, in introducing you, mentioned that you were out there in left field. I don't think that's any place for you to be in left field. Not in this district, no, no, it's better to be down in the center I would say. This is the first time that Ancher has been left to me, I tell you that. We're very honored tonight, of course, to have as the honored guest of the evening, Russell Vores and his wife, Ruth. Russell has brought great fame to our state and has surely brought honor to himself. I'm very happy to be associated with him. I'm grabbing a hold of anybody that has any kind of fame at all. When I found out as I knew that he was a transplant from South Dakota, I thought that this was a chance for me to brag a little bit. Not just because I'm a transplant from South Dakota, but I want to tell you where he came from. I came from a rather large cultural center. If you hadn't heard about it, I would be glad to take the next hour or two to tell you about it. I come from Doland, South Dakota. Of course, I worked my way up. I started out in Wallace. There were 77 people, 76 Norwegians and one Yankee, like my father. Then I went to Doland. There were 600 and then I got into Huron there were 10,000 and that's where I met Muriel. You take Russell- Where do you think he came from? Huron? Sioux Falls? Any of those great metropolitan centers? Any of the great urban complexes? Any of the great cultural centers? Not at all. He came from Hitchcock, South Dakota! And I want to tell you he's done well getting that kind of a start. Now Muriel came from South Dakota too. I want to keep everything happy in the household here. It's

very nice to see all you ex-South Dakotans. Now I don't want anybody to come out against migration. I was worried about that because I heard about that they shouldn't go to the Cities, I was worried about whether they should come to Minnesota. They've got room here for more people in case they want to come. I want to welcome too tonight the ladies that are here and to say how much Mrs. Humphrey and I appreciate the many wonderful things that the Mrs. Jaycees do in this state and particularly the work in the field of helping the mentally retarded and the mentally ill. All of us, I think, owe the ladies a hand and a thank you. When I came in and I saw that sign up there that says "Fifty Years in Growing" I said now here's a crowd that knew how to make a fellow feel good. That's what I've been trying to tell people in this state. I'm a little over 50 and I'll leave the rest of it up to you. I think that's my slogan in case I should do anything politically from here on out. By the way I just am so pleased with your master of ceremonies. I like those ecumenical non-partisan jokes that he told. It really was nice of him and I did think, though, that the one about the Vice-President was a little bit on the shady. I don't think he ought to say things like that about Mr. Agnew. I thought maybe, in order to keep this thing on a non-partisan, bi-partisan keel, I thought that you ought to know how we Democrats have been reveling in our recent successes. We haven't won many elections, but we've been winning some prizes. For example, the Johnson-Kronkite Show has just won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction! I have a lot of things like that in mind tonight. ~~bu~~I heard ~~bu~~Russell say to Muriel, "What comes after Hubert?", and she said "Sunday!". I guess I'd better get on with my work here-I'd keep you too long. I want to say to Paul though, you did give us a ray of hope around here for some of us when he was introducing Willard, why he said something about what a great activist Willard was and how the former Jaycee leaders here in Mankato were old turkeys. Well I just want to say to you fellows it's better to be an old turkey than an exhausted rooster, like this fellow up here.

Speech:

It's always a rare privilege to talk to an audience of this calibre and of this age group, of this promise. I said here tonight as I was sitting at the head table. I said there's enough talent in this room tonight to reshape this whole society of ours in any way we want to do it. If there are ills, and I'm sure we have some. If there are weaknesses, and I'm sure we have some. If there are inequities, and indeed we have those. All of this can, in a sense, be cured or corrected by the kind of ability and competence and talent and drive that's in this audience tonight.

I just looked at a little book I had with me tonight and I saw something there that says, "A success is one who decided to succeed and worked." A failure is one who decided to succeed and wished."

I think you Jaycees have decide to succeed and have gone to work. There is so much to do. All of it is a tremendous challenge. I want to get our vocabulary straightened out if I can. Most people today talk about problems. I wish you would look upon the problems as a challenge. Most people today talk about our difficulties. I wish you would look upon difficulties as opportunities. To get ourself to use that old tripe phase 'thinking in the positive' or 'thinking positively' because it does help. You are what you want to be. As a man thinkest, so is he. A nation, like an individual, or an individual, like a nation, can really think itself and talk itself into despair. Or you can help get yourself geared up for what needs to be done by realizing your own competence, your own ability, sensing it, developing it, and then going out to challenge what's before you. Most everybody is capable of doing more than they have done. The story of this nation is the story of success on the part of people who have the confidence in themselves to make it possible. In that song of the man from the Mancho, I'm sure that you know that's the impossible dream that we have heard so many times. Well this country is the fulfillment of the impossible dream and there is one instance after another or one development after another, which for all practical purposes is one impossible dream. I am sure that Russell Vores would tell you that there were times that he must have felt that it was impossible to do what he set out to do, but he had the get up and the go and the courage and the faith and the determination and a little bit of luck, as we all need on occasion, but he had mainly those qualities

of perseverance, and adventure and daring and drive to work and that impossible dream became a reality. Now it is sort of customary at this time of the year in 1970 to talk about the decade that's just past and to look ahead and I want to do both in the time that's mine tonight.

The 1960's. I've read so much about the 1960's that I wonder if I really lived during that time. I think I have a little different view of the 60's than some of ^{the} things I've heard about it. The decade of the 60's could be well termed the decade of decent, because we had plenty of it. The decade of disorder, because we had lots of that. But it also was the decade of development and the decade of discovery. I jotted down here just a few things that might be of relevance to your experience and to the times and days ahead of you because you are, after all, the generation that is going to be, in many instances, the generation that is in charge. I'd surely like to know what you're thinking and what your plans are because you may very well be in charge of my Medicare and I want to know what you're up to and what kind of folks you are later on! But don't hurry it - I'm not ready yet! Take care! The decade of the 60's. What did we discover? First of all I think we discovered a lot about ourselves. It was a period of self-examination. We looked up into the great national mirror and we saw our image and we saw our countenance and sometimes we saw it was blemished. Sometimes we saw it with a note or at least an image of happiness and sometimes of bitterness. We saw poverty in the midst of unbelievable affluence. Yes, we saw hunger in the midst of plenty. We saw illiteracy within a social structure that had done more in the field of education than any society in recorded history. We saw ~~quite~~ unemployment and underemployed and unemployables at a time when our economy was literally busting at the seams. We saw an urban society become very visible with all of its beauty and ugliness, because cities are not all bad, even though they're frequently so interpreted. We also saw racism at a time that most of us were talking brotherhood and I'm deeply impressed by the Jaycees creed. I love to hear you say it, I have joined in the recitation of it hundreds of times and may I say that it's the same kind of a creed as the pledge of allegiance and we said both of them here tonight. But they mean something, my fellow Americans or we ought not to say them. Because there is one thing that we cannot afford in this land of ours and that is a double standard or any kind of hypocrisy in either public or

private affairs. When we talk about one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, we ought to mean it and practice it, try to live it, and work for it and sacrifice for it, or quit saying it. And if we quit saying it, then we die. Everything that America~~x~~ ever meant died because America is not just a piece of ground, it's not just a great economy. America is an idea, it's an idea about man, an idea about a human being. It's an idea about man and his relationship to his fellow man and man and his relationship to the institutions that he creates. And above all, it's an idea about human dignity. And that is what the Jaycee creed is about. When I read these lines, 'We believe that earth's great treasures lie in human personality and that service to humanity is the best work of life. We believe that faith in God gives meaning and purpose to human life, that the brotherhood of man transcends the sovereignty of nations.' Well, there are other things that are said there too. Do you really believe that? If you do in this generation that I'm looking at, you must practice it. I'm here to tell you tonight that all that we have created, all the great economy, all of these fabulous institutions of material and material goods and structure, all of them will be for not unless we learn how to live together. We cannot export peace or even hope to get peace internationally unless we have peace within ourselves and within our own communities. We're going to have to learn how to live together in this land as Americans, as people, not as whites and blacks, not as Protestants and Catholics and Jews, not as northerner and southerner, not as urban and rural, not as east and west, but as people. When we learn how to do that many of the problems that seem to stare us in the face today and almost cause us a kind of intellectual and spiritual paralysis, will become manageable. Racism is one of the curses of our society. It must be eliminated and you and your children are going to have to do it. Now we've made some beginnings and I'm going to say a word about this. We've also lived in a time when great advancement has been made in the hope and cause of peace. A United Nations still prevails. Agreements have been signed amongst nations, particularly the super powers, like the United States and the Soviet Union. We've come to some understanding, we've come to more of them in the past five to ten years than in the preceding forty, but we've also had the ugly face of war.

If this past generation or this decade has taught us anything, it should have taught us that sheer force and military power and money is not enough to guaranty either peace or security for this nation or any other nation. That we must have learned out of the experiences we've all been through. All of us stand with some guilt. None of us are free of some blame. Now having said this, lets see what really good happened too.

This has been an amazing decade we have gone through. As a matter of fact the one thing I would like to impress upon you is not that America is seriously in trouble, but the fact that is that we have had the capacity to adjust and adapt and to survive. In these last 25 years since World War II a varitable revolution has taken place throughout the world. The amazing thing is that this structure of ours, this social, economic, political organism called the American system has been able to survive, and not only to survive, but to show great promise. We in this decade of the sixties, we elected for the first time a man of Catholic faith, as president of the United States. Now that, we take now for granted, but up until 1961 it had never happened, and what is more it looked as though it never would happen, but it did, and what a wonderful thing that at long last we judged a man by the content of his character, as Doctor Martin Luther King put it, rather than by his race, his color or his creed, and that has to be the American standard. To judge people by the content of their character. That was Dr. Martin Luther King's dream as he put it. It's mine too and it has to be yours. Judge them for what they are, not from whence they come, not of their heritage, not of their church, not of their ethnic group, not of their economic or social status, but only on merit and Jaycees if there is one thing that this organization tries to do as I've seen it over the years is to judge people on merit. If you produce, if you work, if you give of yourself, you become one of the Distinguished Award Winners without regard to race, color, or creed in this organization. Lots of other good things have been happening. Let's not just take them for granted as we hear the soothsayers of doom and gloom. We have had the first Negro, the first black man in this decade that just left us to be appointed to the Supreme Court of this land. That's an amazing breakthrough. The first black man to be in the cabinet of the United States. That is another great breakthrough. The first man on the moon in this decade, which is an amazing feat of human capacity. We've had the great transplants, heart, liver, kidney, the human organs to extend life and we're

just in the infancy stages of this new kind of medicine and new surgery. We came almost to a trillion dollar economy and I wonder how many Americans appreciate what we have. We produce almost 40% of everything that was produced in the world last year and we have less than 6% of the world's population, but we consumed, we consumed over 60% of everything that was consumed. We're great consumers, great consumers and think of what the rest of the world had, the other three billion, three hundred million, and in these 1960's, that some people look back upon as if it was a period of total distress and disaster. For the first time, the laws of this land of ours, said that people would be treated with equal justice, that there would be equal treatment under the law and equal opportunity. So, I think we have a record to look at and I come here tonight, to give ourselves just a little tune up of faith because we can't look into the 70's and all that is ahead of us, if all we can look back on is failure. There's a great deal of difference between defeat and failure. We've suffered some defeats, but I don't think we suffered failure. A defeat is a temporary set-back from whence you can recover and learn or learn and recover. A failure a defeat out of which you learn nothing and have, apparently no desire needed or the will to recover. We're not a failure, we haven't lived our best days, America hasn't lost it's way. I happen to think it's searching for a better way and I think that you are the young men and women that can help find that better way. Now despite all the distress of the 60's, American human conditions, the conditions of the American people has improved dramatically. I always say that you shouldn't make generalized statements unless you can have some reasonable body of evidence whence to support them and I noted down some evidence, I say the rhetoric of the 60's has been divorced at times from the reality. Let's take a look at some of the factors that we call human progress, like income, employment, education, even where we live, not to underestimate the problems that we have and no way to detract from the necessity of doing better but only to look upon this evidence as the proof that if we will to do better, we can do it. Let's just take a look at, in the matter for example of people in poverty in America. We hear a great ^{deal} about it. I'm concerned about it. I want you to be concerned about it because the duty of government and of society is not to make those who already have too much just to have more, but rather to make it possible to those who have too little to have a chance to have enough and we never can be happy in America, particularly with our incredible wealth as a nation, when there are millions and millions of people that for some reason or another, sometimes their fault and sometimes through no fault of

their own, are victimized by what we call poverty. Not just being poor but poverty-ridden. In 1960 we had approximately 40% of our population that were with an income under what we call the poverty level (or about 40 million of our population, I mean) 22%, a little over one-fifth. In 1968-69, we had less than 25 million in that bracket called the poverty group or slightly over 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ %. Now that's too many, but I submit to this audience that there is evidence that we have made progress and I don't think that we should erase that evidence as if it was all a failure because we have demonstrated that a free enterprise economy working in partnership with the government, that people who are socially concerned and have a sense of civic dedication, working together in the great partnership of this nation can do things and I submit that no country has made such an impressive gain on behalf of people who were the deprived as this country in the last decade. You hear a great deal for example about the industrial, military conflict and how we're just pouring out our income into it and our resources and it's needless to say we spend a great deal, and I'm sure too much. In 1961, 50% of the federal budget was for the military. In 1969, 41% was for the military, which I think indicates at least some adjustment. Disposable income for people, that's what counts but you got disposable income, what's in your pocket per capita and mark my words, no nation can even approximate this, come even close to it. Back in 1950, it was about \$1,900. In 1968, \$2,900 adjusted for inflation. Constant dollars now I'm talking about, not inflated dollars. An increase, if you please in the 1950-60 period of 14%, an increase from 1960-69 of 31% in disposable income per capita in the United States of America, non-inflated constant dollars, not bad! I won't say that it is as good as it ought to be, I'll only say it's better than anyone else has been able to achieve. We generally equate many of our problems today as I indicated early on the problem of race. What's happened to the blackman of our society, not nearly enough that is good, much more needs to be done, he deserves better of this country and he deserves a better chance but I noted some interesting commentary here the other day as I was getting ready to talk to you. I found out for example that the non-white unemployment in 1961 was about 13%, I found out that in 1969, at the end of '69 it was down to 6%. Some improvement. I found out some other things too. I found out that for non-white workers going into the white collar class which is the professional or semi-professional group in this country. In 1960, only 16% of the non-white, that is the black primarily, could be called white collar workers. In 1969 25%. We have made some progress, but I

think the most impressive figure is in education and yet our educational system is in serious trouble. In 1950 only 53% of all Americans had finished high school. In 1969, 75% of all Americans had finished high school and as for the whites and non-whites, in 1960 and '69 there were about 38% of the blacks of high school age that had finished high school and 10 years later there was almost 60% that had, progress, progress and I don't mean to put progress in the terms of dollars, and high school and college even though by the way, our college enrollment in the last 10 years in this country has doubled, doubled, if there was nothing else that plagued the college campus today except the population explosion, it would cause trouble on the campus. An interesting figure is that just 10 years ago, only about, what was it, about 16% of our population was between the ages of 18 and 24. 18 and 24, 16 million, last year 25 million between the ages of 18 and 24, a younger America. Now all of that tells us of the tremendous problems that we had but the great opportunities and I take you then to the 70's for your opportunities. We heard about one tonight and I want to emphasize this in Minnesota. Minnesota is yet a governable, manageable state. This is a land of true opportunity here. I'm privileged to live in the twin cities, I've been mayor of the city of Minneapolis, I now teach at Macalaster college in St. Paul and at the University. I think it shows how much we've progressed when the former mayor of Minneapolis can live safely in St. Paul. That really proves that lots of things that have happened that's good, but just take a look at what we have. There's a great metropolitan area of over a million people, but that great city and that great metropolitan area is still a city that is governable, still one in which we can experiment, still one in which we can have the good life, still one in which we can balance off the economy, and the cultural and educational programs with decent housing, good transportation, a clean and wholesome community. You have that chance right here to make this a reality and as Russel Vores has demonstrated to you, you have the chance here to give some semblance of rural, urban balance in Minnesota. To see to it that our communities that are called the rural countryside, the small town, the medium size city become industrially developed and not only industrially developed but culturally developed because young men and women are not going to live in cities just because there are industries. They want to live where there are good schools, community colleges, good transportation, hopefully a modern airport, surely good roads and above all, good homes and good neighborhoods. Now we can build this in our state and I happen to believe that just as about 50 years ago, state government was the pioneer for what was called the advances in federal government,

now the development in our great states of the great hinterland of America can point the way for the rest of this nation. The migration that took place into the cities, the in-migration is going to start coming out and we need to be ready for it. The 70's, in other words, can be the time for great decision for us. We're going to have to decide whether we make our cities livable, now let's face it. The present demographic projections show that 90% of the population of the United States in the year 2000 will be living in cities of 250,000 or more, unless something is done to attract young families into other parts of this land. We ought to start that program here with every conceivable incentive that can be offered by government and industry and labor and community. To build not a great metropolitan metropolis so to speak, but a balanced life of economy and social structure. We're going to have to decide what we're going to do with this country's education, whether we're willing to put more of the resources into the training of our young not just in elementary and secondary and higher but in pre-school education. Education that Mrs. Humphrey and I are interested in and that you're interested in. For the disadvantaged because every child has a claim on us, not just the normal child but the exceptional child, the disadvantaged child and we're going to have to understand in America, my fellow Americans, the great reservoir of talent in this country may very well be coming from the poorest of the poor and the blackest of the black, from the Mexican-American, the Puerto Rican and the Indian and others because there is the new hope of this land and through education we hope to make them better and they to make themselves better but I must leave you with this thought, it isn't good enough just to build a good school, all the argument about bussing today, all the argument about integration today. The way that you get over those arguments is to build good neighborhoods. When you build open neighborhoods and good neighborhoods, you will have good schools and you will have good and better people, but you cannot have people that are going to orderly, constructive, creative, that come out of the bowels of the earth, so to speak, come out of congested areas where there is little or no hope or promise and little or anything but violence and tension. Speaking of population, a figure that demonstrates what I'm trying to tell you is this, that in Harlem, New York, the population density is such that if all the other four burroughs of New York had the same population density as Harlem you could put all of the other 200 million Americans in the other four burroughs, or to put it another way, Harlem is so dense in population that

for the other burroughs to be equally dense, all 200 million Americans would have to move into it. You can't live that way ladies and gentlemen. It isn't possible and we're simply going to have to learn that God Almighty put open spaces here and gave us great resources to be used and not abused and thank goodness, the Jaycees are beginning now to take on the problems that the President of the United States has underscored, that members of congress have underscored, called our physical environment and let's protect it here in Minnesota. Let this be not just something for government with punitive measures. You're the new industrialists, you're going to build the new economy of America. Hundreds of thousands like you across this land are going to be in charge of our new plants, of our new mines, of our new industries and make it your business not only to make an industry that is profitable but make it your business to make an industry that fits into the social pattern and social system for good living. Social value and profits are not antagonistic, they are not opposites, the fact of the matter is that the new industry of America and the new economy of America will be required to place in the fore-front, the social values, the quality of life not just the quantity of goods and I think the Jaycees have the chance of a lifetime as they come into the 70's to stake out this whole new frontier and to say as we move into positions of leadership and trust, as we develop this economy, we're not only going to be content with massive production and great consumption. The quantity of goods, yes, the ledger of profit, yes, but above all the quality of life because ultimately that's what it's all about and then finally may I say that all of this will be for naught unless we learn how to live in peace and I hope that we will understand that peace is not just a wish but it has to be as I said earlier, like any kind of success, worked for, planned for and even sacrificed for. We're trying to build conditions in this world that are conducive to peace. Peace is the product. Peace is the sum total of our human effort to build a social, political structure of some harmony and some balance. Peace is not just the absence of war or conflict. It is the harmonious relationship of people working together for great causes and great purposes and one of the great purposes that we must work for, is to slow down this mad arms race which has griped our country, the Soviet Union, and regrettably other countries as well who can ill afford it. We're going to have to make up our mind that we are going to either halt the arms race or the arms race is going to halt mankind. We cannot continue to build arsenals of unreasonable destructive power without raising the power of danger and I can't help but look at this audience tonight and know that here are young parents whose children are yet to come into their adolescence and into their

maturity and in the next ten years my fellow Americans we're going to decide whether or not this world of ours is going over the obise of danger and destruction or whether we're going to pull back and have some hope for a better life. I hope that we will make the right decision. Thank goodness, our government will within two months be at Vienna, Austria, meeting with representatives of the Soviet Union in a, what I hope will be a successful effort to turn back the tide of the arms build-up and if we do, every mother in this audience will have had a prayer answered, and every father in this audience will have a better chance for himself, his family, and his country. This is one thing above all others we must concentrate upon. I want to thank you very much for permitting me to share these moments with you. I believe that all of you in this audience are in agreement with me that what we want from our country is what you and I had, and that's what I call a chance, just a chance, not a handout, not somebody that makes life easy for us, but a chance. And I have quoted it many times, and I guess everybody has some favorite passages. I don't quote from Scripture, but I quote from Prose. There was a man who wrote in the Depression years, about what was his worry and his concern and was the worry of my concern in those years. And his name was Thomas Wolfe. And he gave us a message which I think rates true, today as it did then. He was talking about what is America, what does it mean, and what does it stand for, and what is it's promise. And I believe that you want this country to be, to offer a great promise to yet people unborn. Thomas Wolfe put it this way, "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, and to be himself, and to become what ever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him." This is the promise of America. Ladies and Gentlemen, that is the promise of America. Every man, his right to live, not to be victimized by crime and violence, but to live. Every man his right to work, not to be denied work because of his color, or his status. Every man to be himself, not to be curbed by inhibitions or pressures that denies him the right to creativity and expression. The right to decent, yes, disorder, no. And to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can make him. Oh what a thought that is, his vision can make him. This is the promise of our country, this is the promise of America. I hope you don't think that a little old-fashioned love of country and respect for the ideals of this land and it's promise is out of date. Because, remember this, that the

American Revolution is a continuing one, it is yet to be won, and it is the one revolution that offers the hope of emancipation, not emancipation from some fictional tyranny, but emancipation from our own fears, our doubts, our uncertainties, and surely young men are young, not so much because of their age, but because they have faith, because they have ideals, because they have promise, rather than fears, doubts, suspensions, and hates. Thank you very much.

MINNESOTA



Jaycees



MEMBER UNITED STATES JAYCEES

JUNIOR CHAMBER INTERNATIONAL

GRIGGS MIDWAY BUILDING 1821 UNIVERSITY AVENUE ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55104

March 2, 1970

Miss Ruth Wallace
Macalester College
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Miss Wallace:

Enclosed is a tape and two copies of Mr. Humphrey's
speech in Mankato on February 14th.

Thank you for your patience in this matter.

Sincerely,

MINNESOTA JAYCEES

Larry Gadola
Executive Director

LPG/lg

cc: File

Enclosure



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