

**COMMENCEMENT 2014, LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
5/10/14**

INVOCATION (Rev. Johnnie Moore):

PLEASE RISE AS WE BEGIN OUR SERVICE IN PRAYER AND REMAIN STANDING FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.

[prayer]

PLEASE REMAIN STANDING FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (2nd Lt. Tyler Turgeau):

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND TO THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS, ONE NATION UNDER GOD, INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.

NATIONAL ANTHEM (Sounds of Liberty)

PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING (Dr. Ron Godwin):

YOU MAY BE SEATED.

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY DEPENDS ON A STRONG AND VIABLE FACULTY TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING ACADEMICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY WITH TODAY'S STUDENTS.

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING, NOW IN ITS FOURTH YEAR, IS THE HIGHEST ANNUAL AWARD PRESENTED TO GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE FACULTY AT LIBERTY UNIVERSITY. THIS AWARD RECOGNIZES SUPERIOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY BOTH OUR ONLINE AND RESIDENTIAL FACULTY.

WE ARE HONORING SPECIFIC FACULTY TODAY WHO, THROUGH THEIR EFFECTIVE USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY, CREATIVITY, AND ABILITY TO INNOVATE WHILE TEACHING, HAVE SUCCEEDED IN DEVELOPING STUDENT FAITH, KNOWLEDGE, AND CHARACTER.

THESE AWARDEES ARE BEING RECOGNIZED NOT ONLY DURING TODAY'S COMMENCEMENT, BUT ALSO BY WAY OF MONETARY GIFTS INTENDED TO FURTHER DEMONSTRATE LIBERTY'S STRONG COMMITMENT TO OUTSTANDING TEACHING IN BOTH THE RESIDENTIAL AND ONLINE CLASSROOMS.

TWO OF OUR ONLINE FACULTY WINNERS, AUDREY LYNN MAYBERRY AND DANIELLE R. PLOMARITAS (PLŌ-MAH-RÉE-TAHS), BOTH IN THE COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES, COULD NOT BE PRESENT TODAY.

NOW, IN RECOGNITION OF OUR HONOREES PHYSICALLY PRESENT, IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE THAT I PRESENT TO YOU THE FOLLOWING 2013-2014 AWARDEES OF THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING.

PLEASE HOLD YOUR APPLAUSE UNTIL ALL NAMES ARE ANNOUNCED.

BRIAN MATTHEW CAMPBELL
CENTER FOR COUNSELING & FAMILY STUDIES
(Brian's son is graduating from Law School today.)

MICHAEL A. DAVIS
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DONNA DAVIS DONALD
COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES

JESSIL FUHR
SCHOOL OF RELIGION

LINNAYA GRAF
SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

JOHN E. MARSELUS
SCHOOL OF AERONAUTICS

JAMES A. SWEZEY (SWĀY-ZEE)
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

NICOLE D. THORN

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

EDNA CHINYELE UDOBONG

SCHOOL OF LAW

AND NOW, PLEASE JOIN ME IN A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR OUR PRESIDENT'S EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD WINNERS.

NOW, WITH NO FURTHER ADIEU, PLEASE JOIN WITH ME IN WELCOMING TO THIS PODIUM THE DISTINGUISHED LEADER OF THIS GREAT INSTITUTION.

THE PRESIDENT OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY, JERRY FALWELL.

REMARKS & HONORIS CAUSA (President Jerry Falwell):

GOOD MORNING. NOW, IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO OFFICIALLY WELCOME TO OUR 41ST ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES OUR VERY SPECIAL GUESTS THE CLASS OF 2014.

YOU KNOW, ATTENDING LIBERTY HAS BEEN A TRADITION IN OUR FAMILY. MY BROTHER, MY SISTER, MY SON TREY AND I ALL GRADUATED FROM LIBERTY. EVEN MY MOM, WHO NEVER WENT TO COLLEGE IN HER YOUTH, GRADUATED FROM LIBERTY IN HER 50S. MY SON, WESLEY, IS A LIBERTY STUDENT NOW AND MY 14 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, CAROLINE, IS EXCITED ABOUT COMING TO LIBERTY IN A FEW YEARS.

I'D LIKE FOR BECKI, TREY, WESLEY, AND CAROLINE TO STAND. AND YOU KNOW, WESLEY IS A THIRD YEAR STUDENT HERE AT LIBERTY. I NOTICED ONE THING WE ARE NOT

TEACHING AS WELL. I FOUND OUT JUST BEFORE I CAME UP HERE, ONE PLACE WE MIGHT BE LACKING IS WE'RE NOT TEACHING THESE YOUNG MEN HOW TO TIE THEIR TIES. I HAD TO TIE WESLEY'S TIE FOR HIM JUST BEFORE WE CAME OUT. BUT, THAT'S WHY I WAS A LITTLE LATE GETTING OUT.

LAST WEEKEND, BECKI AND I ATTENDED THE SENIOR PICNIC AND HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO HUNDREDS OF GRADUATING SENIORS. WE WERE AMAZED AT HOW MANY GRADUATING COUPLES MET WHILE STUDYING HERE AT LIBERTY AND NOW HAVE ANOTHER BIG LIFE-CHANGING EVENT SCHEDULED OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

BECKI AND I BEGAN DATING WHILE SHE WAS A STUDENT AT LIBERTY – EVEN THOUGH I WAS FIVE YEARS OLDER AND WAS IN LAW SCHOOL WHEN SHE ARRIVED AT LU-- AND MY SON TREY WILL BE MARRYING SARAH CRAIG, A LIBERTY JUNIOR, TWO WEEKS FROM TODAY.

WE EVEN MET A COUPLE AT THE PICNIC, JONATHAN SCHMIDT AND CHRISTINA PHILLIPS, WHO ARE GETTING MARRIED BECAUSE I TORE JONATHAN'S DORM DOWN.

IN THE FALL OF 2013, JON LIVED IN DORM 4. WE HAD TO DEMOLISH THAT DORM SOONER THAN PLANNED TO MAKE WAY FOR THE NEW HIGH RISE DORM THAT IS NOW NEARING COMPLETION. JON MOVED TO THE QUALITY INN, A LOCAL HOTEL SERVING AS A TEMPORARY DORM FOR LU.

JON E-MAILED ME THAT: "I WAS ONLY THERE FOR A WEEK OR SO BEFORE I TOOK NOTICE OF CHRISTINA WHO WAS LIVING NEXT DOOR AT THE ANNEX. I ONLY SAW HER ABOUT 5 TIMES IN BETWEEN MY COMMUTES FROM THE ANNEX TO THE QUALITY INN, BUT BY APRIL 7TH I HAD SEEN ENOUGH. SHE WORKED AT THE FRONT DESK AND I FINALLY MUSTERED UP THE CONFIDENCE TO BOLDLY APPROACH HER (I WAS NERVOUS)). WE EXCHANGED A FRIENDLY "HI!" TO EACH OTHER BEFORE WE TALKED FOR A FEW MINUTES. WE EXCHANGED PHONE NUMBERS AND HUNG OUT THAT WEEKEND WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER NOW FOR OVER A YEAR AND IT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST BLESSING TO OUR LIVES. IT IS AMAZING HOW GOD WORKS IN SUCH UNUSUAL WAYS. I AM SO GRATEFUL, EVEN THOUGH AT FIRST NOTICE OF DORM 4 BEING TORN

DOWN IT WAS DISCOURAGING NEWS, I AM SO GRATEFUL THAT LIBERTY IS MAKING SO MUCH PROGRESS; IT ULTIMATELY IS HOW I MET THE LOVE OF MY LIFE!"

COULD ALL OF THE GRADUATES WHO MET YOUR SPOUSES OR FUTURE SPOUSES HERE AT LIBERTY PLEASE STAND? I KNOW THERE'S A LOT OF YOU.

[LAUGHTER]

YOU KNOW MY FATHER USED TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO BE SURE TO GET A "RING BY SPRING" WHILE THEY WERE AT LIBERTY, AND I'M SO GLAD MANY OF YOU PAID ATTENTION.

NOW, I WANT TO JUST THANK SOME FOLKS WHO, BEHIND THE SCENES, MAKE THIS ALL POSSIBLE. LORI BAKER SPENDS SIX MONTHS OF EVERY YEAR WORKING ON THIS EVENT AND EVERYTHING YOU SEE HERE IS A PRODUCT OF HER LABORS. SHE TEXTED, WELL I GUESS SHE TWEETED, THAT SOMEONE COMPARED HER JOB TO BEING A WEDDING PLANNER. SHE SAID, "YEAH, BUT THERE'S 6,000 BRIDES." SO, THANK YOU LORI. AND ALSO CHARLES SPENCE, OUR SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT FOR CONSTRUCTION, HE WORKED SO HARD OVER THE LAST WEEKS AND MONTHS TO GET THAT TUNNEL OPEN TODAY IN SPITE OF TERRIBLE WEATHER, SO THAT IT WOULD BE A LITTLE EASIER FOR ALL OF YOU TO GET IN AND OUT. SO, THANK YOU CHARLES SPENCE.

NOW, I WANT TO RECOGNIZE SOME SPECIAL GUESTS. FIRST, DR. JOHN M. BOREK, JR. SERVED AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY FROM 1997 -2003 AND PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN CREATING THE ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFRA-STRUCTURE THAT HAS SERVED LIBERTY SO WELL OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS OF EXPLOSIVE GROWTH HERE. TODAY, JOHN'S GRANDSON, AUSTIN SMITH, IS AMONG OUR GRADUATES. CONGRATULATIONS, AUSTIN, AND WELCOME BACK, JOHN! WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND?

BOARD OF TRUSTTES MEMBER HARVEY GAINNEY HAS A GRANDDAUGHTER, CHELSEA JORDAN, WHO'S GRADUATING. I ALSO FOUND OUT THIS WEEK THAT LIBERTY UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF LAW NOW HAS ITS FIRST GRADUATE WHO'S BECOME A JUDGE, WILL ROACH II. CONGRATULATIONS TO WILL.

AND FINALLY, THE SULLIVAN FAMILY. AMANDA SULLIVAN GRADUATED FROM LIBERTY IN 2010, THEN RECEIVED HER MASTERS IN 2012. HER PARENTS, MICHAEL AND STACY SULLIVAN - BOTH RECEIVED THEIR BACHELORS DEGREES ALSO IN 2012 HERE FROM LIBERTY. THIS YEAR, MICHAEL AND STACY WILL RECEIVE THEIR MASTERS DEGREES AND AMANDA'S SISTER KRISTEN, WHO IS A MISSIONARY IN SOUTH AFRICA, WILL ALSO GRADUATE WITH THEM TODAY. AMANDA'S BROTHER, MATTHEW IS ABOUT TO BEGIN HIS 3RD YEAR AT LIBERTY AND AMANDA'S YOUNGEST SISTER COURTNEY IS ABOUT TO BEGIN HER FRESHMAN YEAR AT LIBERTY. FINALLY, AMANDA'S BROTHER MIKEY MAY SOON BE APPLYING TO LIBERTY'S MEDICAL SCHOOL. IF WE HAD MORE FAMILIES LIKE THE SULLIVANS, RECRUITING STUDENTS WOULD BE MUCH LESS EXPENSIVE. SO, CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SULLIVANS.

WHEN YOU LOOK AROUND THIS STADIUM THIS MORNING YOU SEE THOUSANDS OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE STOOD WITH YOU AS YOU PURSUED YOUR DEGREE.

NEVER FORGET THAT NO ONE SUCCEEDS IN LIFE ALONE.... THERE ARE PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS, SPOUSES AND CHILDREN, AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS WHO ARE ALWAYS STANDING BEHIND US. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE ENCOURAGED YOU AND PRAYED FOR YOU WHEN YOU WERE READY TO GIVE UP. THEY APPLAUDED YOU AT EVERY LITTLE VICTORY, AND THEY ARE HERE TODAY TO CHEER YOU ACROSS THE FINISH LINE.

WE WANT TO RECOGNIZE SOME OF THESE SPECIAL PEOPLE TODAY.

WOULD ALL THE PARENTS OF GRADUATES PLEASE STAND?

[PAUSE]

AND HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO ALL THE MOMS HERE TODAY.

YOU MAY BE SEATED.

THREE YEARS AGO, WE STARTED A NEW TRADITION OF RECOGNIZING THE SPOUSES OF GRADUATES WHO ARE OFTEN THE UNSUNG HEROES BEHIND THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SO MANY GRADUATES.

WE HAVE ONE PROUD SPOUSE WHO COULD NOT BE HERE TODAY BUT WHO WANTED HIS WIFE TO KNOW HOW PROUD HE IS OF HER. GRADUATE MALORY JADE MALLERY, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND? I KNOW THIS IS A COMPLETE SURPRISE TO YOU BUT YOUR HUSBAND, SGT MARK MALLERY, SERVING TODAY IN THE US ARMED FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN, WROTE TO US AND TOLD US—[APPLAUSE] — THAT YOU DROVE ALL THE WAY FROM KANSAS TO RECEIVE YOUR DEGREE AND HE TOLD US HOW BADLY HE WANTED TO BE HERE AND HOW PROUD HE IS OF WHAT YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED. HE DID THE BEST HE COULD. HE SENT THIS VIDEO MESSAGE TO YOU ALL THE WAY FROM AFGHANISTAN.

[VIDEO PLAYS]

I WOULD LIKE THE SPOUSES OF ALL THE GRADUATES TO PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED.

[APPLAUSE]

YOU MAY BE SEATED.

FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE ALL OF OUR GRADUATES ... THE CLASS OF 2014, TO PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED AS WELL.

[PAUSE]

WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU AND SO THANKFUL TO GOD FOR YOUR ACHIEVEMENT

IT HAS TRULY BEEN OUR PRIVILEGE TO SERVE YOU AND TO BE A PART OF YOUR LIVES.

YOU HAVE SACRIFICED AND LABORED FOR YEARS TO MAKE THIS DAY A REALITY, YOU HAVE EARNED THIS GREAT HONOR, AND WE ARE HERE TO SALUTE YOU TODAY.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

[APPLAUSE]

YOU KNOW, I HAVE WATCHED WITH PRIDE AS YOU WELCOMED SOME OF THE BEST KNOWN AND MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS OF OUR WORLD TODAY TO CONVOCATION. WE'VE HAD EVERYBODY FROM WILLIE ROBERTSON TO SARAH PALIN TO EVEN THE MOTHER OF JUSTIN BIEBER HERE THIS YEAR. AND I WAS IN WILLIE ROBERTSON'S OFFICE JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, AND THEY ASKED IF I WANTED TO GET A PICTURE IN HIS OFFICE CHAIR. THE ONLY REQUIREMENT IS THAT YOU HAVE TO PUT YOUR FEET UP ON THE DESK. SO I DID.

ONE OF OUR LAST SPEAKERS THIS YEAR WAS MR. BO PILGRIM. HE IS THE 85 YEAR OLD FOUNDER OF PILGRIM'S PRIDE CHICKEN. WHEN HE GREETED OUR STUDENTS, HE HAD US HAND OUT A SMALL BOOKLET ABOUT HIS FAITH TO ALL 10,000 STUDENTS IN CONVOCATION. TO EVERYONE'S GREAT SURPRISE, EACH BOOKLET CONTAINED A CRISP \$20 BILL, A GIFT FROM HIM TO THE STUDENTS. ASKED WHY HE DID IT, HE SAID HE HAD MORE MONEY THAN HE NEEDED AND HE FELT MOST OF OUR STUDENTS PROBABLY DIDN'T. SENIORS WHO MISSED CONVOCATION THAT DAY ASKED ME TO INVITE HIM TO COMMENCEMENT. UNFORTUNATELY FOR THEM, THAT DID NOT WORK OUT.

EACH OF THESE SPEAKERS LEFT HERE AS LIFELONG FANS AND SUPPORTERS OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BECAUSE OF THE IMPRESSION YOU MADE ON THEM. YOU EVEN CHANGED FOR THE BETTER HOW SOME OF THEM VIEW CHRISTIANITY.

I HAVE TO STOP HERE TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON THAT BECAUSE THE WARM RECEPTION THAT THIS DIVERSE GROUP OF SPEAKERS RECEIVED HERE AT LIBERTY THIS YEAR AND IN PAST YEARS IS IN STARK CONTRAST TO THE RECEPTION THAT SPEAKERS OFTEN RECEIVE AT MAJOR SECULAR UNIVERSITIES – UNIVERSITIES THAT CONSTANTLY PAT THEMSELVES ON THE BACK FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS.

JUST LAST WEEK, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE DR. CONDOLEEZA RICE CANCELLED HER SCHEDULED COMMENCEMENT SPEECH AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY BECAUSE OF LOUD AND ORGANIZED PROTESTS FROM STUDENTS AND FACULTY WHO DID NOT LIKE THE FACT THAT DR. RICE'S POLITICAL VIEWS WERE DIFFERENT AND MORE CONSERVATIVE THAN THEIR OWN.

USA TODAY REPORTED THIS WEEK THAT HGTV HAD ANNOUNCED A NEW SERIES, "FLIP IT FORWARD" PLANNED FOR OCTOBER, STARRING TWINS AND LU GRADUATES DAVID AND JASON BENHAM. THE SHOW WAS ALREADY IN PRODUCTION AND WAS BEING FILMED WHEN

SUDDENLY THIS WEEK, QUIETLY, IN A TWEET, HGTV SAYS THE SHOW WILL NOT BE HAPPENING.

USA TODAY REPORTED THAT IT APPEARS THAT HGTV WAS ALERTED BY AN ANTI-CHRISTIAN AND ANTI-CONSERVATIVE WATCHDOG GROUP THAT DAVID BENHAM HAD PROTESTED AGAINST THE HOMOSEXUAL POLITICAL AGENDA AT THE 2012 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION AND HAD PROTESTED AGAINST ABORTION IN THE PAST.

WHEN I LEARNED OF THIS JUST TWO DAYS AGO, BECKI SUGGESTED THAT I INVITE THE BENHAM BROTHERS TO BE MY PERSONAL GUESTS AT COMMENCEMENT THIS MORNING. TO MY SURPRISE THEY WERE ABLE TO MAKE IT. THEY ARE HERE, SITTING ON THE FRONT ROW.

DAVID BENHAM SAID THIS WEEK:

"THE FIRST AND LAST THOUGHT ON OUR MINDS AS WE BEGIN AND END EACH DAY IS; HAVE WE SHINED CHRIST'S LIGHT TODAY? AS CHRISTIANS WE ARE CALLED TO LOVE OUR FELLOW MAN. ANYONE WHO SUGGESTS THAT WE HATE HOMOSEXUALS OR PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS IS EITHER MISINFORMED OR LYING. OVER THE LAST DECADE, WE'VE SOLD THOUSANDS OF HOMES WITH THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF PRODUCING VALUE AND BREATHING LIFE INTO EACH FAMILY THAT HAS CROSSED OUR PATHS, AND WE DO NOT, NOR WILL WE EVER DISCRIMINATE AGAINST PEOPLE WHO DO NOT SHARE OUR VIEWS."

JASON BENHAM ADDED TO THAT:

"WE WERE SADDENED TO HEAR HGTV'S DECISION. WITH ALL OF THE GROTESQUE THINGS THAT CAN BE SEEN AND HEARD ON TELEVISION TODAY YOU WOULD THINK THERE WOULD BE ROOM FOR TWO TWIN BROTHERS WHO ARE FAITHFUL TO OUR FAMILIES, COMMITTED TO BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES, AND DEDICATED PROFESSIONALS. IF OUR FAITH COSTS US A TELEVISION SHOW THEN SO BE IT."

DAVID AND JASON, IT IS SAD THAT THE GROUPS THAT HAVE TARGETED YOU ARE USING MCCARTHY-ERA TACTICS IN AN ATTEMPT TO PUNISH YOU FOR YOUR OPINIONS. YOUR VALUES ARE AMERICAN VALUES, AND IF EVERYONE IN THE WORLD TURNS AGAINST YOU, YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT YOUR ALMA MATER WILL ALWAYS HAVE YOUR BACK. I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE THE MORE THAN 30,000 PEOPLE IN THIS STADIUM TO JOIN ME IN APPLAUDING YOU TO DEMONSTRATE OUR SUPPORT FOR YOU AND OUR ADMIRATION FOR THE STAND YOU'VE TAKEN."

[PAUSE]

[LONG APPLAUSE]

I TWEETED THIS MORNING WITH THE HASHTAG #FLIPTHISDECISION AND YOU CAN FIND IT ON @LIBERTYU OR MY TWITTER ACCOUNT @JERRYJRFALWELL. PLEASE REWTWEET IT AND LET'S GET THE MESSAGE OUT TO HGTV THAT IT'S NOT ACCEPTABLE

TO PUNISH PEOPLE FOR THEIR OPINIONS AND THEIR BELIEFS. IT'S JUST NOT AMERICAN.

THIS YEAR'S COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY IS NANCY PELOSI. I HEARD THE MOTHER OF A CONSERVATIVE GRADUATE AT UC-BERKELEY INTERVIEWED BY RUSH LIMBAUGH THIS WEEK. SHE SAID THAT, SHE AND HER HUSBAND DON'T SHARE MS. PELOSI'S BELIEFS BUT THEY ARE PLANNING NO PROTESTS AND INTEND TO BE RESPECTFUL AT THE CEREMONY.

ISN'T IT AMAZING HOW THE PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTRY WHO CLAIM TO BE OPEN MINDED AND COMMITTED TO TOLERANCE, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS ARE THE MOST BIGOTED AND CLOSE-MINDED IN OPPOSING VIEWS, ESPECIALLY CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN VIEWS?

[APPLAUSE]

WHILE LIBERTY IS A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY AND ALL OF OUR FACULTY ARE CHRISTIANS COMMITTED TO OUR DOCTRINAL STATEMENT, WE HAVE ALWAYS INVITED PROMINENT SPEAKERS FROM ALL RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL PERSUASIONS AND FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE TO SPEAK IN CONVOCATION AND EVEN AT COMMENCEMENT. WE BELIEVE THAT YOU, OUR GRADUATES WILL BE BETTER EQUIPPED TO DEFEND YOUR FAITH AND YOUR VALUES BECAUSE YOU HAVE HEARD FIRST HAND FROM LEADERS WHO HAVE DIFFERENT THEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL BELIEFS.

I BELIEVE THAT ONE REASON OUR LIBERTY COMMUNITY AS WELL AS CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL ARE MORE RESPECTFUL AND MORE WILLING TO LISTEN TO THOSE WHO HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS IS BECAUSE THEY ARE CONFIDENT IN WHAT THEY BELIEVE. YOU SEE, IF YOU FERVENTLY BELIEVE SOMETHING AND HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR FAITH AND YOUR IN WORLDVIEW, YOU DON'T FEEL THREATENED BY CONTRARY OPINIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF YOU ARE INSECURE IN YOUR BELIEFS OR YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE WHAT YOU CLAIM TO BELIEVE, YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEAR THE EXPRESSION OF OPPOSING VIEWS. I BELIEVE THAT IS WHY THE PROTESTORS AT RUTGERS WERE SO AFRAID OF CONDOLEEZA RICE SPEAKING AT THEIR SCHOOL AND WHY THE LIBERAL WATCHDOG GROUP FEARED THE BENHAM BROTHERS HAVING THEIR OWN TV SHOW.

YOU, THE CLASS OF 2014 ARE ENTERING A WORLD THAT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY HOSTILE TO YOUR CHRISTIAN VALUES. I URGE YOU, LIKE THE BENHAM BROTHERS, TO NEVER COMPROMISE YOUR FAITH OR YOUR VALUES REGARDLESS OF THE PRICE YOU HAVE TO PAY.

[APPLAUSE]

FROM OUR UNIVERSITY'S INCEPTION WE HAVE TAKEN OUR FAITH AND OUR PATRIOTISM SERIOUSLY.

OUR NAME, "LIBERTY" HAS BOTH THEOLOGICAL AND PATRIOTIC IMPLICATIONS - EACH GRADUATION YEAR, OUR BACCALAUREATE SERVICE EMPHASIZES OUR FAITH, AND THIS COMMENCEMENT SERVICE EMPHASIZES OUR PATRIOTISM.

DURING THIS COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY WE HAVE ALWAYS REMINDED YOU THAT IT'S FAR BETTER AND FAR EASIER TO LOVE GOD AND TO LOVE OTHERS IN A WORLD THAT'S FREE.

WE HAVE REMINDED YOU THAT SUCCESS AND PROSPERITY ARE WORTHY AMBITIONS, AND THAT THE FREE MARKET IS NOT AN ENEMY OF GENEROSITY BUT A REASON FOR IT. OR, AS RALPH WALDO EMERSON, SAID: "DOING WELL IS THE RESULT OF DOING GOOD."

IN THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS, JESUS SCOLDED THE SERVANT WHO DIDN'T TAKE RISK IN THE MARKETPLACE AND GENERATE A RETURN ON HIS INVESTMENT, CALLING HIM "WICKED AND LAZY." JESUS TAUGHT US THAT IT IS NOT GOOD, TO NOT DO WELL.

AT LIBERTY WE HAVE PREPARED YOU FOR BOTH: TO DO GOOD AND TO DO WELL.

IN AMERICA, IT WAS OUR JUDEO CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION, THAT GAVE US THE FREE MARKET AND THAT MADE US THE MOST PROSPEROUS AND GENEROUS NATION IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

WE BELIEVE IN WORK AND WORSHIP, IN PRAYER AND PROSPERITY, IN GENEROSITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.

I LIKE WHAT WILLIAM PENN, THE DEVOUT QUAKER AND FOUNDER OF PENNSYLVANIA, SAID ABOUT THE MARRIAGE OF FAITH AND THE FREE MARKET.

PENN SAID, "I DESIRE TO EXTEND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, YET I WANT SOME RECOMPENSE FOR MY TROUBLES."

[LAUGHTER]

THIS DEGREE YOU'LL SOON RECEIVE TODAY IS AN INVESTMENT IN YOUR FUTURE, AND -AS JESUS SAID "TO WHOM MUCH HAS BEEN GIVEN, MUCH SHALL BE REQUIRED."

IT'S NOT GETTING YOUR DEGREE THAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IT'S WHAT YOU'LL DO WITH IT THAT MATTERS.

[PAUSE]

THERE ARE OVER 17,800 MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 2014,

THERE ARE MORE THAN 8000 GRADUATES WHO WILL BE AWARDED MASTER'S DEGREES IN TODAY'S CEREMONY, AND 715 STUDENTS WILL BE AWARDED DOCTORAL DEGREES, INCLUDING 78 GRADUATES FROM OUR SCHOOL OF LAW.

THE CLASS OF 2014 INCLUDES 43 SIBLINGS, 31 PAIRS OF PARENTS GRADUATING WITH THEIR CHILDREN, 8 SETS OF TWINS AND 132 HUSBANDS AND WIVES WHO WILL CELEBRATE THEIR COMMENCEMENT TOGETHER, TODAY.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU.

[APPLAUSE]

I AM ALSO VERY PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THIS MORNING THAT THE 2014 GRADUATING CLASS INCLUDES 5185 MEMBERS OF OUR NATION'S ARMED FORCES AND HUNDREDS OF THEM ARE ON ACTIVE DUTY. WOULD ALL THE ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY WHO ARE WALKING TODAY PLEASE STAND?

LIBERTY IS PROUD TO BE ONE OF OUR NATION'S MOST MILITARY FRIENDLY UNIVERSITIES WITH OVER 25,000 MILITARY STUDENTS.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU HAVE SACRIFICED FOR YOUR COUNTRY, AND FOR ALL YOU ARE DOING TO PRESERVE OUR FREEDOM EVERYDAY.

THIS MORNING WE ARE ALSO AWARDING THREE POST-HUMOUS DEGREES. SITTING DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF ME ARE THE FAMILIES OF SARAH MCKEOWN, CHARLES "NATHAN" DAVIDSON, AND JOHN HALLSTROM.

NATHAN DAVIDSON, THE RECENTLY DECEASED SON OF OUR SEMINARY PROFESSOR AND LONGTIME FRIEND OF MY FAMILY, DR. CHARLIE DAVIDSON, WILL BE AWARDED A DEGREE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES.

JOHN HALLSTROM, WHO LOST A VALIANT FIGHT AGAINST CANCER IN MARCH 2014, WILL BE AWARDED A DEGREE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES.

AND SARAH MCKEOWN, WHO WAS A MEMBER OF THE MARCHING BAND AND THE CREW TEAM, AND WAS A MUCH LOVED RESIDENTIAL STUDENT ON THIS CAMPUS FOR FIVE YEARS, WILL BE HONORED WITH A DEGREE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN.

TO THE FAMILIES OF NATHAN, JOHN, AND SARAH ... I CONFESS THAT FEW OF US CAN IMAGINE THE PAIN THAT YOU ARE EXPERIENCING, BUT YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT YOUR LIBERTY FAMILY IS PRAYING FOR YOU TOGETHER, WITH YOU, WE THANK GOD THAT YOUR LOVED ONE'S LIVES WERE LIVED WELL, THEIR LEGACY ENDURES, AND THROUGH OUR FAITH WE HAVE COMFORT THIS MORNING THAT "WE DO NOT GRIEVE AS THOSE WHO HAVE NO HOPE."

[APPLAUSE]

IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS ALONE, I HAVE MET A GRADUATE FROM NEPAL, ANOTHER FROM SIERRA LEONE, A COUPLE FROM TWO DIFFERENT PARTS OF CHINA WHO MET AT LIBERTY, WERE MARRIED AND PLAN TO RETURN TO CHINA TOGETHER AFTER GRADUATION AND MANY OTHERS FROM ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD.

OUR OLDEST GRADUATES ARE JOY BORELLA WHO IS 81 AND CHARLES EDWARD CARNES, WHO IS 78.

OUR YOUNGEST COLLEGE GRADUATE EARNING HIS BACHELORS DEGREE TODAY IS RICHARD ARLIN GREEN, III. HE IS 17.

BUT, ACTUALLY, HE IS ONLY OUR YOUNGEST *UNIVERSITY* GRADUATE, BUT NOT OUR YOUNGEST PARTICIPANT THIS MORNING.

THERE ARE 136 STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED THEIR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION THROUGH LIBERTY UNIVERSITY'S ONLINE ACADEMY. THEY WILL RECEIVE THEIR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS TODAY.

[APPLAUSE]

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO GIVE SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO THOSE WHO WILL BE GRADUATING FROM LIBERTY UNIVERSITY ONLINE TODAY. IN ALL, MORE THAN 85% OF THE CLASS OF 2014 ARE ADULTS, AVERAGE AGE 37, WHO COMPLETED THEIR STUDIES ONLINE.

AS PART OF LIBERTY'S CHRISTIAN MISSION, WE HAVE ALWAYS SOUGHT TO MAKE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AS AFFORDABLE AND AS ACCESSIBLE FOR AS MANY INDIVIDUALS AS POSSIBLE. LIBERTY UNIVERSITY ONLINE IS ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE EVERY DAY, MAKING THE DREAMS OF TENS-OF-THOUSANDS OF MEN AND WOMEN COME TRUE.

THOSE ARE YOUR DREAMS.

EACH MAY I RECEIVE DOZENS OF MESSAGES FROM GRADUATES WHO TELL ME THEIR STORIES, AND EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE FOR LIBERTY UNIVERSITY. THE COMMON THEME IS ALWAYS HOW MANY OF THEM NEVER COULD HAVE OBTAINED A COLLEGE DEGREE IF NOT FOR LIBERTY UNIVERSITY ONLINE. [1985 EDP]

NEARLY EVERY ONE OF YOU CAN TESTIFY TO HOW LIBERTY'S INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND EDUCATION HAS PREPARED AND INSPIRED YOU.

IN FACT, THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT BROUGHT MANY OF YOU HERE, IN THE FIRST PLACE.

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING THE VISION FOR LIBERTY UNIVERSITY WAS TO CREATE A UNIVERSITY THAT WOULD BE FOR EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN YOUNG PEOPLE WHAT NOTRE DAME IS FOR CATHOLIC AND WHAT BRIGHAM YOUNG IS FOR MORMON PEOPLE, A WORLD CLASS UNIVERSITY. THE VISION WASN'T TO BUILD ONLY A BIBLE SCHOOL, BUT TO BUILD A FULLY ACCREDITED LIBERAL-ARTS UNIVERSITY THAT WOULD TRAIN AND SEND OUT A GENERATION OF MEN AND WOMEN INTO CULTURE AS BUSINESS PERSONS, EDUCATORS, DOCTORS, NURSES, LAWYERS, AND ATHLETES...GRADUATES IN EVERY VOCATION, TO ENTER EVERY SPHERE OF SOCIETY, TO BECOME THE SALT OF THE EARTH AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

I AM ESPECIALLY EXCITED TO TELL YOU THAT THE FIRST CLASS OF OUR NEW FILM SCHOOL – THE ZAKI GORDON CENTER FOR CINEMATIC ARTS -- IS GRADUATING TODAY AND THAT LIBERTY'S FIRST CLASS OF 150 FUTURE MEDICAL DOCTORS WILL BE ENROLLED IN OUR NEW COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE THIS FALL.

[APPLAUSE]

GOD TRULY HAS BLESSED THIS UNIVERSITY. WE ARE LITERALLY REBUILDING OUR CAMPUS, REPLACING EACH OF THE TEMPORARY STRUCTURES THAT WERE BUILT IN THE 1970S WITH WORLD CLASS FACILITIES. IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR, WE DEDICATED THE FIRST OF THESE NEW ACADEMIC STRUCTURES – THE JERRY FALWELL LIBRARY. THIS MORNING, WE DISTRIBUTED COPIES OF THE LIBERTY JOURNAL MAGAZINE THAT FEATURED THE NEW LIBRARY. I HOPE THAT YOU WILL TAKE TIME TO READ THE DEDICATORY SPEECH IN THE FIRST FEW PAGES OF THAT JOURNAL BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT WILL GIVE YOU A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY'S UNIQUE HISTORY, ITS EARLY STRUGGLES TO SURVIVE AND EVENTUALLY PROSPER AND ITS MISSION AND PURPOSE. IF YOU DID NOT RECEIVE A PAPER COPY, PLEASE READ THE

LIBERTY JOURNAL ON OUR WEBSITE. I ALSO HOPE OUR VISITORS TODAY WILL TAKE TIME TO WALK THROUGH THE NEW LIBRARY BEFORE LEAVING TOWN.

IN ORDER TO SHOW OUR GRATITUDE TO THE CLASS OF 2014 FOR ENDURING ALL THE CONSTRUCTION ON CAMPUS THESE LAST TWO YEARS WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND IN ORDER TO COMMEMORATE THE CLASS OF 2014 AS THE FIRST GRADUATING CLASS TO OCCUPY THE NEW LIBRARY, WE ARE CREATING A SPECIAL DISPLAY IN THE NEW LIBRARY IN HONOR OF THE CLASS OF 2014. PURE METALLIC LUTETIUM HAS BEEN ISOLATED ONLY IN RECENT YEARS AND IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT TO PREPARE. IT IS A RARE EARTH ELEMENT THAT IS IDENTIFIED ON THE PERIODIC TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS WITH THE ATOMIC SYMBOL OF LU AND IT HAPPENS TO BE ELEMENT NUMBER 71, WHICH ALSO HAPPENS TO BE THE YEAR LU WAS FOUNDED.

THE METAL IS SILVERY WHITE AND RELATIVELY STABLE IN AIR. IT IS PERHAPS THE MOST EXPENSIVE OF ALL RARE ELEMENTS. IT IS FOUND IN SMALL AMOUNTS WITH ALL RARE EARTH METALS, AND IS VERY DIFFICULT TO SEPARATE FROM OTHER RARE ELEMENTS. IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT BUT OUR OWN JAMIE HILL WAS ABLE TO OBTAIN A ONE-KILO BAR OF LUTETIUM ENGRAVED WITH LIBERTY'S NAME AND IT WILL PERMANENTLY BE DISPLAYED IN THE JERRY FALWELL LIBRARY IN HONOR OF THE CLASS OF 2014.

[APPLAUSE]

IT'S IN A BOX THAT CAN'T BE BROKEN, SO DON'T GET ANY IDEAS.

NOW, AS PART OF THIS CEREMONY THIS MORNING, WE SHALL HONOR TWO GREAT AMERICANS WHO HAVE PROVEN THEMSELVES FAITHFUL WITH THE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED TO THEM BY GOD AND BY THIS COUNTRY.

THE FIRST, DEL. LACEY PUTNEY, IS A LEGENDARY LEADER IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA.

DEL. PUTNEY WAS BORN ON JUNE 27, 1928 IN RURAL BIG ISLAND, VIRGINIA, NOT FAR FROM WHERE I LIVE NOW. IN FACT, DEL. PUTNEY IS STILL MY NEIGHBOR IN GOODE, VA. OVER THE LAST 26 YEARS, WHENEVER I VISITED THE GOODE COUNTRY CROSSROADS STORE, USUALLY ON SATURDAY, I WOULD OFTEN SEE LACEY THERE TALKING TO HIS CONSTITUENTS AND I ALWAYS KNEW WHEN I DROVE UP THAT HE WAS THERE BECAUSE HIS LICENSE PLATE HAS ONLY A SINGLE DIGIT, THE NUMBER "1". I WILL EXPLAIN WHY IN JUST A MINUTE.

AS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, LACEY WAS ASKED TO ATTEND WASHINGTON & LEE UNIVERSITY TO PLAY BASEBALL. HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT WHICH COLLEGES WERE PRESTIGIOUS OR HIGHLY RATED AND HE WAS NOT PREPARED FOR THE ACADEMIC COURSEWORK BUT, BY THE TIME HE GRADUATED, HE WAS MAKING DEAN'S LIST AND, BY THEN, HE HAD ACTUALLY BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO WEARING A COAT AND TIE TO CLASS.

IN A RECENT ARTICLE IN WASHINGTON & LEE'S MAGAZINE, PUTNEY SAID THAT HE HAD NEVER MET A PROMINENT PERSON BEFORE HE WENT TO COLLEGE. HE TOLD THE REPORTER HOW MANY OF HIS CLASSMATES HAD GONE ON TO BECOME WELL KNOWN NAMES SUCH AS US SEN JOHN WARNER, JOURNALIST TOM WOLFE, THE REV. PAT ROBERTSON, AND NEWS PERSONALITY ROGER MUDD.

LACEY TOLD A STORY OF A TIME WHEN HE AND SOME FRIENDS WERE DRIVING BACK FROM SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE WHEN A LEXINGTON POLICE OFFICER PULLED THEM OVER. THE OFFICER RECOGNIZED THE CAR AS BELONGING TO PAT ROBERTSON'S FATHER, A US SENATOR WHO LIVED IN LEXINGTON. THE POLICE OFFICER ASKED IF THE DRIVER WAS SEN. ROBERTSON'S SON. IT WAS IN FACT PAT ROBERTSON AND PAT WENT ON TO INTRODUCE TO THE POLICE OFFICER FRED VINSON, JR., THE SON OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT. IN THE BACK SEAT WAS CARTER GLASS, III, GRANDSON OF SEN. CARTER GLASS WHOSE HOME AND FARM ARE NOW THE LIBERTY UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. FINALLY, THE OFFICER SAID JOKINGLY TO THE FOURTH BOY, YOU MUST BE ROBERT E. LEE. HE SAID, ACTUALLY, YES SIR, I AM. IT WAS ROBERT E. LEE, IV, THE GREAT-GRANDSON OF GENERAL LEE.

[LAUGHTER]

PUTNEY HAD COME A LONG WAY FROM BIG ISLAND AND SOON EARNED UNDERGRADUATE AND LAW DEGREES FROM WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY AND SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES AIRFORCE BEFORE STARTING HIS OWN LAW PRACTICE IN BEDFORD COUNTY, A PRACTICE HE MAINTAINED FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS. HE WAS MARRIED TO HIS FIRST WIFE, ELIZABETH, FOR 52 YEARS. AND AFTER SHE PASSED AWAY, HE MARRIED HIS CURRENT WIFE, CARMILLA, IN 2007.

PUTNEY ENTERED PUBLIC SERVICE IN 1962 AS THE HOUSE DELEGATE FOR VIRGINIA'S 19TH DISTRICT. HE WON HIS FIRST ELECTION AS A DEMOCRAT BUT, SIX YEARS LATER, AFTER SECURING MEMBERSHIP ON THE POWERFUL APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, PUTNEY BECAME AN INDEPENDENT. THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAD BECOME TOO LIBERAL FOR HIM BUT HE REFUSED TO JOIN THE REPUBLICANS BECAUSE OF LOYALTY OATHS THE PARTIES REQUIRED OF CANDIDATES PLEDGING SUPPORT FOR THEIR TICKET.

DELEGATE PUTNEY HELD HIS SEAT IN THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES AS AN INDEPENDENT UNTIL HIS RETIREMENT ON DEC. 31, 2013, WINNING 26 CONSECUTIVE TERMS, LOGGING 52-YEARS OF SERVICE TO VIRGINIA AND IN SO DOING ACHIEVING THE DISTINCTION OF BEING THE LONGEST-SERVING MEMBER IN THE HISTORY OF VIRGINIA'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY. NO OTHER DELEGATE HAS SERVED MORE THAN 38 YEARS. NOW, YOU KNOW WHY HIS VA LICENSE PLATE IS SIMPLY THE NUMERAL "1".

OVER THOSE 52 YEARS, HE WORKED FOR 12 GOVERNORS, WORKED WITH HUNDREDS OF DELEGATES AND SENATORS, AND EARNED BI-PARTISAN RESPECT FOR HIS DEDICATION TO VIRGINIA'S CITIZENS AND LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP -- AN ACHIEVEMENT THAT IS ALMOST UNHEARD OF IN THE POLARIZED POLITICAL CLIMATE OF TODAY.

LACEY PUTNEY MAINTAINED A REPUTATION AS A DEEPLY-COMMITTED, SELFLESS PUBLIC SERVANT WHO WAS ENTIRELY COMMITTED TO THE WELL BEING OF HIS CONSTITUENTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES. HE PLAYED AN INDISPENSABLE ROLE IN MANY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS OF THE LAST HALF-CENTURY IN VIRGINIA, INCLUDING THE CREATION OF THE VIRGINIA TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VTAG) WHICH HELPED MANY OF YOU ATTEND LIBERTY, AND THE SIX-YEAR CAPITAL OUTLAY PLANNING PROCESS TO HELP MAINTAIN THE COMMONWEALTH'S COVETED TRIPLE A

CREDIT RATING. HE SERVED AS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, ON THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON RULES AND ON PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS, AND WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS.

HIS ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER HAS MADE OUR STATE A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE AND TO WORK, AND HIS SERVICE IS WITHOUT PARALLEL.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, VIRGINIA'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY HONORED DEL. PUTNEY WITH ITS 100 MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTING A RESOLUTION HONORING HIM FOR HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE. AFTER THE RESOLUTION WAS PASSED A SPONTANEOUS STANDING OVATION ERUPTED IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

DEL. PUTNEY'S GENEROSITY HAS BEEN ONLY MATCHED BY THE FIERCENESS WITH WHICH HE FOUGHT TO PRESERVE THE FISCAL INTEGRITY OF OUR GREAT STATE.

I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE DEL. PUTNEY, AND DR. GODWIN TO JOIN ME AT THE PODIUM.

[APPLAUSE]

IN RECOGNITION OF DEL. LACEY PUTNEY'S DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, AND IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIS UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO THE STATE OF VIRGINIA AND THE VALUES OF AMERICA, BY THE POWER VESTED IN ME BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY, THE DOCTOR OF HUMANITIES DEGREE IS HEREBY CONFERRED UPON LACEY PUTNEY WITH ALL THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES APPERTAINING THEREUNTO.

CONGRATULATIONS, DELEGATE PUTNEY.

THE SECOND LEADER WE WILL HONOR TODAY IS OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER: THE 55TH GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA, BOBBY JINDAL.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL HAS CALLED HIM “LOUISIANA’S PRODIGY GOVERNOR” WHO IS “CRITICAL TO REINVIGORATING [THE] THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.” THE WASHINGTON POST HAS DEEMED HIM A “PHENOM” WHO HAS “PENETRATED WASHINGTON D.C.’S EGO AND HIERARCHY TO LAND IN A SPECTACULARLY INFLUENTIAL SPOT.” RUSH LIMBAUGH HAS REFERRED TO HIM AS THE “NEXT RONALD REAGAN”

HE WAS BORN IN THE STATE HE NOW LEADS ON JUNE 10, 1971. HE GRADUATED FROM BATON ROUGE HIGH SCHOOL AND THEN ATTENDED BROWN UNIVERSITY WHERE HE MANAGED TO GRADUATE WITH HONORS IN BOTH BIOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY.

MORE IMPRESSIVELY, HE LEFT BROWN UNIVERSITY AS A CONSERVATIVE ... WHICH IS PRACTICALLY A MIRACLE.

[LAUGHTER]

FOLLOWING BROWN, JINDAL TURNED DOWN INVITATIONS TO STUDY LAW AND MEDICINE AT BOTH HARVARD AND YALE. INSTEAD, HE ATTENDED OXFORD UNIVERSITY AS A RHODES SCHOLAR.

GOV. JINDAL ENTERED PUBLIC SERVICE IN 1996 WHEN HE WAS APPOINTED SECRETARY OF THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS. THE DHH IS LOUISIANA’S LARGEST DEPARTMENT WITH MORE THAN 12,000 EMPLOYEES, HUNDREDS OF FACILITIES AND A \$4-BILLION BUDGET.

DURING HIS TIME AT DHH, HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR TURNING A \$400-MILLION BUDGET DEFICIT INTO A SURPLUS OF \$220-MILLION. THIS GREAT ACHIEVEMENT PROVED TO BE JUST ONE OF MANY EXAMPLES OF JINDAL’S REMARKABLE CAPABILITIES AS AN EXECUTIVE WITH A STALWART COMMITMENT TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY.

JINDAL WENT ON TO SERVE IN A NUMBER OF OTHER NOTABLE POSITIONS IN BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT; INCLUDING SERVING AS THE EXECUTIVE

DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL BIPARTISAN COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF MEDICARE, SERVING AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM – ONE OF THE 20 LARGEST HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN THE COUNTRY OVERSEEING MORE THAN 80,000 STUDENTS PER YEAR – AND AS THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DURING THE GEORGE W. BUSH ADMINISTRATION.

IN 2004 JINDAL WAS ELECTED FOR HIS FIRST OF TWO TERMS AS CONGRESSMAN FOR LOUISIANA'S FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, AND IN 2008 HE WAS SWORN IN AS LOUISIANA'S 55TH GOVERNOR. HE WAS REELECTED IN 2012.

ONE POSITION JINDAL HASN'T YET HELD IS THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES...AND RUMOR HAS IT ... THAT COULD SOON CHANGE.

[PAUSE]

JINDAL'S WORK IN LOUISIANA HAS ARRESTED THE ATTENTION OF LEADERS ACROSS AMERICA, HE HAS BECOME KNOWN FOR HIS INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE MOST TAXING PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME. HE'S EMBARKED ON SOME OF THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE REFORMS TO HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION IN AMERICA AND HE HAS ALSO RUTHLESSLY ELIMINATED BURDENSOME TAXES THAT ONCE DETERRED INVESTMENT IN HIS STATE. AS A RESULT OF HIS PRO-BUSINESS POLICIES, MORE THAN \$54-BILLION IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT HAS Poured INTO LOUISIANA, CREATING TENS-OF-THOUSANDS OF JOBS, AND PROPELLING HIS STATE TO ITS HIGHEST RANKINGS EVER FOR BUSINESS FRIENDLINESS.

JINDAL IS THE TYPE OF LEADER WHO MAKES DECISIONS ON PRINCIPLE AND YET FINDS CREATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT OTHERS HAVEN'T EVEN IMAGINED BEFORE. HE'S SETTING AN EXAMPLE OF THE TYPE OF GOVERNANCE AND THE TYPE OF CONSERVATISM THAT MUST BE EMBARKED UPON IF AMERICA'S FUTURE SHALL PROVE TO BE AS BRIGHT AS HER PAST.

I WOULD LIKE TO ASK GOV. JINDAL, AND THE PROVOST TO JOIN ME AT THE PODIUM.

[APPLAUSE]

IN RECOGNITION OF GOV. BOBBY JINDAL'S UNFLINCHING COMMITMENT TO THE PRESERVATION OF LIBERTY IN AMERICA, AND IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIS INNOVATIVE AND PRINCIPLED LEADERSHIP IN THESE CONSEQUENTIAL TIMES, BY THE POWER VESTED IN ME BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY, THE DOCTOR OF HUMANITIES DEGREE IS HEREBY CONFERRED UPON BOBBY JINDAL WITH ALL THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES APPERTAINING THEREUNTO.

[APPLAUSE]

NOW, TO DELIVER OUR 41ST ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS, JOIN WITH ME IN WELCOMING, GOV. BOBBY JINDAL.

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS (Gov. Bobby Jindal):

LOUISIANA GOV. BOBBY JINDAL:

President Falwell, thank you for that kind and generous introduction.

Congratulations to the graduates of the Class of 2014! Let's give them another round of applause for this accomplishment.

[APPLAUSE]

I have to warn you in advance...I've done a number of these graduations...and you will have to bear with your parents today.

You may witness them shedding a tear or two.

And when you see that, you will think that they are replaying the years in their minds ...

you might think that they are remembering when you first learned to ride a bike, when you took your first steps, you will think they are sadly wondering where all those years have gone by.

But you would be wrong about that.

No, those tears you see are actually tears of joy.

Joy derived from knowing that the tuition bills from Liberty University will finally stop coming.

[APPLAUSE]

In fact, because of this, the truth is that your parents are the most genuinely happy people here today.

By the way, this is probably a good time to let you know that I hate giving commencement addresses. I just really do.

Because the graduates and their families simply want to get on with it. The only thing worse than having to sit through a commencement address, is having to sit through a commencement address by a politician. All I can say about that is – to use the college vernacular – it sucks to be you right now.

[LAUGHTER]

I thought about giving a speech today lecturing you about going out into the world and working hard and all that stuff...but I got bored with that.

I thought about giving a speech telling you of all the great things we are doing in Louisiana, but I knew you would be bored with that.

I thought about giving a speech telling you that if you like your health care plan you can keep your health care plan, but I decided I didn't want to lie to you.

[LAUGHTER]

And I thought about giving a speech telling you that debt is good, redistribution of wealth is smart, and personal morality doesn't matter, but you only need to know those things if you are planning to go to work for the federal government in Washington D.C.

Let me start today by telling you a very few things about my personal story. My parents immigrated to this country nearly a half century ago. They came without much, but they had heard about the idea of America. And that's what America really is, it's an idea, and the central tenant of that idea is freedom.

When my folks arrived in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1971, my mother was already pregnant with me. I was what you would politely call a “preexisting condition.”

So my dad didn’t look around for handouts or for the government to pay the hospital bill... no, instead he worked out paying for me on an installment plan. In fact, shortly after I was born, he asked the hospital if they would take me back if he skipped a payment. He was hopeful, but they said no, he was stuck with me.

My dad grew up dirt poor. He was the only one in his large family to get past the fifth grade. But he knew that the idea of America was that if you work hard and apply yourself, you will be successful. So when he got to Baton Rouge he decided to get a job by simply going through the yellow pages calling company after company. He finally wore some guy down on the phone from the railroad company ... which is pretty amazing considering the fact that my dad has quite an accent, not like me, not a southern accent, but an accent. He not only convinced a guy to hire him, but also then told the guy who said you could start on Monday, that’s great, but I don’t have a car and don’t have a driver’s license. So he told his boss you’re going to have to come pick him up for work every morning.

I could tell you a lot of amusing stories about my folks adjusting to life in America, but I want to fast forward to the most significant thing that has ever happened to me, and it happened when I was a child.

A friend I knew gave me a rather odd Christmas present that year, he gave me my very first copy of the Bible. Some time later, a girl I knew invited me to church. Here I was looking for a date, and meanwhile she was looking to save my soul.

I found the Gospel message intriguing, but I was skeptical. I’m an analytical sort of person, so I decided I would have to investigate all these fanciful claims. So I started reading this Bible, often times in my closet, not sure how my parents would respond. The short story is this, I read the words of Jesus Christ and I realized that they were true.

I used to say that I had found God, but I believe it is more accurate to say that He found me. And it happened because people were brave enough to plant seeds of the Gospel in my life.

Many years later, when I became a candidate for political office, in one of my first debates, I got the question- “What is the single most important moment in your life?”

I had just endured countless hours of debate prep sessions with my political consultants and staff. That is where you sit around and get savagely grilled by people you pay -- your political consultants and staffers.

I knew exactly what they hoped I would say — they would argue that I should try to appeal to female voters by offering a touching story about when I asked my wife Supriya for her hand in marriage, or about the birth of my first child, a beautiful baby girl.

And yes, those were great moments.

But instead, I decided to do something new in politics, I told the audience the truth that day —that the most significant moment of my life was when I turned it over to Jesus Christ and acknowledged Him as my Savior.

[APPLAUSE]

My political consultants began shifting uncomfortably in their seats, and I have to admit I enjoyed that.

[LAUGHTER]

I thought of Matthew 10:33 which says -- "whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

And of Romans 1:16 which says – "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes..."

It is said that college is an intellectual pursuit, involving reason and logic. I went to Brown University in the Ivy League, a place that prides itself in intellectual reasoning.

One of the good things about going to Brown is that I was quickly able to become the President of the College Republicans on campus almost immediately. The other Republican student at Brown was the Vice President.

[LAUGHTER]

Some kids go off to college and lose their way, they become convinced that their faith is not an intellectual pursuit.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Reason and logic lead to truth...which means that reason and logic lead to God.

There is a general view among many of the elites in America that truly enlightened folks realize that all this faith and religion stuff is just quaint and antiquated thinking from an earlier era. Or that it is a nice restful place for those who are not as bright or as intellectually curious as they are.

Again, nothing could be further from the truth. True intellectual curiosity will inevitably lead to an understanding of our Creator.

I always noticed examples of this elitist view of faith when national political reporters, usually from places like Boston, New York or Washington D.C., would come down to Baton Rouge to interview me in my first years as Governor.

Inevitably, during these interviews, they would say something like this – “Governor, you are a smart guy, we know you went to Brown and were a Rhodes Scholar, so tell me, how is it that you call yourself pro-life, and you say that you oppose gay marriage, and you say that you oppose gun control? Be honest, you just say that stuff to get elected in the Deep South right?”

So of course I liked to have a little fun with it, so I would lean over the desk, and in whispered tones, pretending to confide in him or her, I would say – “well, just between us, do me a favor, go tell your editors the bad news, tell them that I absolutely believe everything I say.”

[APPLAUSE]

As you can imagine, those interviews ended rather abruptly. They never came back after that for some reason.

Let me shift gears for a moment now and talk straight with you about the world we live in, and the culture into which our students are about to wade.

Today’s world is increasingly hostile to matters of faith. American culture has in many ways become a secular culture.

At a minimum, to our graduates, it is safe to say that you are going into a world that is far more secular than the one your parents entered.

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to speak at the Reagan Library out in California where I talked about the silent war on religious liberty in America today.

The Declaration of Independence says that we are a nation constituted in accordance with the “Laws of Nature and of Nature's God,” and that we are a people “endowed by [our] Creator with certain unalienable Rights.”

Let me make this explicit: the source and justification for the very existence of the United States of America is and always has been contingent upon the understanding of man as a created being, with a Creator conferring his intrinsic rights — “among [them] Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

How we understand and approach that Creator is properly left to the hearts and consciences of every citizen.

For me, I am a Catholic Christian. My parents are Hindus. I am blessed to know Baptists, Jews, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and so many more in the rich tapestry of American faiths.

And I also know men and women who acknowledge no denomination or creed, confess to

uncertainty about the Divine, yet look to the richness of nature and the majesty of this world — and wonder, and inwardly seek, the Author of it all.

You know, these days we think this diversity of belief is tolerated under our law and Constitution. But that's wrong. This diversity of belief is the foundation of our law and Constitution.

America does not sustain and create faith. Faith created and sustains America.

[APPLAUSE]

America did not invent religious freedom, religious freedom invented America.

President John Adams, in 1798, wrote to Massachusetts militiamen to remind them that "... Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

In 1798, this was simple common sense. In 2014, we are forced to confront a question that would have been unthinkable to President Adams ... and President Washington, and President Reagan, and every other American throughout history who believed in America's founding premise:

What happens when our government decides it no longer needs a "moral and religious people?"

Today the American people, whether they know it or not, are mired in a silent war. It threatens the fabric of our communities, the health of our public square, and the endurance of our constitutional governance.

It is a war against the propositions in the Declaration of Independence. It is a war against the spirit that motivated abolitionism. It is a war against the faith that motivated the Civil Rights struggle. It is a war against the soul of countless acts of charity. It is a war against the conscience that drives social change. It is a war against the heart that binds our neighborhoods together.

It is a war against America's best self, at America's best moments. It is a war — a silent war — against religious liberty.

This war is waged in our courts and in the halls of political power. It is pursued with grim and relentless determination by a group of like-minded elites, determined to transform the country from a land sustained by faith — into a land where faith is silenced, privatized, and circumscribed.

Their vision of America is not the vision of the Founding. It's not even the vision of 10 years ago. It's a vision in which an individual's devotion to Almighty God is accorded as much respect as a casual hobby — and with about as many rights and protections.

These elites to this point have faced little opposition. But there is a remnant who have the temerity to believe in America and its promises — and to do something about it. My question to these graduates is: Will you be a part of that remnant?

Margaret Thatcher famously said this, 'Europe was created by history. America was created by philosophy.'

The secular elites understand this just as well as she did. And they know that to take over America, they must make war on this philosophy.

This silent war is the real undercurrent driving politically fractious debates in a number of areas of policy. But why is this war happening? What does it mean for the country and people of faith? Why does it represent such a fundamental challenge to our American identity and the exceptional history that makes our nation great?

Consider three storylines playing out in our states and at the highest courts over the past several years in three different areas, yet all with overlapping effects.

First: the freedom to exercise your religion in the way you run your business, large or small, is under assault.

You have likely heard of the Obama Administration's case against Hobby Lobby, a mega craft store and a family business whose battle against President Obama's contraception mandate will end up as a Supreme Court decision. The national chain filed suit after being told they would be fined \$1.3 million per day if they didn't pay for abortifacients through their insurance.

Hobby Lobby is nothing less than an all-American success story. This family-owned company was launched in Oklahoma in 1970 with nothing more than a \$600 loan and a workshop in a garage.

Today they have 588 stores in 47 states. They have more than 13,000 full-time employees. They expanded, branching out to create a Christian supply shop to sell Bibles and craft supplies, opening another 35 stores in 7 states, with almost 400 more employees.

This is entrepreneurship at its best, a family owned business that went from \$600 and a garage to two companies that employ almost 14,000 people full-time across the country.

Through it all, Hobby Lobby has retained the guiding principles of its devout founders.

Their statement of purpose begins with a Bible verse, and they are closed every Sunday. They've committed to honor the Lord by being generous employers, paying well above minimum wage and increasing salaries four years in a row even in the midst of the enduring recession.

None of this matters to the Obama Administration.

The argument they have advanced, successfully thus far, is that faithful business owners cannot operate under the assumption that they can use their moral principles to guide the way their places of business spend money.

According to the Administration's legal arguments, the family that owns Hobby Lobby is not protected by the First Amendment's "free exercise" of religion clause.

That's the part of the First Amendment which states that "Congress shall make no law ... prohibiting the free exercise" of religion. The Obama Administration and Attorney General Eric Holder argue that, "Hobby Lobby is a for-profit, secular employer, and a secular entity by definition does not exercise religion."

A federal judge agreed: since Hobby Lobby is a "secular" corporation, they have no right to be guided by the religious beliefs of their ownership.

Keep in mind that Hobby Lobby wasn't arguing that so-called morning-after pills should be illegal, or banned, or doing anything to prevent their employees from paying the small cost of such pills. They just had a serious moral problem with paying for something they viewed as inherently against their deeply held beliefs.

The Obama Administration's argument ignores these beliefs and treats them as little more than an inconvenience to its ever-expanding regulatory state. Now let's be clear: this is bigger than Hobby Lobby. The Administration's argument strikes at the core of our understanding of free exercise of religion.

This case could have enormous ramifications for religious business owners across the country.

Under the Obama regime, you have the protection of the First Amendment as an individual, you see — but the instant you start a business, you lose those protections.

And that brings us to the second front in the silent war: the assault on our freedom of association as people of faith, to form organizations where we work alongside others who share our views.

This brings us to the Hosanna-Tabor case, which revolved around the ability of a Lutheran academy in Michigan to fire a teacher. Here, the Obama Administration advanced another extreme argument, claiming that job regulations prevented the academy from being able to fire anyone over a difference in beliefs.

The lawyers for the Obama Administration went far beyond the issues of the case to instead advance the legally absurd position that there is no general ministerial exception, arguing that religious groups don't even have the Constitutionally protected right to select their own ministers or rabbis.

Thankfully, here, the Administration's extreme position was rebutted by the Supreme Court in decisive fashion, with a 9-0 decision opposing its perspective. So for the time being at least, the government doesn't get to decide who can preach the Gospel.

But the important thing to note is that the government wanted to make that decision. That is truly offensive and frightening.

The Administration advanced that extreme argument because it is consistent with the view of many on the Left, particularly elite liberal legal scholars, that the god we must worship first is government, and that our rights are doled out by Washington as they see fit.

But those cases are only the beginning — there is a bigger threat, the assault on your freedom of expression in all areas of life.

Illinois shows us a preview of what this looks like.

In legislation they proposed altering the definition of marriage, they would have required churches and other congregations to essentially close their doors to outsiders, stop providing services to the community, and close off their facilities to other non-profits or church groups in order to avoid being required to host same-sex ceremonies.

They would not allow religious bodies to rent their facilities to non-members for use in weddings, for example.

They would drive churches to have to eliminate classes, day schools, counseling, fellowship hall meetings, soup kitchens and much, much more.

In other words, this law and others like it would require believers to essentially choose to break with their deeply held theological beliefs, or give up their daily activity of evangelism, retreat from public life, and sacrifice their property rights.

This is the next stage of the assault, and it is only beginning.

Today, an overwhelming majority of those who belong to a religious denomination in America — that's more than half the country — are members of organizations that affirm the traditional definition of marriage. All of those denominations will be targeted in large and small degrees in the coming years.

For example: will churches in America even be able to remain part of the public square in a time when their views on sin are in direct conflict with the culture, and when expressing those views will be seen as hiding hateful speech behind religious protections?

This war on religious liberty – on your freedom to exercise your religion, on your freedom to associate, on your freedom of expression – is only going to continue.

It is going to continue because of an idea, a wrongheaded concept: that religious freedom means you have the freedom to worship, and that is all.

In this misbegotten and un-American conception of religious liberty, your rights only begin and end in the pew. This is absolutely ridiculous. We have the right to practice our faith and protect our conscience no matter where we happen to be.

[APPLAUSE]

We must also keep some perspective on this silent war. It is a challenging time to be a believer in America, yes. But consider the plight of believers around the world today. In nation after nation, Christians are being slaughtered by radical Islamists for their beliefs. It is a time of enormous upheaval in the Middle East, where your beliefs can lead to your church being burned, your children being kidnapped, or put you on the wrong side of a gun.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote this: "The cross is laid on every Christian. It begins with the call to abandon the attachments of the world. ... When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die."

And today, around the world, many Christians are living out that calling. That is a shooting war over religion, not a silent one.

So here, in America, we should be grateful that the laws and principles put in place by the Founders, men like George Mason and James Madison and Patrick Henry who understood the importance of religious liberty, have endured for so long.

They are the reason America has come so far, and it is those same principles that should guide us farther still – principles that understand that power is derived from the people, not from government.

Calvin Coolidge understood this, in his own time: "We live in an age of science and of abounding accumulation of material things. These did not create our Declaration. Our Declaration created them. The things of the spirit come first. Unless we cling to that, all our material prosperity, overwhelming though it may appear, will turn to a barren scepter in our grasp."

The President was right. The things of the spirit do come first. We must act, and act now, to protect them.

The temptation in some corners is to ask for a truce in these fractious battles — but in practical terms, a truce would only amount to those who value religious liberty laying down their arms.

Our religious freedom was won over the course of centuries of persecution and blood, and we should not surrender them without a fight.

Make no mistake: the war over religious liberty is the war over free speech, and without the first there is no such thing as the second.

Though this is not a battle any of us would have chosen, it's one we're called to join, and we should do so gladly, with our hearts and minds set on things above.

Our religious liberty must in no way ever be linked to the ever-changing opinions of the public. To the contrary, we must understand that our freedom of conscience protects all Americans of every persuasion — however those persuasions may evolve.

Second, it is unmistakable that most of the Obama Administration's attacks on religious liberty are aimed at conservative Christians. But the fact is that our religious liberties are designed to protect people of all faiths.

And I will note, that while I am best described as an evangelical Catholic, my extended family is quite diverse when it comes to matters of faith. And our liberties in America demand equal protections for all.

Third, for those of you who follow pop culture, you may have taken note of the recent flap between the Robertson family, of Duck Dynasty fame, and the A&E Network that produces and broadcasts the Duck Dynasty show.

And you may have further observed that the one of the first and the loudest and most aggressive defenders of the Robertson family was the Governor of Louisiana.

[APPLAUSE]

Now, you may think that I was defending the Robertsons simply because I am the Governor of their home state, the great state of Louisiana. You may have thought I defended them simply because my boys are huge fans of the show.

You would be wrong about that. I defended them because they have every right to speak their minds, however indelicately they may choose to do so.

[APPLAUSE]

Of course, A&E is a for-profit business, and they can choose what they want to put on the air.

But there was something much, much larger at stake here. There was a time when liberals in this country believed in debate.

But that is increasingly not the case for the modern Left in America. No, the modern Left has grown tired of debate. Their new strategy is simply to try to silence their critics.

So these Leftists immediately mobilized and did all they could not to debate the issues, but rather to attempt to silence the Robertsons. And as you well know, the same thing happened again just this week with another demonstration of intolerance from the entertainment industry. HGTV was working on a new show featuring the Benham brothers: twin brothers that graduated from right here, Liberty University, in 1998. I know they've been recognized but I would like to ask them to stand and let's give them another round of applause for their courage and grace.

[APPLAUSE]

HGTV canceled the show this week, allegedly because they learned that one of the brothers had protested a Democratic Party convention, and the other had protested at an abortion clinic.

I want you to think about that for a minute. If these guys had protested at the Republican Party convention or at Liberty University, instead of canceling their show, HGTV would've probably given them a raise and a new deal.

There was a time when the Left preached tolerance.

And they are indeed tolerant, unless they disagree with you.

To paraphrase William F. Buckley, a liberal is someone who welcomes dissent, and is astonished to find there is any.

The modern Left in America is completely intolerant of the views of people of faith.

They want a completely secular society where people of faith keep their views to themselves.

Remember this quote from our 40th president, President Reagan: "Freedom is a fragile thing and is never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not ours by inheritance; it must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation."

To be clear, churches in America are not being burned to the ground, and Christians are not being slaughtered for their faith. There is really no comparison to the persecution of people of faith inside our borders and outside.

So...we've established that our culture has taken a secular turn, we've established that persecution of Christians is on the rise throughout the world, we've established that religious liberty here in America is under siege, we've established that the Left no longer wants to debate, they simply want to silence us.

Now what? What do we do about it? What should you do about it?

First of all, you should be optimistic and be of good cheer. This is an exciting time to be a believer.

It is true that Christians are the last group that it is OK to discriminate against in America. But so what?

If God is with us, who can be against us?

To the graduates: just a couple of last words of advice.

Don't see yourself as a victim; America already has enough people who see themselves as victims.

You should go out into the world: boldly be the salt and light in a world that needs you now more than ever before.

And most of all, you should be bold in your faith and embrace opportunities to stand up for the truth, just like those people in my life.

You never know when you might be planting a seed that will change someone's life forever.

God bless you, congratulations on your graduation, God bless the great faculty, staff, and students of Liberty University. Congratulations to the Class of 2014.

MUSIC SELECTION (Sounds of Liberty)

SGA PRESENTATION (Student Government Association President Joshua Warner and Danielle Ferrario-Tweeten, Senior Class President):

Warner:

GOOD MORNING LIBERTY UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 2014! I AM HONORED TO STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY, AND SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE STUDENT BODY. FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS, WE HAVE DEDICATED OURSELVES TO THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE. EVERY STUDENT HERE IS AN INTELLECTUAL WHO HAS BEEN EQUIPPED -BY LIBERTY'S DISTINGUISHED FACULTY- TO BE CHAMPIONS FOR CHRIST IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE. AT TIMES IT

HAS BEEN CHALLENGING, AND GREAT MEMORIES HAVE BEEN MADE. SOME OF US HAVE EVEN FOUND OUR LIFELONG HELPMATE TO SHARE MEMORIES WITH FOREVER. I AM GRATEFUL TO HAVE ATTENDED LIBERTY UNIVERSITY, AND THERE IS NO OTHER PLACE I WOULD RATHER GRADUATE FROM. IT'S NOT ANY ORDINARY SCHOOL, IT'S AN OUTSTANDING SCHOOL THAT TRAINS, AND MENTORS, ITS STUDENTS TO DO GREAT THINGS FOR CHRIST. WITH THIS IN MIND, LET US STRIVE TO DO BOLD THINGS WITH OUR LIVES. WHETHER THIS BE IN BUSINESS, LAW, THE MILITARY, MEDICINE, THE CHURCH, MISSIONS, POLITICS, OR PSYCHOLOGY; WE ALL CAN REACH OUR WORLD FOR CHRIST. CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2014 FOR MAKING IT TO OUR NEW BEGINNING!

EVERY YEAR THE SENIOR CLASS RAISES FUNDS, FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS, AROUND THE LYNCHBURG AREA AND BEYOND. THROUGH MANY HOURS OF HARD WORK, THE SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT HAS PLANNED AND COORDINATED THE RAISING OF FUNDS FOR THIS YEAR'S PROJECT. IT IS MY DISTINCT PRIVILEGE TO WELCOME OUR SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT, DANIELLE FERRARIO!

Tweeten

GOOD MORNING LIBERTY UNIVERSITY! MY NAME IS DANIELLE FERRARIO AND I HAVE HAD THE EXTREME HONOR OF SERVING AS THE SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT FOR THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2014. PART OF MY JOB AS REPRESENTING THE SENIOR CLASS WAS TO DETERMINE THE SENIOR CLASS GIFT.

BUT BEFORE I EXPLAIN WHAT THE GIFT IS, I WANT EVERYONE IN THIS STADIUM TO RAISE THEIR HAND IF YOU HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY CANCER IN SOME WAY, WHETHER THROUGH A PERSONAL DIAGNOSIS OR A DIAGNOSIS OF A FAMILY, FRIEND, OR LOVED ONE.

I PERSONALLY HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY CANCER IN MANY WAYS. BOTH OF MY GRANDFATHERS BATTLED CANCER AS WELL AS FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES. AND LOOKING AROUND THIS STADIUM, I CAN'T SEE ONE PERSON THAT HAS NOT BEEN AFFECTED PERSONALLY BY CANCER. THE SENIOR CLASS GIFT FOR THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2014 WILL BE A YEARLY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP THAT WILL BE GIVEN TO SOMEONE WHO HAS FOUGHT, OR IS CURRENTLY FIGHTING CANCER.

NOT ONLY IS FIGHTING CANCER A PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL BATTLE, BUT IT IS A FINANCIAL BATTLE AS WELL. MEDICAL BILLS ACCUMULATE AND IT BECOMES A FINANCIAL BURDEN ON THE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES AFFECTED. OUR DESIRE AS A CLASS WAS TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE FOUNDATIONS OF THIS SCHOLARSHIP TO BE ABLE TO SUPPORT THOSE WHO MAY NEED HELP PAYING FOR COLLEGE BECAUSE OF THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF FIGHTING CANCER. NOT ONLY WILL THIS SCHOLARSHIP BE ABLE TO FINANCIALLY AID THE RECIPIENT, BUT ALSO ENCOURAGE THAT PERSON THAT THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST ARE SUPPORTING THEM.

SO, LIBERTY UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 2014, THANK YOU FOR RAISING OVER \$15,000 TO START THIS SCHOLARSHIP. I ENCOURAGE YOU, EVEN AS YOU MOVE ON FROM HERE, TO REMEMBER THIS GIFT AND KEEP GIVING TO IT. THIS SCHOLARSHIP IS OUR LEGACY AND ITS PURPOSE IS TO NOT ONLY AFFECT ONE PERSON'S LIFE, BUT MANY LIVES. THANK YOU.

PRESENTATION OF DEGREES (Dr. Ron Godwin):

IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO PRESENT THE CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES INDIVIDUALLY FOR THE CLASS OF 2014: CANDIDATES FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, DOCTOR OF EDUCATION, JURIS DOCTOR AND DOCTOR OF MINISTRY. PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED. ... YOU MAY BE SEATED.

CANDIDATES FOR THE EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST, THEOLOGY, AND MASTER OF THEOLOGY DEGREES - PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED. YOU MAY BE SEATED.

CANDIDATES FOR ALL OTHER MASTERS' LEVEL DEGREES— PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED. ... YOU MAY BE SEATED.

CANDIDATES FOR ALL BACHELOR'S LEVEL DEGREES— PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED. ...YOU MAY BE SEATED.

CANDIDATES FOR ALL ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREES— PLEASE STAND. ... YOU MAY BE SEATED.

CANDIDATES FOR THE GRADUATE OF THEOLOGY, THE BIBLE DIPLOMA, AND THE BIBLE CERTIFICATE— PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED. ... YOU MAY BE SEATED.

LIBERTY ONLINE ACADEMY CANDIDATES FOR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS – PLEASE STAND TO BE RECOGNIZED.

FINALLY, ONCE AGAIN, WILL ALL MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2014 - PLEASE STAND AND REMAIN STANDING FOR THE CONFERRING OF DEGREES.

[APPLAUSE]

CHARGE TO THE GRADUATES & CONFERRING OF DEGREES (President Jerry Falwell)

ON THIS COMMENCEMENT DAY, YOU STAND IN A NEW RELATIONSHIP TO LIBERTY UNIVERSITY -- A UNIVERSITY THAT NOW LOOKS UPON YOU AS ITS SONS AND DAUGHTERS. THIS INSTITUTION HAS SUCCEEDED IF YOU HAVE LEARNED HERE THE ABILITY TO THINK CRITICALLY, UTILIZING NOT ONLY MAN'S STORE OF KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM, BUT - ABOVE ALL - GOD'S WISDOM IN MAKING LIFE'S DECISIONS.

TODAY YOU WILL EXPERIENCE A NEW FREEDOM, BUT WITH THAT FREEDOM COMES NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. WE TRUST YOUR EDUCATION AT LIBERTY UNIVERSITY HAS PREPARED YOU TO ENJOY THAT FREEDOM TO ITS FULLEST AND TO ACCEPT THOSE RESPONSIBILITIES WITHOUT FEAR.

YOU HAVE A HIGH AND NOBLE CALLING, AND YOU HAVE A FINELY-TUNED GUIDANCE SYSTEM, THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

NEVER AGAIN ON THIS EARTH WILL WE BE ASSEMBLED TOGETHER AS WE ARE TODAY. AS YOU LEAVE, YOU WILL GO INTO ALL WALKS OF LIFE AND TO ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD CARRYING WITH YOU THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, WE WILL HEAR REPORTS ABOUT YOU. BUT ONLY ETERNITY WILL REVEAL THE FULL IMPACT YOUR LIVES AND YOUR EDUCATION HERE AT LIBERTY, AND THE IMPACT THAT THAT EDUCATION HAS HAD UPON THIS WORLD AND THE WORLD TO COME.

IT IS OUR PRAYER AS YOU LEAVE THIS CAMPUS THAT YOU WILL HAVE A FULL LIFE, BASED UPON FAITH IN AND DEPENDENCE UPON ALMIGHTY GOD, PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND RESPECT OF YOUR FELLOW MAN.

WE HOPE THAT HOWEVER FAR YOUR JOURNEYS MAY TAKE YOU, THEY WILL BRING YOU BACK TO THIS CAMPUS TO WHICH YOU WILL ALWAYS BELONG.

REMEMBER, YOU ARE OUR AMBASSADORS WHEREVER YOU GO. YOUR ASSOCIATES WILL JUDGE CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION BY HOW YOU CONDUCT YOURSELVES.

AS YOU GRADUATE, YOU SHOULD NOT FIND SATISFACTION WITH THE COMMON PLACE IN CHARACTER, ATTITUDE, AND VALUES. BY YOUR EXAMPLE, YOU SHOULD RAISE THE INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL TONE OF SOCIETY.

IN PRESENTING YOU NOW TO RECEIVE YOUR DEGREES, WE CHARGE YOU TO LIVE A LIFE OF DEVOTION TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND DEPENDENCE UPON THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR STRENGTH, DIRECTION, AND GROWTH.

IN TESTIMONY OF YOUR CONDUCT AND PURPOSE, BY THE POWER

VESTED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY AND

UPON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FACULTIES OF THE UNIVERSITY, I HEREBY CONFER UPON YOU THE DEGREE OF THE UNIVERSITY, WITH ALL THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES APPERTAINING THEREUNTO.

[APPLAUSE]

I FORGOT SOMETHING, YOU MAY NOW MOVE YOUR TASSELS.

[APPLAUSE]

PLEDGE OF THE GRADUATING CLASS (Dr. Ron Godwin):

AND NOW GRADUATES, PLEASE REMAIN STANDING AND JOIN ME IN THE PLEDGE OF THE GRADUATING CLASS, LOCATED IN YOUR PROGRAM.

“AS A MEMBER OF THE GRADUATING CLASS, AND IN THE PRESENCE OF THESE ASSEMBLED WITNESSES AND GOD, I EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO LIBERTY UNIVERSITY, AND PROMISE TO HOLD MY DEGREE SO NO LOSS WILL COME TO IT.

I PLEDGE TO SEEK EARNESTLY AND FAITHFULLY TO PERPETUATE THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHER GENERATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE, THAT OUR LORD’S WORK MAY NEVER LACK FOR LEADERS OF CHARACTER AND ABILITY.

WITH WHATEVER WISDOM I POSSESS, AND WITH REVERENCE FOR THE TRUTH, I PLEDGE THE BEST OF MY LIFE AND LOYALTY TO MY LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, TO MY COUNTRY, AND TO MY ALMA MATER. I AFFIRM MY DETERMINATION TO JUSTIFY, THROUGH MY OWN LIFE AND DEEDS, MY INHERITANCE FROM THE PAST AND TO DO ALL THAT I CAN TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST.”

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WOULD YOU ALL PLEASE RISE FOR THE DEDICATORY PRAYER WHICH WILL BE LED BY THE SENIOR PASTOR OF THE THOMAS ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH, PASTOR JONATHAN FALWELL.

DEDICATORY PRAYER (Pastor Jonathan Falwell):

WOULD YOU JOIN ME IN PRAYER? FATHER, TODAY WE ARE HUMBLLED. WE ARE HUMBELD BY THE SIGHT WE SEE IN THIS STADIUM. OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO MADE THE COMMITMENT TO TRAVEL THE JOURNEY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOU, TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WISDOM THAT COMES FROM THE PEOPLE OF THIS INSTITUTION, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE WISDOM THAT COMES FROM ALL OF HUMANITY.

WE PRAY THAT, GOD, AS THE JOURNEY TODAY BEGINS FOR THESE GRADUATES, THIS ONE THAT WILL LEAD TO SUCCESS; NOT JUST MONATARILY, BUT IT WILL LEAD TO SUCCESS IN INTEGRITY. IT WILL LEAD TO SUCCESS IN INTEGRITY AND CONTINUE TO PASS ON THE WISDOM THAT ONLY COMES FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

WE PRAY FOR EVERY GRADUATE TODAY THAT THEY WILL BE WITNESSES; THEY WILL BE TESTIMONIES OF THE GOSPEL. THAT AS WE HEARD TODAY FROM GOV. JINDAL, THAT THEY, ACCORDING TO ROMANS 1:16, THAT THEY WILL NOT BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, FOR IT IS THE POWER OF SALVATION FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES.

LORD, WE KNOW THAT THIS GRADUATION TODAY, THE DEGREE THAT THEY RECEIVE, IS NOT THE ENDING, BUT IT IS THE BEGINNING. AND LORD, WE PRAY THAT TODAY THAT IT WILL BE A BEGINNING TO BRING THIS WORLD TO THE REALIZATION, TO THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE ONLY THING THAT IS WORTHY OF OUR PRAISE, THE ONLY THING THAT SHOULD BE VALUED TODAY, IS OUR LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST.

GOD, TODAY WE THANK YOU. WE THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT YOU'VE GIVEN. THE GIFT YOU'VE GIVEN IN YOUR SON JESUS CHRIST WHO CAME TO THIS EARTH, WHO DIED UPON THE CROSS, WHO WAS BURIED IN THAT TOMB. BUT PRAISE GOD THAT THREE DAYS LATER HE DID EXACTLY AS HE PROMISED... [AUDIO CUT OFF]

REMEMBER, A UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT IS A TIME AND PLACE WHERE TRADITIONS ARE HONORED, AND WE WANT EACH OF YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN ONE OF LIBERTY'S TRADITIONS LATER TODAY.

FOLLOWING THIS CEREMONY, EACH OF THE COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS OF THE UNIVERSITY WILL HOLD ITS OWN CEREMONY. THE DEAN WILL SPEAK, AND EACH PROGRAM WILL FEATURE THE RECOGNITION OF EACH GRADUATE BY NAME. TIMES AND LOCATIONS ARE LISTED IN THE PROGRAM.

PLEASE REMAIN IN PLACE FOR THE RECESSIONAL.

RECESSIONAL (LU Wind Ensemble)

