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HUNTER COLLEGE

Commencement Address of Lawrence L. Casady,
Trustee of Hunter College, Wednesday,
June 15, 1932.

It is always a great pleasure to participate in a function of this character. We are happy to extend to you our sincere congratulations on this, the realization of your goal. We express the hope that you will be as successful in the accomplishment of life's work as you have been in student life. We are particularly pleased to convey to your Parents and Relatives the felicitations due them for the years of labor and love they have expended in your behalf. You have had the benefits of a careful training. Your Parents have made sacrifices to assist you; your Teachers have given their best to equip you, and your City has given you the opportunity. Today, these obligations are discharged. Henceforth, you must go forward dependent on your own initiative and resources. You, however, have the advantage of an endowment which, if properly administered, should bring immeasurable rewards to you and reflected happiness to those who have made possible this glorious opportunity.

In these days of unrest and unhappiness, there is an urgent demand for a loyal, progressive and intelligent Emancipator. In the wave of hysteria which envelops us, there is too much of the Pharisee and the Demagogue and too little of the Saviour and the Leader. There are those who in the midst of our problems seek only to destroy--to tear down all that a glorious heritage has given us. They are represented by the group which loudly exploits the wrongs and failings of others, for personal aggrandizement and by the opponents of Constitutional Government; the professional critic motivated by selfish ambition; the radical disturber who misinterprets and connives to destroy. They present an impossible and exaggerated panacea wherein perfect peace and contentment will forever reign.

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After all, our World is merely a combination of humans with finite minds, limited attainments and varying morals. No individual, family or organization is so advanced but there is some fault or wrong within. On the other hand, as has been well said, neither is there a creature so accursed or despised but some good in him a loving eye may see. We test friendship, devotion and loyalty by the service and zeal extended in time of need. We regard it as the duty of a friend to aid another in difficulty. We hold it to be the obligation of a member of a family to aid one who has gone astray. We maintain that it is the responsibility of a true member of an organization to contribute his good will, his talents, his help to overcome an obstacle.

With the additional problems confronting us, each individual has an increasing responsibility in the life of our World today. Citizenship has been placed in a crucible of conflicting and opposing elements and the nature of the residue depends on the worth and substance of the controlling element. Oh, it is so easy to carp, to ridicule, to condemn and to malign. But destructive criticism does not overcome a problem; it does not bring relief. Rather, it leads to dissatisfaction, pessimism, despair and ruin. With all our spirit, we would condemn the Master of a ship who, instead of responding to an S.O.S. should broadcast a criticism of the foolhardiness of the Pilot in distress. We would forever despise the individual in a family who exploited the wrong of his Brother and sought thereby to advance his personal ambitions.

Yet today, we find ourselves struggling with problems, the immensity of which cannot be exaggerated, and the most prominent voice is that of the fanatic, the disturber, the Pharisee and the radical. No Nation is stronger than its

backbone and the backbone of the Nation of today, consists of an infinite number of vertebrae, the thinking people of the land. But if they are weak, if they fail to appreciate their individual importance, their personal influence for good, that backbone must weaken and decay. With that weakness, the germ of unrest and destruction will be nurtured and developed, with the natural result. Our most serious danger today, is the apathy, the selfishness and the lack of interest of our Citizens in the cause of mankind ^{at} ~~in~~ large. They must realize that good Government depends on good Citizenry, that successful Government can only be builded through individual cooperation, that the remedy of present-day problems is not by giving tacit approval or re-echoing the criticism of the mal-content but by extending individual effort and sacrifice toward the renaissance which must come. Independence, initiative, honest thought, are the only true rules which will guide us through the difficulties of the day. Oh, it is so refreshing and encouraging even to have a few instances similar to that given by a World figure last week, when he admitted that he had originally erred in his judgment on a great world problem, but who had the manhood and the patriotism to change his original opinion and to enter actively into the support of those whom he originally opposed.

None can contribute more to the advancement of good Citizenry with its correlative good Government than the Women of our Country. Whether in the Home, in the Field, in Public or in Private, the cultured, the progressive Woman is not alone a moral influence for good. She is a powerful ally in constructive development. In our own day, you have many prominent Leaders whom you may well emulate. If we were

to leave one thought with you, Young Ladies of the Class of 1932, today, it would be this:- Fifteen years ago, the Men and Women of this Country responded to an appeal for help. They gave up their homes, their ambitions and their personal satisfactions to respond to a Cause. They underwent difficulties, privations and sacrifices. They were called upon to perform tasks which were disagreeable, duties which were onerous and acts which in their personal judgment, were inadvisable or wrong. But they had sworn to obey orders, to do their duty and regardless of personal convictions or ambitions, they were motivated by one superior command which they knew must eventually bring peace, happiness and success. They were inspired to Carry On. Let that be your motto and you will have the satisfaction which follows from a life well spent.

6/10/32