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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 10, 1989

Ed/Chris
1989 MAY 12 PM 7:11
file

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: CHRISS WINSTON *cu*
FROM: EDWARD E. McNALLY *EMN*
SUBJECT: ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

5/11/89

I. SUMMARY

Attached for your consideration and review are draft remarks for your commencement address at Alcorn State University on Saturday.

II. DISCUSSION

At 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 13, 1989, you are scheduled to join Dr. Walter Washington (president of Alcorn State University) to address Alcorn's graduating class of approximately 350 students. An audience of approximately 7,000 persons is expected in the field house of the Health, Physical Education & Recreation Complex.

Dr. Washington (who met with you here as part of the leadership group from Historically Black Colleges and Universities in January at the O.E.O.B. and again in April in the Rose Garden) has been president at Alcorn for the past 20 years.

(McNally/Dooley)
May 10, 1989
9:25 a.m.
Draft Two
(ALCORN)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN ST. UNIV. COMMENCEMENT
LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1989
11:00 A.M.

((DR. WALTER WASHINGTON, ALCORN'S PRESIDENT, WILL INTRODUCE
YOU.))

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you. ((PAUSE))

You know, last month we commemorated the bicentennial of the American presidency. And Walter, I have to tell you -- after all these actors in powdered wigs -- it's a relief to finally stand beside someone who really is "President Washington."

Good morning to you all and thank you -- President Washington, in particular for your fine work here at Alcorn, respected faculty, Mississippi's distinguished congressional delegation -- the families and friends and fans of these students -- and most of all: The Alcorn State University Class of '89.

For four years, today's seniors have been part of the proud tradition they call "the Alcorn family." And this is a day for the family. But it's your own individual families -- the mothers and fathers and grandparents gathered here -- that I want to congratulate first. In a very private way, your years of hard work, sacrifice, and yes, love for your sons and daughters have brought this moment to pass. You deserve the first round of applause.

For many American families -- those fortunate families where children are raised assuming they will have the opportunity to go to college -- the drama of today's ceremony is difficult to appreciate. Many of you are the first in your families ever to attend college -- let alone stay the course to graduate.

And the economic transformation wrought by historically black colleges such as Alcorn is nothing less than astounding: While 85 percent of United Negro College Fund alumni come from blue-collar families -- almost all go on to professional or managerial positions. In many cases they are the first blacks to hold those particular positions. It's an exciting tradition -- and one of the most under-appreciated success stories in America.

It's also a tradition that's close to my heart. When I was a college senior in 1948, Barbara and I began participating in the United Negro College Fund. In the forty years since, we've continued to do our small part along the way. And even before becoming President -- back in January, about a week before the Inauguration -- Walter Washington and some of his colleagues met with me to talk about how the Administration can best support this unique tradition.

Some good ideas came out of that gathering. And several are already in effect -- begun last month when Walter and others joined me in the Rose Garden to launch the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Now, I understand that several of today's graduates are joining me in federal service -- in agriculture, defense,

transportation and other critical areas. I'm proud of you -- we welcome you -- America needs your talent. And that's not idle talk. Last month's Order also directed that the federal personnel office develop a program to improve recruitment at Alcorn and similar colleges for part-time and summer positions, to help get you started in ~~the~~ federal public service.

I also understand that a campaign is underway here now to raise half a million dollars through a federal challenge grant program. ~~Recently~~ ^{Recently}, I ~~we~~ signed an order bringing \$60 million in new funds over the next four years to boost the endowment matching grants available to schools like Alcorn.

~~Now,~~ ^{As} I told the college presidents who gathered at the White House last month, these new initiatives are just a start. More must be done.

But on a day like today, there is much of which we can be proud. Just as I have covered a fair piece of ground since my own days as a college senior, so too has Alcorn come a long way since 1948. That was the landmark year Alcorn first earned an "A" rating as an accredited college. And that was the year "The Seven Mile Stretch" ((ALCORN'S ENTRANCE ROAD)) was finally paved -- a milestone that was resoundingly cheered by the graduating class.

They were only 60 in number -- barely a fifth of the total receiving degrees today -- a ceremony so small that it fit comfortably in the Oakland Chapel.

7.

6

Like my classmates in Connecticut, many of the men at Alcorn in 1948 were veterans, soldiers who had fought for democracy while serving in segregated units. And like many of you today, the Alcornites of 1948 were graduating with skills that would enable them to feed the hungry, nurse the sick, and teach the young.

Future Pittsburgh Steeler Jack Spinks -- the first black pro athlete to come out of Mississippi -- was getting ready to start his freshman year. He would soon be practicing in a ramshackle wooden building that everyone called the "Old Chicken Coop." Jack says that when it rained during basketball games, the roof leaked so bad people had to keep their umbrellas open. The modern field house in which we're gathered today was then not even a dream. And Jack is somewhere out there today -- and I understand his youngest son is part of the graduating class.

The forty years of schooling that separate Jack and his son embrace an era of tremendous change -- for Alcorn, and for America -- a time of upheaval, and finally, a time of growth and maybe something like wisdom.

Not everything has changed. The threads woven through the fabric of Alcorn -- and any place where excellence is sought -- are what used to be called simple family values. We're not talking about two sets of values -- family values are the same for black and white. And they are not complicated. Honesty. Faith. Frugality. Acceptance of responsibility. The importance of work. A tradition of helping one's neighbors. And, as I have

said before, any definition of a successful life must include serving others.

Martin Luther King argued that "intelligence is not enough." He said: "Intelligence plus character -- that is the goal of true education."

Well, you at Alcorn are lucky. Alcorn is a place where -- as your old football coach put it -- "the air is a little bit cleaner, the grass is a little bit greener, the water is a little bit sweeter. . . it's just a little bit closer to heaven." This place has character -- it is a university with a mission. And to paraphrase a new song that's climbing the charts this month, this special, secluded college has been "the wind beneath your wings." For you -- and for young Americans graduating all across our country this month -- it is time for you to take that wind and soar.

For some of you, I hope there comes a day when you ride those winds into the political arena, to fight for what you believe in, to grapple not only with your own dreams, but also those of your countrymen.

But politics is hardly the only arena where a new breeze is blowing. [When I got out of college, I piled everything I had into an old Studebaker and went to Texas to learn the oil business. Before long we started a company -- made a little money -- but the bigger reward was building something on my own. And creating 215 jobs for 215 families.]

*How about some will go into business
risks, rewards, jobs*

*some will go into education -
excellence, accountability choice
some will go into industry
service others.*

Now, business can be pretty rough and tumble. But America is successful because we are a nation of risk-takers. The Alcorn Braves know that you can't steal second base and keep one foot on first.

Every senior here is an educated man or woman, proud and self-assured. With all the cockiness of youth, some of you -- I hope most of you -- must be feeling today like anything is possible.

Well, trust those instincts. Everyone has a dream.  And everyone has something to give.

Last month I saw a new movie -- a movie about baseball and about faith -- in which Burt Lancaster ponders the power of hope. He asks: "Is there enough magic, out there in the moonlight, to make this dream come true?"

Well, I have come to Mississippi today because the magic of America, and the magic of our times, means believing that your best days -- that our best days -- are still to come. Born in an era of peace and educated in times of relative prosperity, your generation can look to a new century rich with unimaginable opportunities.

Yes, there is enough magic out there -- enough for all Americans. And yes, you can seize that magic with the power of your own hands -- and with the skills bequeathed you by this special college. And yes, just as Alcorn's 1988 yearbook was dedicated to Dr. King, you can honor his memory by doing what he

taught us all to do -- to have a dream -- and to work every day to make that dream come true.

America is proud of you and the families you represent. God bless you in the challenges to come. And God bless the United States.

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((DR. WALTER WASHINGTON, ALCORN'S PRESIDENT, WILL
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THANK YOU, DOCTOR. THANK YOU. ((PAUSE))

YOU KNOW, LAST MONTH WE COMMEMORATED THE
BICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY.

- 2 -

AND WALTER, I HAVE TO TELL YOU -- AFTER ALL THESE
ACTORS IN POWDERED WIGS -- IT'S A RELIEF TO FINALLY
STAND BESIDE SOMEONE WHO REALLY IS "PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON."

GOOD MORNING TO YOU ALL AND THANK YOU, PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, IN PARTICULAR, FOR THE FINE WORK BY YOU AND
YOUR FACULTY HERE AT ALCORN ((ALL-CORN)).

- 3 -

IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO SEE THAD AND TRENT, YOUR ABLE SENATORS, MY GOOD FRIEND SONNY AND OTHERS IN MISSISSIPPI'S DISTINGUISHED CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION. CONGRATULATIONS ALSO TO THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS AND FANS OF THESE STUDENTS -- AND, MOST OF ALL: THE ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY CLASS OF '89.

FOR FOUR YEARS, TODAY'S SENIORS HAVE BEEN PART OF THE PROUD TRADITION THEY CALL "THE ALCORN FAMILY." AND THIS IS A DAY FOR THE FAMILY.

- 4 -

BUT IT'S YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES -- THE MOTHERS AND FATHERS AND GRANDPARENTS GATHERED HERE -- THAT I WANT TO CONGRATULATE FIRST. IN A VERY PRIVATE WAY, YOUR YEARS OF HARD WORK, SACRIFICE, AND YES, LOVE FOR YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS HAVE BROUGHT THIS MOMENT TO PASS. YOU DESERVE THE FIRST ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

- 5 -

THE AMERICAN FAMILY HAS BEEN UNDER SIEGE IN RECENT TIMES. BUT, AS THE MONTHS UNFOLD, I BECOME MORE AND MORE CERTAIN THAT THE ANSWER TO OUR PROBLEMS CAN BE FOUND IN THE STRENGTH OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY. LOOKING AROUND THIS ROOM, YOU CAN FEEL THE PRIDE. IT'S A POWERFUL FORCE FOR GOOD.

- 6 -

AND AS PRESIDENT, I WILL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO PROMOTE THE FAMILY -- EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION -- TO PROTECT THE FAMILY -- IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS -- AND TO REAFFIRM THE FAMILY VALUES THAT BROUGHT YOUR KIDS THROUGH THESE FOUR CHALLENGING YEARS.

FOR SOME AMERICAN FAMILIES -- THOSE FORTUNATE FAMILIES WHERE CHILDREN ARE RAISED ASSUMING THEY WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO COLLEGE -- THE DRAMA OF TODAY'S CEREMONY IS DIFFICULT TO APPRECIATE.

- 7 -

MANY OF YOU ARE THE FIRST IN YOUR FAMILIES EVER TO ATTEND COLLEGE -- LET ALONE STAY THE COURSE TO GRADUATE.

AND THE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION WROUGHT BY HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES SUCH AS ALCORN IS NOTHING LESS THAN ASTOUNDING: WHILE 85 PERCENT OF UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND ALUMNI COME FROM BLUE-COLLAR FAMILIES -- ALMOST ALL GO ON TO PROFESSIONAL OR MANAGERIAL POSITIONS.

- 8 -

IN MANY CASES THEY ARE THE FIRST BLACKS TO HOLD THOSE PARTICULAR POSITIONS. IT'S AN EXCITING TRADITION -- AND ONE OF THE MOST UNDER-APPRECIATED SUCCESS STORIES IN AMERICA.

IT'S ALSO A TRADITION THAT'S CLOSE TO MY HEART. WHEN I WAS A COLLEGE SENIOR IN 1948, BARBARA AND I BEGAN PARTICIPATING IN THE UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND. IN THE FORTY YEARS SINCE, WE'VE CONTINUED TO DO OUR SMALL PART ALONG THE WAY.

- 9 -

AND EVEN BEFORE BECOMING PRESIDENT -- BACK IN JANUARY, ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE THE INAUGURATION -- WALTER WASHINGTON AND SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES MET WITH ME TO TALK ABOUT HOW THE ADMINISTRATION CAN BEST SUPPORT THIS UNIQUE TRADITION.

- 10 -

SOME GOOD IDEAS CAME OUT OF THAT GATHERING. AND SEVERAL ARE ALREADY IN EFFECT -- BEGUN LAST MONTH WHEN WALTER AND OTHERS JOINED ME IN THE ROSE GARDEN TO LAUNCH THE PRESIDENT'S BOARD OF ADVISORS ON HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

NOW, I UNDERSTAND THAT SEVERAL OF TODAY'S GRADUATES ARE JOINING ME IN FEDERAL SERVICE -- IN AGRICULTURE, DEFENSE, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER CRITICAL AREAS.

- 11 -

I'M PROUD OF YOU -- WE WELCOME YOU -- AMERICA NEEDS YOUR TALENT. AND THAT'S NOT IDLE TALK. LAST MONTH'S ORDER ALSO DIRECTED THAT THE FEDERAL PERSONNEL OFFICE DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE RECRUITMENT AT ALCORN AND SIMILAR COLLEGES FOR PART-TIME AND SUMMER POSITIONS, TO HELP GET YOU STARTED IN FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE.

I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT A CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY HERE NOW TO RAISE HALF A MILLION DOLLARS THROUGH A FEDERAL CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM.

- 12 -

RECENTLY, I SIGNED AN ORDER BRINGING \$60 MILLION IN NEW FUNDS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO BOOST THE ENDOWMENT MATCHING GRANTS AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS LIKE ALCORN.

AS I TOLD THE COLLEGE PRESIDENTS WHO GATHERED AT THE WHITE HOUSE LAST MONTH, THESE NEW INITIATIVES ARE JUST A START. MORE MUST BE DONE.

- 13 -

BUT ON A DAY LIKE TODAY, THERE IS MUCH OF WHICH WE CAN BE PROUD. JUST AS I HAVE COVERED A FAIR PIECE OF GROUND SINCE MY OWN DAYS AS A COLLEGE SENIOR, SO TOO HAS ALCORN COME A LONG WAY SINCE 1948. THAT WAS THE LANDMARK YEAR ALCORN FIRST EARNED AN "A" RATING AS AN ACCREDITED COLLEGE. AND THAT WAS THE YEAR "THE STRETCH" WAS FINALLY PAVED -- A MILESTONE THAT WAS RESOUNDINGLY CHEERED BY THE GRADUATING CLASS.

- 14 -

THEY WERE ONLY 60 IN NUMBER -- BARELY A FIFTH OF THE TOTAL RECEIVING DEGREES TODAY -- A CEREMONY SO SMALL THAT IT FIT COMFORTABLY IN THE OAKLAND CHAPEL.

LIKE MY CLASSMATES IN CONNECTICUT, MANY OF THE MEN AT ALCORN IN 1948 WERE VETERANS, SOLDIERS WHO HAD FOUGHT FOR DEMOCRACY WHILE SERVING IN SEGREGATED UNITS. AND LIKE MANY OF YOU TODAY, THE ALCORNITES OF 1948 WERE GRADUATING WITH SKILLS THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO FEED THE HUNGRY, NURSE THE SICK, AND TEACH THE YOUNG.

FUTURE PITTSBURGH STEELER JACK SPINKS -- THE FIRST BLACK PRO ATHLETE TO COME OUT OF MISSISSIPPI -- WAS GETTING READY TO START HIS FRESHMAN YEAR. HE WOULD SOON BE PRACTICING IN A RAMSHACKLE WOODEN BUILDING THAT EVERYONE CALLED THE "OLD CHICKEN COOP." JACK SAYS THAT WHEN IT RAINED DURING BASKETBALL GAMES, THE ROOF LEAKED SO BAD PEOPLE HAD TO KEEP THEIR UMBRELLAS OPEN. THE MODERN FIELD HOUSE IN WHICH WE'RE GATHERED TODAY WAS THEN NOT EVEN A DREAM.

AND JACK IS SOMEWHERE OUT THERE TODAY -- AND I UNDERSTAND HIS YOUNGEST SON IS PART OF THE GRADUATING CLASS.

THE FORTY YEARS OF SCHOOLING THAT SEPARATE JACK AND HIS SON EMBRACE AN ERA OF TREMENDOUS CHANGE -- FOR ALCORN, AND FOR AMERICA -- A TIME OF UPHEAVAL, AND FINALLY, A TIME OF GROWTH AND MAYBE SOMETHING LIKE WISDOM.

- 17 -

NOT EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED. THE THREADS WOVEN THROUGH THE FABRIC OF ALCORN -- AND ANY PLACE WHERE EXCELLENCE IS SOUGHT -- ARE WHAT USED TO BE CALLED SIMPLE FAMILY VALUES. WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT TWO SETS OF VALUES -- FAMILY VALUES ARE THE SAME FOR BLACK AND WHITE. AND THEY ARE NOT COMPLICATED. HONESTY. FAITH. FRUGALITY. ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY. THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK. A TRADITION OF HELPING ONE'S NEIGHBORS.

- 18 -

MARTIN LUTHER KING ARGUED THAT "INTELLIGENCE IS NOT ENOUGH." HE SAID: "INTELLIGENCE PLUS CHARACTER -- THAT IS THE GOAL OF TRUE EDUCATION."

WELL, YOU AT ALCORN ARE LUCKY. ALCORN IS A PLACE WHERE -- AS YOUR OLD FOOTBALL COACH PUT IT -- "THE AIR IS A LITTLE BIT CLEANER, THE GRASS IS A LITTLE BIT GREENER, THE WATER IS A LITTLE BIT SWEETER. . .IT'S JUST A LITTLE BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN." THIS PLACE HAS CHARACTER -- IT IS A UNIVERSITY WITH A MISSION.

- 19 -

AND TO PARAPHRASE A NEW SONG THAT'S CLIMBING THE CHARTS THIS MONTH, THIS SPECIAL, SECLUDED COLLEGE HAS BEEN "THE WIND BENEATH YOUR WINGS." FOR YOU -- AND FOR YOUNG AMERICANS GRADUATING ALL ACROSS OUR COUNTRY THIS MONTH -- IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE THAT WIND AND SOAR.

FOR SOME OF YOU, I HOPE THERE COMES A DAY WHEN YOU RIDE THOSE WINDS INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA, TO FIGHT FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN, TO GRAPPLE NOT ONLY WITH YOUR OWN DREAMS, BUT ALSO THOSE OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN.

- 20 -

BUT POLITICS IS HARDLY THE ONLY ARENA WHERE A NEW BREEZE IS BLOWING. SOME OF YOU WILL LAND IN BUSINESS - - MAYBE EVEN START A BUSINESS -- WHERE YOU CAN CREATE JOBS, ADDING TO THE OPPORTUNITY OF OTHER AMERICANS. THAT'S PUBLIC SERVICE, TOO.

NOW, BUSINESS CAN BE PRETTY ROUGH AND TUMBLE. BUT AMERICA IS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE WE ARE A NATION OF RISK-TAKERS. THE ALCORN BRAVES KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T STEAL SECOND BASE AND KEEP ONE FOOT ON FIRST.

- 21 -

OTHERS WILL TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION, AND PUT "WIND BENEATH THEIR WINGS." YOUR TOUCHSTONES SHOULD BE EXCELLENCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND CHOICE. THE SYSTEM MUST OFFER PARENTS QUALITY CHOICE IN EDUCATION. ALCORN IS A GOOD EXAMPLE. BUT OUR SCHOOLS MUST ALSO BE MORE ACCOUNTABLE AND THOSE OF YOU WHO WILL KNOW THE JOY OF HELPING A CHILD LEARN, ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THAT RESPONSIBILITY.

- 22 -

OTHERS ARE HEADED FOR HEALTH CARE, AGRICULTURE, JOURNALISM, THE PROFESSIONS. WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE, IT IS WITHIN YOU TO CHANGE THE WORLD -- AND ANY DEFINITION OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE MUST INCLUDE SERVING OTHERS.

22A

AS EACH OF YOU BEGINS A NEW LIFE TODAY, YOU MAY FAIRLY ASK? WILL MY FUTURE BE SECURE? THIS IS NOT JUST A DOMESTIC QUESTION. IT IS A FOREIGN POLICY QUESTION.

FOR THE PAST FORTY YEARS, THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A STRUGGLE -- BECAUSE THE SOVIETS HAVE CHOSEN TO STAND APART FROM -- AND OPPOSED TO -- THE WORLD FAMILY OF NATIONS.

22B

YESTERDAY, I ANNOUNCED A NEW POLICY FOR THE 1990s -- ONE THAT MOVES BEYOND CONTAINMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION. THIS NEW POLICY SETS A GOAL OF BRINGING THE SOVIET UNION INTO THE WORLD COMMUNITY. AND IF WE SUCCEED, THE FUTURE YOU WILL KNOW WILL BE SAFER, AND THE WORLD YOU WILL KNOW WILL BE FREER.

22C

AS THE SOVIET UNION MOVES TOWARD GREATER OPENNESS AND DEMOCRATIZATION -- AS THEY MEET THE CHALLENGE OF RESPONSIBLE INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR -- WE WILL MATCH THEIR STEPS WITH STEPS OF OUR OWN.

- 23 -

TODAY, EVERY SENIOR HERE IS AN EDUCATED MAN OR WOMAN, PROUD AND SELF-ASSURED. WITH ALL THE COCKINESS OF YOUTH, SOME OF YOU -- I HOPE MOST OF YOU -- MUST BE FEELING TODAY LIKE ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

- 24 -

WELL, TRUST THOSE INSTINCTS. EVERYONE HAS A DREAM. AND EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO GIVE.

LAST MONTH I SAW A NEW MOVIE -- A MOVIE ABOUT BASEBALL AND ABOUT FAITH -- IN WHICH BURT LANCASTER PONDERES THE POWER OF HOPE. HE ASKS: "IS THERE ENOUGH MAGIC, OUT THERE IN THE MOONLIGHT, TO MAKE THIS DREAM COME TRUE?"

- 25 -

WELL, I HAVE COME TO MISSISSIPPI TODAY BECAUSE THE MAGIC OF AMERICA, AND THE MAGIC OF OUR TIMES, MEANS BELIEVING THAT YOUR BEST DAYS -- THAT OUR BEST DAYS -- ARE STILL TO COME. BORN IN AN ERA OF PEACE AND EDUCATED IN TIMES OF RELATIVE PROSPERITY, YOUR GENERATION CAN LOOK TO A NEW CENTURY RICH WITH UNIMAGINABLE OPPORTUNITIES.

- 26 -

YES, THERE IS ENOUGH MAGIC OUT THERE -- ENOUGH FOR ALL AMERICANS. AND YES, YOU CAN SEIZE THAT MAGIC WITH THE POWER OF YOUR OWN HANDS -- AND WITH THE SKILLS BEQUEATHED YOU BY THIS SPECIAL COLLEGE. AND YES, JUST AS ALCORN'S 1988 YEARBOOK WAS DEDICATED TO DR. KING, YOU CAN HONOR HIS MEMORY BY DOING WHAT HE TAUGHT US ALL TO DO -- TO HAVE A DREAM -- AND TO WORK EVERY DAY TO MAKE THAT DREAM COME TRUE.

- 27 -

AMERICA IS PROUD OF YOU AND THE FAMILIES YOU
REPRESENT. GOD BLESS YOU IN THE CHALLENGES TO COME.
AND GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES.

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(McNally/Dooley)
May 10, 1989
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Good morning to you all and thank you, President Washington, in particular, for the fine work by you and your faculty here at Alcorn ((ALL-CORN)). It's always good to see Thad and Trent, your able Senators, my good friend Sonny and others in Mississippi's distinguished congressional delegation. Congratulations also to the families and friends and fans of these students -- and, most of all: The Alcorn State University Class of '89.

For four years, today's seniors have been part of the proud tradition they call "the Alcorn family." And this is a day for the family. But it's your own individual families -- the mothers and fathers and grandparents gathered here -- that I want to congratulate first. In a very private way, your years of hard

work, sacrifice, and yes, love for your sons and daughters have brought this moment to pass. You deserve the first round of applause.

The American family has been under seige in recent times. But, as the months unfold, I become more and more certain that the answer to our problems can be found in the strength of the American family. Looking around this room, you can feel the pride. It's a powerful force for good. And as President, I will do everything I can to promote the family -- excellence in education -- to protect the family -- in the fight against drugs -- and to reaffirm the family values that brought your kids through these four challenging years.

For some American families -- those fortunate families where children are raised assuming they will have the opportunity to go to college -- the drama of today's ceremony is difficult to appreciate. Many of you are the first in your families ever to attend college -- let alone stay the course to graduate.

And the economic transformation wrought by historically black colleges such as Alcorn is nothing less than astounding: While 85 percent of United Negro College Fund alumni come from blue-collar families -- almost all go on to professional or managerial positions. In many cases they are the first blacks to hold those particular positions. It's an exciting tradition -- and one of the most under-appreciated success stories in America.

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Now, business can be pretty rough and tumble. But America is successful because we are a nation of risk-takers. The Alcorn Braves know that you can't steal second base and keep one foot on first.

Others will teach the next generation, and put "wind beneath their wings." Your touchstones should be excellence, accountability, and choice. The system must offer parents quality choice in education. Alcorn is a good example. But our schools must also be more accountable and those of you who will know the joy of helping a child learn, are an important part of that responsibility.

Others are headed for health care, agriculture, journalism, the professions. Whatever you choose, it is within you to change the world -- and any definition of a successful life must include serving others.

Every senior here is an educated man or woman, proud and self-assured. With all the cockiness of youth, some of you -- I hope most of you -- must be feeling today like anything is possible.

Last month I saw a new movie -- a movie about baseball and about faith -- in which Burt Lancaster ponders the power of hope. He asks: "Is there enough magic, out there in the moonlight, to make this dream come true?"

Well, I have come to Mississippi today because the magic of America, and the magic of our times, means believing that your best days -- that our best days -- are still to come. Born in an era of peace and educated in times of relative prosperity, your generation can look to a new century rich with unimaginable opportunities.

Yes, there is enough magic out there -- enough for all Americans. And yes, you can seize that magic with the power of your own hands -- and with the skills bequeathed you by this special college. And yes, just as Alcorn's 1988 yearbook was dedicated to Dr. King, you can honor his memory by doing what he taught us all to do -- to have a dream -- and to work every day to make that dream come true.

America is proud of you and the families you represent. God bless you in the challenges to come. And God bless the United States.

#

REMARKS: ALCORN ST. UNIV. COMMENCEMENT
LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1989
11:00 A.M.

((DR. WALTER WASHINGTON, ALCORN'S PRESIDENT, WILL
INTRODUCE YOU.))

THANK YOU, DOCTOR. THANK YOU. ((PAUSE))

YOU KNOW, LAST MONTH WE COMMEMORATED THE
BICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY.

- 2 -

AND WALTER, I HAVE TO TELL YOU -- AFTER ALL THESE
ACTORS IN POWDERED WIGS -- IT'S A RELIEF TO FINALLY
STAND BESIDE SOMEONE WHO REALLY IS "PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON."

GOOD MORNING TO YOU ALL AND THANK YOU, PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, IN PARTICULAR, FOR THE FINE WORK BY YOU AND
YOUR FACULTY HERE AT ALCORN ((ALL-CORN)).

- 3 -

IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO SEE THAD AND TRENT, YOUR ABLE SENATORS, MY GOOD FRIEND SONNY AND OTHERS IN MISSISSIPPI'S DISTINGUISHED CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION. CONGRATULATIONS ALSO TO THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS AND FANS OF THESE STUDENTS -- AND, MOST OF ALL: THE ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY CLASS OF '89.

FOR FOUR YEARS, TODAY'S SENIORS HAVE BEEN PART OF THE PROUD TRADITION THEY CALL "THE ALCORN FAMILY." AND THIS IS A DAY FOR THE FAMILY.

- 4 -

BUT IT'S YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES -- THE MOTHERS AND FATHERS AND GRANDPARENTS GATHERED HERE -- THAT I WANT TO CONGRATULATE FIRST. IN A VERY PRIVATE WAY, YOUR YEARS OF HARD WORK, SACRIFICE, AND YES, LOVE FOR YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS HAVE BROUGHT THIS MOMENT TO PASS. YOU DESERVE THE FIRST ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

- 5 -

THE AMERICAN FAMILY HAS BEEN UNDER SIEGE IN RECENT TIMES. BUT, AS THE MONTHS UNFOLD, I BECOME MORE AND MORE CERTAIN THAT THE ANSWER TO OUR PROBLEMS CAN BE FOUND IN THE STRENGTH OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY. LOOKING AROUND THIS ROOM, YOU CAN FEEL THE PRIDE. IT'S A POWERFUL FORCE FOR GOOD.

- 6 -

AND AS PRESIDENT, I WILL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO PROMOTE THE FAMILY -- EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION -- TO PROTECT THE FAMILY -- IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS -- AND TO REAFFIRM THE FAMILY VALUES THAT BROUGHT YOUR KIDS THROUGH THESE FOUR CHALLENGING YEARS.

FOR SOME AMERICAN FAMILIES -- THOSE FORTUNATE FAMILIES WHERE CHILDREN ARE RAISED ASSUMING THEY WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO COLLEGE -- THE DRAMA OF TODAY'S CEREMONY IS DIFFICULT TO APPRECIATE.

- 7 -

MANY OF YOU ARE THE FIRST IN YOUR FAMILIES EVER TO ATTEND COLLEGE -- LET ALONE STAY THE COURSE TO GRADUATE.

AND THE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION WROUGHT BY HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES SUCH AS ALCORN IS NOTHING LESS THAN ASTOUNDING: WHILE 85 PERCENT OF UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND ALUMNI COME FROM BLUE-COLLAR FAMILIES -- ALMOST ALL GO ON TO PROFESSIONAL OR MANAGERIAL POSITIONS.

- 8 -

IN MANY CASES THEY ARE THE FIRST BLACKS TO HOLD THOSE PARTICULAR POSITIONS. IT'S AN EXCITING TRADITION -- AND ONE OF THE MOST UNDER-APPRECIATED SUCCESS STORIES IN AMERICA.

IT'S ALSO A TRADITION THAT'S CLOSE TO MY HEART. WHEN I WAS A COLLEGE SENIOR IN 1948, BARBARA AND I BEGAN PARTICIPATING IN THE UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND. IN THE FORTY YEARS SINCE, WE'VE CONTINUED TO DO OUR SMALL PART ALONG THE WAY.

- 9 -

AND EVEN BEFORE BECOMING PRESIDENT -- BACK IN JANUARY, ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE THE INAUGURATION -- WALTER WASHINGTON AND SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES MET WITH ME TO TALK ABOUT HOW THE ADMINISTRATION CAN BEST SUPPORT THIS UNIQUE TRADITION.

- 10 -

SOME GOOD IDEAS CAME OUT OF THAT GATHERING. AND SEVERAL ARE ALREADY IN EFFECT -- BEGUN LAST MONTH WHEN WALTER AND OTHERS JOINED ME IN THE ROSE GARDEN TO LAUNCH THE PRESIDENT'S BOARD OF ADVISORS ON HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

NOW, I UNDERSTAND THAT SEVERAL OF TODAY'S GRADUATES ARE JOINING ME IN FEDERAL SERVICE -- IN AGRICULTURE, DEFENSE, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER CRITICAL AREAS.

- 11 -

I'M PROUD OF YOU -- WE WELCOME YOU -- AMERICA NEEDS YOUR TALENT. AND THAT'S NOT IDLE TALK. LAST MONTH'S ORDER ALSO DIRECTED THAT THE FEDERAL PERSONNEL OFFICE DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE RECRUITMENT AT ALCORN AND SIMILAR COLLEGES FOR PART-TIME AND SUMMER POSITIONS, TO HELP GET YOU STARTED IN FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE.

I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT A CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY HERE NOW TO RAISE HALF A MILLION DOLLARS THROUGH A FEDERAL CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM.

- 12 -

RECENTLY, I SIGNED AN ORDER BRINGING \$60 MILLION IN NEW FUNDS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO BOOST THE ENDOWMENT MATCHING GRANTS AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS LIKE ALCORN.

AS I TOLD THE COLLEGE PRESIDENTS WHO GATHERED AT THE WHITE HOUSE LAST MONTH, THESE NEW INITIATIVES ARE JUST A START. MORE MUST BE DONE.

- 13 -

BUT ON A DAY LIKE TODAY, THERE IS MUCH OF WHICH WE CAN BE PROUD. JUST AS I HAVE COVERED A FAIR PIECE OF GROUND SINCE MY OWN DAYS AS A COLLEGE SENIOR, SO TOO HAS ALCORN COME A LONG WAY SINCE 1948. THAT WAS THE LANDMARK YEAR ALCORN FIRST EARNED AN "A" RATING AS AN ACCREDITED COLLEGE. AND THAT WAS THE YEAR "THE STRETCH" WAS FINALLY PAVED -- A MILESTONE THAT WAS RESOUNDINGLY CHEERED BY THE GRADUATING CLASS.

- 14 -

THEY WERE ONLY 60 IN NUMBER -- BARELY A FIFTH OF THE TOTAL RECEIVING DEGREES TODAY -- A CEREMONY SO SMALL THAT IT FIT COMFORTABLY IN THE OAKLAND CHAPEL.

LIKE MY CLASSMATES IN CONNECTICUT, MANY OF THE MEN AT ALCORN IN 1948 WERE VETERANS, SOLDIERS WHO HAD FOUGHT FOR DEMOCRACY WHILE SERVING IN SEGREGATED UNITS. AND LIKE MANY OF YOU TODAY, THE ALCORNITES OF 1948 WERE GRADUATING WITH SKILLS THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO FEED THE HUNGRY, NURSE THE SICK, AND TEACH THE YOUNG.

- 15 -

FUTURE PITTSBURGH STEELER JACK SPINKS -- THE FIRST BLACK PRO ATHLETE TO COME OUT OF MISSISSIPPI -- WAS GETTING READY TO START HIS FRESHMAN YEAR. HE WOULD SOON BE PRACTICING IN A RAMSHACKLE WOODEN BUILDING THAT EVERYONE CALLED THE "OLD CHICKEN COOP." JACK SAYS THAT WHEN IT RAINED DURING BASKETBALL GAMES, THE ROOF LEAKED SO BAD PEOPLE HAD TO KEEP THEIR UMBRELLAS OPEN. THE MODERN FIELD HOUSE IN WHICH WE'RE GATHERED TODAY WAS THEN NOT EVEN A DREAM.

- 16 -

AND JACK IS SOMEWHERE OUT THERE TODAY -- AND I UNDERSTAND HIS YOUNGEST SON IS PART OF THE GRADUATING CLASS.

THE FORTY YEARS OF SCHOOLING THAT SEPARATE JACK AND HIS SON EMBRACE AN ERA OF TREMENDOUS CHANGE -- FOR ALCORN, AND FOR AMERICA -- A TIME OF UPHEAVAL, AND FINALLY, A TIME OF GROWTH AND MAYBE SOMETHING LIKE WISDOM.

- 17 -

NOT EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED. THE THREADS WOVEN THROUGH THE FABRIC OF ALCORN -- AND ANY PLACE WHERE EXCELLENCE IS SOUGHT -- ARE WHAT USED TO BE CALLED SIMPLE FAMILY VALUES. WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT TWO SETS OF VALUES -- FAMILY VALUES ARE THE SAME FOR BLACK AND WHITE. AND THEY ARE NOT COMPLICATED. HONESTY. FAITH. FRUGALITY. ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY. THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK. A TRADITION OF HELPING ONE'S NEIGHBORS.

- 18 -

MARTIN LUTHER KING ARGUED THAT "INTELLIGENCE IS NOT ENOUGH." HE SAID: "INTELLIGENCE PLUS CHARACTER -- THAT IS THE GOAL OF TRUE EDUCATION."

WELL, YOU AT ALCORN ARE LUCKY. ALCORN IS A PLACE WHERE -- AS YOUR OLD FOOTBALL COACH PUT IT -- "THE AIR IS A LITTLE BIT CLEANER, THE GRASS IS A LITTLE BIT GREENER, THE WATER IS A LITTLE BIT SWEETER. . .IT'S JUST A LITTLE BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN." THIS PLACE HAS CHARACTER -- IT IS A UNIVERSITY WITH A MISSION.

- 19 -

AND TO PARAPHRASE A NEW SONG THAT'S CLIMBING THE CHARTS THIS MONTH, THIS SPECIAL, SECLUDED COLLEGE HAS BEEN "THE WIND BENEATH YOUR WINGS." FOR YOU -- AND FOR YOUNG AMERICANS GRADUATING ALL ACROSS OUR COUNTRY THIS MONTH -- IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE THAT WIND AND SOAR.

FOR SOME OF YOU, I HOPE THERE COMES A DAY WHEN YOU RIDE THOSE WINDS INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA, TO FIGHT FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN, TO GRAPPLE NOT ONLY WITH YOUR OWN DREAMS, BUT ALSO THOSE OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN.

- 20 -

BUT POLITICS IS HARDLY THE ONLY ARENA WHERE A NEW BREEZE IS BLOWING. SOME OF YOU WILL LAND IN BUSINESS - - MAYBE EVEN START A BUSINESS -- WHERE YOU CAN CREATE JOBS, ADDING TO THE OPPORTUNITY OF OTHER AMERICANS. THAT'S PUBLIC SERVICE, TOO.

NOW, BUSINESS CAN BE PRETTY ROUGH AND TUMBLE. BUT AMERICA IS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE WE ARE A NATION OF RISK-TAKERS. THE ALCORN BRAVES KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T STEAL SECOND BASE AND KEEP ONE FOOT ON FIRST.

- 21 -

OTHERS WILL TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION, AND PUT "WIND BENEATH THEIR WINGS." YOUR TOUCHSTONES SHOULD BE EXCELLENCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND CHOICE. THE SYSTEM MUST OFFER PARENTS QUALITY CHOICE IN EDUCATION. ALCORN IS A GOOD EXAMPLE. BUT OUR SCHOOLS MUST ALSO BE MORE ACCOUNTABLE AND THOSE OF YOU WHO WILL KNOW THE JOY OF HELPING A CHILD LEARN, ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THAT RESPONSIBILITY.

- 22 -

OTHERS ARE HEADED FOR HEALTH CARE, AGRICULTURE, JOURNALISM, THE PROFESSIONS. WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE, IT IS WITHIN YOU TO CHANGE THE WORLD -- AND ANY DEFINITION OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE MUST INCLUDE SERVING OTHERS.

22A

AS EACH OF YOU BEGINS A NEW LIFE TODAY, YOU MAY FAIRLY ASK? WILL MY FUTURE BE SECURE? THIS IS NOT JUST A DOMESTIC QUESTION. IT IS A FOREIGN POLICY QUESTION.

FOR THE PAST FORTY YEARS, THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A STRUGGLE -- BECAUSE THE SOVIETS HAVE CHOSEN TO STAND APART FROM -- AND OPPOSED TO -- THE WORLD FAMILY OF NATIONS.

22B

YESTERDAY, I ANNOUNCED A NEW POLICY FOR THE 1990s -- ONE THAT MOVES BEYOND CONTAINMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION. THIS NEW POLICY SETS A GOAL OF BRINGING THE SOVIET UNION INTO THE WORLD COMMUNITY. AND IF WE SUCCEED, THE FUTURE YOU WILL KNOW WILL BE SAFER, AND THE WORLD YOU WILL KNOW WILL BE FREER.

22C

AS THE SOVIET UNION MOVES TOWARD GREATER OPENNESS AND DEMOCRATIZATION -- AS THEY MEET THE CHALLENGE OF RESPONSIBLE INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR -- WE WILL MATCH THEIR STEPS WITH STEPS OF OUR OWN.

- 23 -

TODAY, EVERY SENIOR HERE IS AN EDUCATED MAN OR WOMAN, PROUD AND SELF-ASSURED. WITH ALL THE COCKINESS OF YOUTH, SOME OF YOU -- I HOPE MOST OF YOU -- MUST BE FEELING TODAY LIKE ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

- 24 -

WELL, TRUST THOSE INSTINCTS. EVERYONE HAS A DREAM. AND EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO GIVE.

LAST MONTH I SAW A NEW MOVIE -- A MOVIE ABOUT BASEBALL AND ABOUT FAITH -- IN WHICH BURT LANCASTER PONDERES THE POWER OF HOPE. HE ASKS: "IS THERE ENOUGH MAGIC, OUT THERE IN THE MOONLIGHT, TO MAKE THIS DREAM COME TRUE?"

- 25 -

WELL, I HAVE COME TO MISSISSIPPI TODAY BECAUSE THE MAGIC OF AMERICA, AND THE MAGIC OF OUR TIMES, MEANS BELIEVING THAT YOUR BEST DAYS -- THAT OUR BEST DAYS -- ARE STILL TO COME. BORN IN AN ERA OF PEACE AND EDUCATED IN TIMES OF RELATIVE PROSPERITY, YOUR GENERATION CAN LOOK TO A NEW CENTURY RICH WITH UNIMAGINABLE OPPORTUNITIES.

- 26 -

YES, THERE IS ENOUGH MAGIC OUT THERE -- ENOUGH FOR ALL AMERICANS. AND YES, YOU CAN SEIZE THAT MAGIC WITH THE POWER OF YOUR OWN HANDS -- AND WITH THE SKILLS BEQUEATHED YOU BY THIS SPECIAL COLLEGE. AND YES, JUST AS ALCORN'S 1988 YEARBOOK WAS DEDICATED TO DR. KING, YOU CAN HONOR HIS MEMORY BY DOING WHAT HE TAUGHT US ALL TO DO -- TO HAVE A DREAM -- AND TO WORK EVERY DAY TO MAKE THAT DREAM COME TRUE.

- 27 -

AMERICA IS PROUD OF YOU AND THE FAMILIES YOU
REPRESENT. GOD BLESS YOU IN THE CHALLENGES TO COME.
AND GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES.

#

overall speech is fine!!!!.. right length too.

I do not think the personal business stuff is good to use any more except 'in passing':

thus how about this instead...:

Some will go into business. There the risks, and rewards will guide your lives. There you will add to the opportunity of others by creating jobs

Some will go into education .. There the key words should be excellence, accountability, choice.... Our educational system must continue to offer parents a choice, make our schools more accountable

Some will go into medicine... their service to others will be your hallmark, but whatever you choose give it your very best shot...

I do not like the words I have written... needs some speechwriter touch, but I prefer something like this to the Studebaker bit..

gb.

maybe could use a little more... line or two more on strengthening the family..... as we face new threats, narcotics etc, I become more certain that the answer to our problems can be found in the strength of the American Family. I will do nothing as President to weaken the family. I will do everything I can , excellence in education, fighting narcotics, to strengthen the family and emphasize family values.....

(more poetry though)

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 5/8/89

ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY:

5/9/89 2:00 PMSUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	☐	☒	MCCLURE	☒	☐
SUNUNU	☐	☒	NEWMAN	☐	☐
SCOWCROFT	☐	☐	PORTER	☒	☐
DARMAN <i>N/C</i>	☒	☐	STUDDERT <i>N/C</i>	☒	☐
BATES <i>N/C</i>	☒	☐	UNTERMAYER	☐	☐
BREEDEN	☐	☐	ROGERS	☐	☒
CARD	☐	☒	WINSTON	☒	☒
CICCONI	☐	☒	PINKERTON	☒	☐
DEMAREST	☒	☐		☐	☐
FITZWATER	☐	☒		☐	☐
GRAY	☒	☐		☐	☐
HAGIN	☐	☐		☐	☐

REMARKS:

Please forward any comments directly to Chriss Winston, Rm. 122, x2930, no later than 2:00 PM, Tuesday, May 9, 1989, with an info copy to my office. Thank you.

RESPONSE:

James W. Cicconi
 Assistant to the President
 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
 Ext. 2702

(McNally/Dooley)
May 8, 1989
5:30 p.m.
Draft One
(ALCORN)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN ST. UNIV. COMMENCEMENT
LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1989
11:00 A.M.

((DR. WALTER WASHINGTON, ALCORN'S PRESIDENT, WILL INTRODUCE YOU.))

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you. ((PAUSE))

You know, last month we commemorated the bicentennial of the American presidency. And Walter, I have to tell you -- after all these actors in powdered wigs -- it's a relief to finally stand beside someone who really is "President Washington."

When Air Force One landed, Walter sent an assistant out to meet us. The Alcorn ((ALL-CORN)) aide was nervous and blurted out the ten scariest words in the English language: ((PAUSE)) "I come from Washington -- and I'm here to help you."

Good morning to you all -- ^{and thank you} President Washington, ^{in particular for your fine work here at Alcorn,} respected faculty, Mississippi's distinguished congressional delegation -- the families and friends and fans of these students -- and most of all: The Alcorn State University Class of '89.

For four years, today's seniors have been part of the proud tradition they call "the Alcorn family." And this is a day for the family. But it's your own individual families -- the mothers and fathers and grandparents gathered here -- that I want to congratulate first. In a very private way, your years of hard

work, sacrifice, and yes, love for your sons and daughters have brought this moment to pass. You deserve the first round of applause.

For many American families -- those fortunate families where children are raised assuming they will have the opportunity to go to college -- the drama of today's ceremony is difficult to appreciate. Many of you are the first in your families ever to attend college -- let alone stay the course to graduate.

And the economic transformation wrought by historically black colleges such as Alcorn is nothing less than astounding: ^{white} ~~Although~~ 85 percent of United Negro College Fund alumni come from blue-collar families -- ~~only three percent hold blue-collar jobs themselves.~~ ^{all} ~~Almost 90 percent~~ go on to professional or managerial positions. ~~Ninety-five percent work in interracial settings -- and many are the first blacks to hold those~~ ^{In many cases they} ~~particular~~ positions. It's an exciting tradition -- and one of the most under-appreciated success stories in America.

It's also a tradition that's close to my heart. When I was a college senior in 1948, Barbara and I began participating in the United Negro College Fund. In the forty years since, we've continued to do our small part along the way. And even before becoming President -- back in January, about a week before the Inauguration -- Walter Washington and some of his colleagues met with me ^{for} ~~at the White House~~ to talk about how the Administration can best support this unique tradition.

Some good ideas came out of that gathering. And several are already in effect -- begun last month when Walter and others joined me in the Rose Garden to launch the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Now, I understand that several of today's graduates ~~will~~ *are* soon ~~be~~ joining me in federal service -- in agriculture, defense, transportation and other critical areas. I'm proud of you -- we welcome you -- America needs your talent ~~and diversity~~. And that's not idle talk. Last month's Order also directed that the federal personnel office develop a program to improve recruitment at Alcorn and similar colleges for part-time and summer positions, to help get you started in the federal public service.

I also understand that a campaign is underway here now to raise half a million dollars through a federal challenge grant program. Well, *I've signed an order bringing* ~~another fresh initiative calls for~~ \$60 million in new funds over the next four years to boost the endowment matching grants available to schools like Alcorn.

Now, as I told the college presidents who gathered at the White House last month, these new initiatives are just a start. More must be done.

But on a day like today, there is much of which we can be proud. Just as I have covered a fair piece of ground since my own days as a college senior, so too has Alcorn come a long way since 1948. That was the landmark year Alcorn won *first* ~~was~~ *earned* an 'A' rating *as an accredited college.* ~~full~~ *Seven mile* accreditation. And that was the year "The Stretch" ((ALCORN'S

~~SEVEN-MILE~~ ENTRANCE ROAD)) was finally paved -- a milestone that was resoundingly cheered by the graduating class.

They were only 60 in number -- barely a fifth of the total receiving degrees today -- a ceremony so small that it fit comfortably in the ^{Oakland} old Chapel, ~~the Chapel built in another time by slaves for the white gentry of Mississippi.~~

Like my classmates in Connecticut, ^{many} ~~most~~ of the men at Alcorn in 1948 were veterans, soldiers who had fought for democracy while serving in segregated units. And like many of you today, the Alcornites of 1948 were graduating with skills that would enable them to feed the hungry, nurse the sick, and teach the young.

Future Pittsburgh Steeler Jack Spinks -- the first black pro athlete to come out of Mississippi -- was getting ready to start his freshman year. He would soon be practicing in a ramshackle wooden building that everyone called the "Old Chicken Coop." Jack says that when it rained during basketball games, the roof leaked so bad people had to keep their umbrellas open. The modern field house in which we're gathered today was then not even a dream. And Jack is somewhere out there today -- and I understand his youngest son is part of the graduating class.

The forty years of schooling that separate Jack and his son embrace an era of tremendous change -- for Alcorn, and for America -- a time of upheaval, and finally, a time of growth and maybe something like wisdom.

Not everything has changed. The threads woven through the fabric of Alcorn -- and any place where excellence is sought -- are what used to be called simple family values. We're not talking about two sets of values -- family values are the same for black and white. And they are not complicated. Honesty. Faith. Frugality. Acceptance of responsibility. The importance of work. A tradition of helping one's neighbors. And, as I have said before, any definition of a successful life must include serving service to others.

Martin Luther King argued that "intelligence is not enough." He said: "Intelligence plus character -- that is the goal of true education."

Well, you at Alcorn are lucky. Alcorn is a place where -- as your ^{old} football coach put it -- "the air is ^{a little bit} cleaner, ^{the} grass ^{is a little bit} greener, ^{the} water ^{a little bit} sweeter. ^{it's} just a little bit closer to heaven." This place has character -- it is a university with a mission. And to paraphrase a new song that's climbing the charts this month, this special, secluded college has been "the wind beneath your wings." For you -- and for young Americans graduating all across our country this month -- it is time for you to take that wind and soar.

For some of you, I hope there comes a day when you ride those winds into the political arena, to fight for what you believe in, to grapple not only with your own dreams, but also those of your countrymen.

a new breeze is

BR But politics is hardly the only arena where ~~the winds of~~ ~~change are~~ blowing. When I got out of college, Barbara and I piled into an old Studebaker with our young son and went to Texas to learn the oil business. Before long we started a company -- made a little money -- but the bigger reward was building something on my own. And creating 215 jobs for 215 families.

Now, business can be pretty rough and tumble. But America is successful because we are a nation of risk-takers. The Alcorn Braves know that you can't steal second base and keep one foot on first.

Every senior here is an educated man or woman, proud and self-assured. With all the cockiness of youth, some of you -- I hope most of you -- must be feeling today like anything is possible.

Well, trust those instincts. Everyone has a dream. And everyone has something to give.

Last month I saw a new movie -- a movie about baseball and about faith -- in which Burt Lancaster ponders the power of hope. He asks: "Is there enough magic, out there in the moonlight, to make this dream come true?"

Well, I have come to Mississippi today because the magic of America, and the magic of our times, means believing that your best days -- that our best days -- are still to come. Born in an era of peace and educated in times of relative prosperity, your generation can look to a new century rich with unimaginable opportunities.

Yes, there is enough magic out there -- enough for all Americans. And yes, you can seize that magic with the power of your own hands -- and with the skills bequeathed you by this special college. And yes, just as Alcorn's ¹⁹⁸⁸ ~~most recent~~ yearbook was dedicated to Dr. King, you can honor his memory by doing what he taught us all to do -- to have a dream -- and to work every day to make that dream come true.

America is proud of you and the families you represent. God bless you in the challenges to come. And God bless the United States.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 10, 1989

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: CHRISS WINSTON *cu*
FROM: EDWARD E. McNALLY *EMN*
SUBJECT: ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

I. SUMMARY

Attached for your consideration and review are draft remarks for your commencement address at Alcorn State University on Saturday.

II. DISCUSSION

At 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 13, 1989, you are scheduled to join Dr. Walter Washington (president of Alcorn State University) to address Alcorn's graduating class of approximately 350 students. An audience of approximately 7,000 persons is expected in the field house of the Health, Physical Education & Recreation Complex.

Dr. Washington (who met with you here as part of the leadership group from Historically Black Colleges and Universities in January at the O.E.O.B. and again in April in the Rose Garden) has been president at Alcorn for the past 20 years.

(McNally/Dooley)
May 10, 1989
9:25 a.m.
Draft Two
(ALCORN)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN ST. UNIV. COMMENCEMENT
LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1989
11:00 A.M.

((DR. WALTER WASHINGTON, ALCORN'S PRESIDENT, WILL INTRODUCE
YOU.))

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you. ((PAUSE))

You know, last month we commemorated the bicentennial of the American presidency. And Walter, I have to tell you -- after all these actors in powdered wigs -- it's a relief to finally stand beside someone who really is "President Washington."

Good morning to you all and thank you -- President Washington, in particular for your fine work here at Alcorn, respected faculty, Mississippi's distinguished congressional delegation -- the families and friends and fans of these students -- and most of all: The Alcorn State University Class of '89.

For four years, today's seniors have been part of the proud tradition they call "the Alcorn family." And this is a day for the family. But it's your own individual families -- the mothers and fathers and grandparents gathered here -- that I want to congratulate first. In a very private way, your years of hard work, sacrifice, and yes, love for your sons and daughters have brought this moment to pass. You deserve the first round of applause.

For many American families -- those fortunate families where children are raised assuming they will have the opportunity to go to college -- the drama of today's ceremony is difficult to appreciate. Many of you are the first in your families ever to attend college -- let alone stay the course to graduate.

And the economic transformation wrought by historically black colleges such as Alcorn is nothing less than astounding: While 85 percent of United Negro College Fund alumni come from blue-collar families -- almost all go on to professional or managerial positions. In many cases they are the first blacks to hold those particular positions. It's an exciting tradition -- and one of the most under-appreciated success stories in America.

It's also a tradition that's close to my heart. When I was a college senior in 1948, Barbara and I began participating in the United Negro College Fund. In the forty years since, we've continued to do our small part along the way. And even before becoming President -- back in January, about a week before the Inauguration -- Walter Washington and some of his colleagues met with me to talk about how the Administration can best support this unique tradition.

Some good ideas came out of that gathering. And several are already in effect -- begun last month when Walter and others joined me in the Rose Garden to launch the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Now, I understand that several of today's graduates are joining me in federal service -- in agriculture, defense,

transportation and other critical areas. I'm proud of you -- we welcome you -- America needs your talent. And that's not idle talk. Last month's Order also directed that the federal personnel office develop a program to improve recruitment at Alcorn and similar colleges for part-time and summer positions, to help get you started in the federal public service.

I also understand that a campaign is underway here now to raise half a million dollars through a federal challenge grant program. Well, I've signed an order bringing \$60 million in new funds over the next four years to boost the endowment matching grants available to schools like Alcorn.

Now, as I told the college presidents who gathered at the White House last month, these new initiatives are just a start. More must be done.

But on a day like today, there is much of which we can be proud. Just as I have covered a fair piece of ground since my own days as a college senior, so too has Alcorn come a long way since 1948. That was the landmark year Alcorn first earned an "A" rating as an accredited college. And that was the year "The Seven Mile Stretch" ((ALCORN'S ENTRANCE ROAD)) was finally paved -- a milestone that was resoundingly cheered by the graduating class.

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said before, any definition of a successful life must include serving others.

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Well, I have come to Mississippi today because the magic of America, and the magic of our times, means believing that your best days -- that our best days -- are still to come. Born in an era of peace and educated in times of relative prosperity, your generation can look to a new century rich with unimaginable opportunities.

Yes, there is enough magic out there -- enough for all Americans. And yes, you can seize that magic with the power of your own hands -- and with the skills bequeathed you by this special college. And yes, just as Alcorn's 1988 yearbook was dedicated to Dr. King, you can honor his memory by doing what he

taught us all to do -- to have a dream -- and to work every day to make that dream come true.

America is proud of you and the families you represent. God bless you in the challenges to come. And God bless the United States.

#

FACT-CHECKING CHANGES

(McNally/Dooley)
May 8, 1989
5:30 p.m.
Draft One
(ALCORN)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN ST. UNIV. COMMENCEMENT
LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1989
11:00 A.M.

((DR. WALTER WASHINGTON, ALCORN'S PRESIDENT, WILL INTRODUCE YOU.))

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you. ((PAUSE))

You know, last month we commemorated the bicentennial of the American presidency. And Walter, I have to tell you -- after all these actors in powdered wigs -- it's a relief to finally stand beside someone who really is "President Washington."

When Air Force One landed, Walter sent an assistant out to meet us. The Alcorn ((ALL-CORN)) aide was nervous and blurted out the ten scariest words in the English language: ((PAUSE))

"I come from Washington -- and I'm here to help you."

Good morning to you all -- President Washington, respected faculty, Mississippi's distinguished congressional delegation -- the families and friends and fans of these students -- and most of all: The Alcorn State University Class of '89.

For four years, today's seniors have been part of the proud tradition they call "the Alcorn family." And this is a day for the family. But it's your own individual families -- the mothers and fathers and grandparents gathered here -- that I want to congratulate first. In a very private way, your years of hard

Ed + I were arguing over whether or not a joke should be factually correct (No one is meeting Air Force One) Pinkerton wants it out....?

they're very sensitive about pronouncing the name correctly

the VP of the school asked if we had any language praising Pres. Washington -- it's his 20th year as Pres. + he's really done a lot for the school -- Ed said it's your call.

work, sacrifice, and yes, love for your sons and daughters have brought this moment to pass. You deserve the first round of applause.

For many American families -- those fortunate families where children are raised assuming they will have the opportunity to go to college -- the drama of today's ceremony is difficult to appreciate. [Many of you are the first in your families ever to attend college -- let alone stay the course to graduate.]

And the economic transformation wrought by historically black colleges such as Alcorn is nothing less than astounding: Although 85 percent of United Negro College Fund alumni come from blue-collar families -- only three percent hold blue-collar jobs themselves. Almost 90 percent go on to professional or managerial positions. Ninety-five percent work in interracial settings -- and many are the first blacks to hold those positions. It's an exciting tradition -- and one of the most under-appreciated success stories in America.

It's also a tradition that's close to my heart. When I was a college senior in 1948, Barbara and I began participating in the United Negro College Fund. In the forty years since, we've continued to do our small part along the way. And even before becoming President -- back in January, about a week before the Inauguration -- Walter Washington and some of his colleagues met with me ⁱⁿ at the White House ^{compound (actually at EOB)} to talk about how the Administration can best support this unique tradition.

Some good ideas came out of that gathering. And several are already in effect -- begun last month when Walter and others joined me in the Rose Garden to launch the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

X Now, I understand that several of today's graduates ^{are} ~~will~~ ~~soon~~ be joining me in federal service -- in agriculture, defense, transportation and other critical areas. I'm proud of you -- we welcome you -- America needs your talent and diversity. And that's not idle talk. Last month's Order also directed that the federal personnel office develop a program to improve recruitment at Alcorn and similar colleges for part-time and summer positions, to help get you started in the federal public service.

I also understand that a campaign is underway here now to raise half a million dollars through a federal challenge grant program. Well, another fresh initiative calls for \$60 million in new funds over the next four years to boost the endowment matching grants available to schools like Alcorn.

Now, as I told the college presidents who gathered at the White House last month, these new initiatives are just a start. More must be done.

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X They were only 60 in number -- barely a fifth of the total receiving degrees today -- a ceremony so small that it fit comfortably in the ^{Oakland} old Chapel. ~~-- the Chapel built in another time by slaves for the white gentry of Mississippi.~~

X Like my classmates in Connecticut, ^{many} ~~most~~ of the men at Alcorn in 1948 were veterans, soldiers who had fought for democracy while serving in segregated units. And like many of you today, the Alcornites of 1948 were graduating with skills that would enable them to feed the hungry, nurse the sick, and teach the young.

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For some of you, I hope there comes a day when you ride those winds into the political arena, to fight for what you believe in, to grapple not only with your own dreams, but also those of your countrymen.

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But politics is hardly the only arena where the winds of change are blowing. When I got out of college, ~~Barbara and I~~ ^{everything I had} piled into an old Studebaker ~~with our young son~~ and went to Texas to learn the oil business. Before long we started a company -- made a little money -- but the bigger reward was building something on my own. [And creating 215 jobs for 215 families.]

X
Now, business can be pretty rough and tumble. But America is successful because we are a nation of risk-takers. The Alcorn Braves know that you can't steal second base and keep one foot on first. According to Mark McEntyre, who wrote the speech ~~this~~ #215 is from Bush himself. We've never been able to source it -

Every senior here is an educated man or woman, proud and self-assured. With all the cockiness of youth, some of you -- I hope most of you -- must be feeling today like anything is possible.

Well, trust those instincts. Everyone has a dream. And everyone has something to give.

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America is proud of you and the families you represent. God bless you in the challenges to come. And God bless the United States.

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WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 5/8/89 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 5/9/89 2:00 PM

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	☐	☒	MCCLURE	☒	☐
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SCOWCROFT	☐	☐	PORTER	☒	☐
DARMAN	☒	☐	STUDDERT	☒	☐
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CARD	☐	☒	WINSTON	☐	☒
CICCONI	☐	☒	PINKERTON	☒	☐
DEMAREST	☒	☐		☐	☐
FITZWATER	☐	☒		☐	☐
GRAY	☒	☐		☐	☐
HAGIN	☐	☐		☐	☐

REMARKS:

Please forward any comments directly to Chriss Winston, Rm. 122, x2930, no later than 2:00 PM, Tuesday, May 9, 1989, with an info copy to my office. Thank you.

→ no comments

RESPONSE:

James W. Cicconi
Assistant to the President
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
Ext. 2702

(McNally/Dooley)
May 8, 1989
5:30 p.m.
Draft One
(ALCORN)

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believe in, to grapple not only with your own dreams, but also those of your countrymen.

But politics is hardly the only arena where a new breeze is blowing. Some of you will land in business -- maybe even start a business -- where you can create jobs, adding to the opportunity of other Americans. That's public service, too.

Now, business can be pretty rough and tumble. But America is successful because we are a nation of risk-takers. The Alcorn Braves know that you can't steal second base and keep one foot on first.

Others will teach, ^{the next generation} and put wind beneath the ["]wings of ~~others~~. Your touchstones should be excellence, accountability, and choice. ^{Commitment to excellence} The system must offer parents, ^{quality in education} a choice. ^{Alcorn is a} Alcorn is a good example, ^{But} of ~~quality choice~~ -- and our schools, ^{also} must be more accountable. ^{And those of you who will know the joy of}

Others are headed for health care, agriculture, journalism, the professions. Whatever you choose, it is within you to change the world -- and any definition of a successful life must include serving others.

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Well, trust those instincts. Everyone has a dream. And everyone has something to give.

Helping a child learn, are an important part of that responsibility.

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 5/8/89

ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY:

5/9/89 2:00 PM

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	☐	☒	MCCLURE	☒	☐
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DARMAN	☒	☐	STUDDERT	☒	☐
BATES	☒	☐	UNTERMAYER	☐	☐
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DEMAREST	☒	☐		☐	☐
FITZWATER	☐	☒		☐	☐
GRAY	☒	☐		☐	☐
HAGIN	☐	☐		☐	☐

REMARKS:

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RESPONSE:

Ok
6/8W
5/8

James W. Cicconi
Assistant to the President
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
Ext. 2702

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 9, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR CHRISS WINSTON
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR COMMUNICATIONS

FROM: PATRICIA MACK BRYAN *PMB*
ASSOCIATE COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Presidential Remarks - Alcon State University
Commencement

Pursuant to James W. Cicconi's staffing memorandum of May 8, 1989, Counsel's Office has reviewed the above-referenced remarks and has no legal objection to them. However, while we ultimately defer to your judgment as to the message and tone to be conveyed, we do suggest the following statements be deleted.

Page 2, Full Paragraph 2, Sentence 3: The phrase "Ninety-five percent work in interracial settings."

Page 4, Full Paragraph 1: The phrase "the Chapel built in another time by slaves for the white gentry of Mississippi."

cc: James W. Cicconi

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 9, 1989

MEMORANDUM TO CHRISS WINSTON

FROM:

JIM PINKERTON 

SUBJECT: Alcorn State Univ. Commencement Speech Draft

Pg. 1, para. 2, line 2 "I'm come from Washington -- and I'm here to help you." This pun may be funny to white audiences, but we suspect it will fall very flat here.

2,3,3 "...only 3 percent hold blue-collar jobs themselves." This diminishes the value of blue-collar jobs. We suggest omitting the statistics referring to blue-collar jobs and putting the thought more positively by saying: "Most United Negro College Fund alumni move up to better jobs. Almost 90 percent go on to professional or managerial positions."

3,2,4 "America needs your talent and diversity." The way the sentence reads makes it seem as if each individual is "diverse," whereas the thought behind the words is that America will be better because of the diversity of its population. Thus, we suggest something like "America needs you for your talent. National greatness comes from different people coming together for common purposes."

3,3,3 The President's leadership needs to be emphasized here: Instead of saying "... another fresh initiative calls for \$60 million in new funds....," we suggest: "...I've signed another initiative that provides for \$60 million in new funds...."

6,1,1 "But politics is hardly the only arena where the winds of change are blowing." While we've used the "winds of change" line before, it is most famous historically as the phrase Harold MacMillan used to describe the de-colonization of the British Empire. We still prefer the President's own Inaugural phrase, "a New Breeze is blowing," which serves the same rhetorical purpose, is less derivative, and therefore more associated with him.

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Assistant to the President
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
Ext. 2702

(McNally/Dooley)

May 8, 1989

5:30 p.m.

Draft One

(ALCORN)

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For four years, today's seniors have been part of the proud tradition they call "the Alcorn family." And this is a day for the family. But it's your own individual families -- the mothers and fathers and grandparents gathered here -- that I want to congratulate first. In a very private way, your years of hard

work, sacrifice, and yes, love for your sons and daughters have brought this moment to pass. You deserve the first round of applause.

For many American families -- those fortunate families where children are raised assuming they will have the opportunity to go to college -- the drama of today's ceremony is difficult to appreciate. Many of you are the first in your families ever to attend college -- let alone stay the course to graduate.

And the economic transformation wrought by historically black colleges such as Alcorn is nothing less than astounding: Although 85 percent of United Negro College Fund alumni come from blue-collar families -- only three percent hold blue-collar jobs themselves. Almost 90 percent go on to professional or managerial positions. Ninety-five percent work in interracial settings -- and many are the first blacks to hold those positions. It's an exciting tradition -- and one of the most under-appreciated success stories in America.

It's also a tradition that's close to my heart. When I was a college senior in 1948, Barbara and I began participating in the United Negro College Fund. In the forty years since, we've continued to do our small part along the way. And even before becoming President -- back in January, about a week before the Inauguration -- Walter Washington and some of his colleagues met with me at the White House to ~~talk~~ talk about how the Administration can best support this unique tradition.

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I also understand that a campaign is underway here now to raise half a million dollars through a federal challenge grant program. Well, another fresh initiative calls for \$60 million in new funds over the next four years to boost the endowment matching grants available to schools like Alcorn.

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But on a day like today, there is much of which we can be proud. Just as I have covered a fair piece of ground since my own days as a college senior, so too has Alcorn come a long way since 1948. That was the landmark year Alcorn won full accreditation. And that was the year "The Stretch" ((ALCORN'S

SEVEN-MILE ENTRANCE ROAD)) was finally paved -- a milestone that was resoundingly cheered by the graduating class.

They were only 60 in number -- barely a fifth of the total receiving degrees today -- a ceremony so small that it fit comfortably in the old Chapel -- the Chapel built in another time by slaves for the white gentry of Mississippi.

Like my classmates in Connecticut, most of the men at Alcorn in 1948 were veterans, soldiers who had fought for democracy while serving in segregated units. And like many of you today, the Alcornites of 1948 were graduating with skills that would enable them to feed the hungry, nurse the sick, and teach the young.

Future Pittsburgh Steeler Jack Spinks -- the first black pro athlete to come out of Mississippi -- was getting ready to start his freshman year. He would soon be practicing in a ramshackle wooden building that everyone called the "Old Chicken Coop." Jack says that when it rained during basketball games, the roof leaked so bad people had to keep their umbrellas open. The modern field house in which we're gathered today was then not even a dream. And Jack is somewhere out there today -- and I understand his youngest son is part of the graduating class.

The forty years of schooling that separate Jack and his son embrace an era of tremendous change -- for Alcorn, and for America -- a time of upheaval, and finally, a time of growth and maybe something like wisdom.

Not everything has changed. The threads woven through the fabric of Alcorn -- and any place where excellence is sought -- are what used to be called simple family values. We're not talking about two sets of values -- family values are the same for black and white. And they are not complicated. Honesty. Faith. Frugality. Acceptance of responsibility. The importance of work. A tradition of helping one's neighbors. And, as I have said before, any definition of a successful life must include service to others.

Martin Luther King argued that "intelligence is not enough." He said: "Intelligence plus character -- that is the goal of true education."

Well, you at Alcorn are lucky. Alcorn is a place where -- as your football coach put it -- "the air is cleaner, grass greener, water sweeter -- just a little bit closer to heaven." This place has character -- it is a university with a mission. And to paraphrase a new song that's climbing the charts this month, this special, secluded college has been "the wind beneath your wings." For you -- and for young Americans graduating all across our country this month -- it is time for you to take that wind and soar.

For some of you, I hope there comes a day when you ride those winds into the political arena, to fight for what you believe in, to grapple not only with your own dreams, but also those of your countrymen.

But politics is hardly the only arena where the winds of change are blowing. When I got out of college, Barbara and I piled into an old Studebaker with our young son and went to Texas to learn the oil business. Before long we started a company -- made a little money -- but the bigger reward was building something on my own. And creating 215 jobs for 215 families.

Now, business can be pretty rough and tumble. But America is successful because we are a nation of risk-takers. The Alcorn Braves know that you can't steal second base and keep one foot on first.

Every senior here is an educated man or woman, proud and self-assured. With all the cockiness of youth, some of you -- I hope most of you -- must be feeling today like anything is possible.

Well, trust those instincts. Everyone has a dream. And everyone has something to give.

Last month I saw a new movie -- a movie about baseball and about faith -- in which Burt Lancaster ponders the power of hope. He asks: "Is there enough magic, out there in the moonlight, to make this dream come true?"

Well, I have come to Mississippi today because the magic of America, and the magic of our times, means believing that your best days -- that our best days -- are still to come. Born in an era of peace and educated in times of relative prosperity, your generation can look to a new century rich with unimaginable opportunities.

Yes, there is enough magic out there -- enough for all Americans. And yes, you can seize that magic with the power of your own hands -- and with the skills bequeathed you by this special college. And yes, just as Alcorn's most recent yearbook was dedicated to Dr. King, you can honor his memory by doing what he taught us all to do -- to have a dream -- and to work every day to make that dream come true.

America is proud of you and the families you represent. God bless you in the challenges to come. And God bless the United States.

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(McNally/Dooley)
May 8, 1989
5:30 p.m.
Draft One
(ALCORN)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN ST. UNIV. COMMENCEMENT
LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1989
11:00 A.M.

((DR. WALTER WASHINGTON, ALCORN'S PRESIDENT, WILL INTRODUCE
YOU.))

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you. ((PAUSE))

You know, last month we commemorated the bicentennial of the American presidency. And Walter, I have to tell you -- after all these actors in powdered wigs -- it's a relief to finally stand beside someone who really is "President Washington."

When Air Force One landed, Walter sent an assistant out to meet us. The Alcorn ((ALL-CORN)) aide was nervous and blurted out the ten scariest words in the English language: ((PAUSE)) "I come from Washington -- and I'm here to help you."

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INTRODUCE YOU.))

THANK YOU, DOCTOR. THANK YOU. ((PAUSE))

YOU KNOW, LAST MONTH WE COMMEMORATED THE
BICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY.

- 2 -

AND WALTER, I HAVE TO TELL YOU -- AFTER ALL THESE
ACTORS IN POWDERED WIGS -- IT'S A RELIEF TO FINALLY
STAND BESIDE SOMEONE WHO REALLY IS "PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON."

GOOD MORNING TO YOU ALL AND THANK YOU, PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, IN PARTICULAR, FOR THE FINE WORK BY YOU AND
YOUR FACULTY HERE AT ALCORN ((ALL-CORN)).

- 3 -

IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO SEE THAD AND TRENT, YOUR ABLE SENATORS, MY GOOD FRIEND SONNY AND OTHERS IN MISSISSIPPI'S DISTINGUISHED CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION. CONGRATULATIONS ALSO TO THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS AND FANS OF THESE STUDENTS -- AND, MOST OF ALL: THE ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY CLASS OF '89.

FOR FOUR YEARS, TODAY'S SENIORS HAVE BEEN PART OF THE PROUD TRADITION THEY CALL "THE ALCORN FAMILY." AND THIS IS A DAY FOR THE FAMILY.

- 4 -

BUT IT'S YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES -- THE MOTHERS AND FATHERS AND GRANDPARENTS GATHERED HERE -- THAT I WANT TO CONGRATULATE FIRST. IN A VERY PRIVATE WAY, YOUR YEARS OF HARD WORK, SACRIFICE, AND YES, LOVE FOR YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS HAVE BROUGHT THIS MOMENT TO PASS. YOU DESERVE THE FIRST ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

- 5 -

THE AMERICAN FAMILY HAS BEEN UNDER SIEGE IN RECENT TIMES. BUT, AS THE MONTHS UNFOLD, I BECOME MORE AND MORE CERTAIN THAT THE ANSWER TO OUR PROBLEMS CAN BE FOUND IN THE STRENGTH OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY. LOOKING AROUND THIS ROOM, YOU CAN FEEL THE PRIDE. IT'S A POWERFUL FORCE FOR GOOD.

- 6 -

AND AS PRESIDENT, I WILL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO PROMOTE THE FAMILY -- EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION -- TO PROTECT THE FAMILY -- IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS -- AND TO REAFFIRM THE FAMILY VALUES THAT BROUGHT YOUR KIDS THROUGH THESE FOUR CHALLENGING YEARS.

FOR SOME AMERICAN FAMILIES -- THOSE FORTUNATE FAMILIES WHERE CHILDREN ARE RAISED ASSUMING THEY WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO COLLEGE -- THE DRAMA OF TODAY'S CEREMONY IS DIFFICULT TO APPRECIATE.

- 7 -

MANY OF YOU ARE THE FIRST IN YOUR FAMILIES EVER TO ATTEND COLLEGE -- LET ALONE STAY THE COURSE TO GRADUATE.

AND THE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION WROUGHT BY HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES SUCH AS ALCORN IS NOTHING LESS THAN ASTOUNDING: WHILE 85 PERCENT OF UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND ALUMNI COME FROM BLUE-COLLAR FAMILIES -- ALMOST ALL GO ON TO PROFESSIONAL OR MANAGERIAL POSITIONS.

- 8 -

IN MANY CASES THEY ARE THE FIRST BLACKS TO HOLD THOSE PARTICULAR POSITIONS. IT'S AN EXCITING TRADITION -- AND ONE OF THE MOST UNDER-APPRECIATED SUCCESS STORIES IN AMERICA.

IT'S ALSO A TRADITION THAT'S CLOSE TO MY HEART. WHEN I WAS A COLLEGE SENIOR IN 1948, BARBARA AND I BEGAN PARTICIPATING IN THE UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUND. IN THE FORTY YEARS SINCE, WE'VE CONTINUED TO DO OUR SMALL PART ALONG THE WAY.

- 9 -

AND EVEN BEFORE BECOMING PRESIDENT -- BACK IN JANUARY, ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE THE INAUGURATION -- WALTER WASHINGTON AND SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES MET WITH ME TO TALK ABOUT HOW THE ADMINISTRATION CAN BEST SUPPORT THIS UNIQUE TRADITION.

- 10 -

SOME GOOD IDEAS CAME OUT OF THAT GATHERING. AND SEVERAL ARE ALREADY IN EFFECT -- BEGUN LAST MONTH WHEN WALTER AND OTHERS JOINED ME IN THE ROSE GARDEN TO LAUNCH THE PRESIDENT'S BOARD OF ADVISORS ON HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

NOW, I UNDERSTAND THAT SEVERAL OF TODAY'S GRADUATES ARE JOINING ME IN FEDERAL SERVICE -- IN AGRICULTURE, DEFENSE, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER CRITICAL AREAS.

- 11 -

I'M PROUD OF YOU -- WE WELCOME YOU -- AMERICA NEEDS YOUR TALENT. AND THAT'S NOT IDLE TALK. LAST MONTH'S ORDER ALSO DIRECTED THAT THE FEDERAL PERSONNEL OFFICE DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE RECRUITMENT AT ALCORN AND SIMILAR COLLEGES FOR PART-TIME AND SUMMER POSITIONS, TO HELP GET YOU STARTED IN FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE.

I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT A CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY HERE NOW TO RAISE HALF A MILLION DOLLARS THROUGH A FEDERAL CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM.

- 12 -

RECENTLY, I SIGNED AN ORDER BRINGING \$60 MILLION IN NEW FUNDS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO BOOST THE ENDOWMENT MATCHING GRANTS AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS LIKE ALCORN.

AS I TOLD THE COLLEGE PRESIDENTS WHO GATHERED AT THE WHITE HOUSE LAST MONTH, THESE NEW INITIATIVES ARE JUST A START. MORE MUST BE DONE.

- 13 -

BUT ON A DAY LIKE TODAY, THERE IS MUCH OF WHICH WE CAN BE PROUD. JUST AS I HAVE COVERED A FAIR PIECE OF GROUND SINCE MY OWN DAYS AS A COLLEGE SENIOR, SO TOO HAS ALCORN COME A LONG WAY SINCE 1948. THAT WAS THE LANDMARK YEAR ALCORN FIRST EARNED AN "A" RATING AS AN ACCREDITED COLLEGE. AND THAT WAS THE YEAR "THE STRETCH" WAS FINALLY PAVED -- A MILESTONE THAT WAS RESOUNDINGLY CHEERED BY THE GRADUATING CLASS.

- 14 -

THEY WERE ONLY 60 IN NUMBER -- BARELY A FIFTH OF THE TOTAL RECEIVING DEGREES TODAY -- A CEREMONY SO SMALL THAT IT FIT COMFORTABLY IN THE OAKLAND CHAPEL.

LIKE MY CLASSMATES IN CONNECTICUT, MANY OF THE MEN AT ALCORN IN 1948 WERE VETERANS, SOLDIERS WHO HAD FOUGHT FOR DEMOCRACY WHILE SERVING IN SEGREGATED UNITS. AND LIKE MANY OF YOU TODAY, THE ALCORNITES OF 1948 WERE GRADUATING WITH SKILLS THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO FEED THE HUNGRY, NURSE THE SICK, AND TEACH THE YOUNG.

- 15 -

FUTURE PITTSBURGH STEELER JACK SPINKS -- THE FIRST BLACK PRO ATHLETE TO COME OUT OF MISSISSIPPI -- WAS GETTING READY TO START HIS FRESHMAN YEAR. HE WOULD SOON BE PRACTICING IN A RAMSHACKLE WOODEN BUILDING THAT EVERYONE CALLED THE "OLD CHICKEN COOP." JACK SAYS THAT WHEN IT RAINED DURING BASKETBALL GAMES, THE ROOF LEAKED SO BAD PEOPLE HAD TO KEEP THEIR UMBRELLAS OPEN. THE MODERN FIELD HOUSE IN WHICH WE'RE GATHERED TODAY WAS THEN NOT EVEN A DREAM.

- 16 -

AND JACK IS SOMEWHERE OUT THERE TODAY -- AND I UNDERSTAND HIS YOUNGEST SON IS PART OF THE GRADUATING CLASS.

THE FORTY YEARS OF SCHOOLING THAT SEPARATE JACK AND HIS SON EMBRACE AN ERA OF TREMENDOUS CHANGE -- FOR ALCORN, AND FOR AMERICA -- A TIME OF UPHEAVAL, AND FINALLY, A TIME OF GROWTH AND MAYBE SOMETHING LIKE WISDOM.

- 17 -

NOT EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED. THE THREADS WOVEN THROUGH THE FABRIC OF ALCORN -- AND ANY PLACE WHERE EXCELLENCE IS SOUGHT -- ARE WHAT USED TO BE CALLED SIMPLE FAMILY VALUES. WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT TWO SETS OF VALUES -- FAMILY VALUES ARE THE SAME FOR BLACK AND WHITE. AND THEY ARE NOT COMPLICATED. HONESTY. FAITH. FRUGALITY. ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY. THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK. A TRADITION OF HELPING ONE'S NEIGHBORS.

- 18 -

MARTIN LUTHER KING ARGUED THAT "INTELLIGENCE IS NOT ENOUGH." HE SAID: "INTELLIGENCE PLUS CHARACTER -- THAT IS THE GOAL OF TRUE EDUCATION."

WELL, YOU AT ALCORN ARE LUCKY. ALCORN IS A PLACE WHERE -- AS YOUR OLD FOOTBALL COACH PUT IT -- "THE AIR IS A LITTLE BIT CLEANER, THE GRASS IS A LITTLE BIT GREENER, THE WATER IS A LITTLE BIT SWEETER. . .IT'S JUST A LITTLE BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN." THIS PLACE HAS CHARACTER -- IT IS A UNIVERSITY WITH A MISSION.

- 19 -

AND TO PARAPHRASE A NEW SONG THAT'S CLIMBING THE CHARTS THIS MONTH, THIS SPECIAL, SECLUDED COLLEGE HAS BEEN "THE WIND BENEATH YOUR WINGS." FOR YOU -- AND FOR YOUNG AMERICANS GRADUATING ALL ACROSS OUR COUNTRY THIS MONTH -- IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE THAT WIND AND SOAR.

FOR SOME OF YOU, I HOPE THERE COMES A DAY WHEN YOU RIDE THOSE WINDS INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA, TO FIGHT FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN, TO GRAPPLE NOT ONLY WITH YOUR OWN DREAMS, BUT ALSO THOSE OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN.

- 20 -

BUT POLITICS IS HARDLY THE ONLY ARENA WHERE A NEW BREEZE IS BLOWING. SOME OF YOU WILL LAND IN BUSINESS - - MAYBE EVEN START A BUSINESS -- WHERE YOU CAN CREATE JOBS, ADDING TO THE OPPORTUNITY OF OTHER AMERICANS. THAT'S PUBLIC SERVICE, TOO.

NOW, BUSINESS CAN BE PRETTY ROUGH AND TUMBLE. BUT AMERICA IS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE WE ARE A NATION OF RISK-TAKERS. THE ALCORN BRAVES KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T STEAL SECOND BASE AND KEEP ONE FOOT ON FIRST.

- 21 -

OTHERS WILL TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION, AND PUT "WIND BENEATH THEIR WINGS." YOUR TOUCHSTONES SHOULD BE EXCELLENCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND CHOICE. THE SYSTEM MUST OFFER PARENTS QUALITY CHOICE IN EDUCATION. ALCORN IS A GOOD EXAMPLE. BUT OUR SCHOOLS MUST ALSO BE MORE ACCOUNTABLE AND THOSE OF YOU WHO WILL KNOW THE JOY OF HELPING A CHILD LEARN, ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THAT RESPONSIBILITY.

- 22 -

OTHERS ARE HEADED FOR HEALTH CARE, AGRICULTURE, JOURNALISM, THE PROFESSIONS. WHATEVER YOU CHOOSE, IT IS WITHIN YOU TO CHANGE THE WORLD -- AND ANY DEFINITION OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE MUST INCLUDE SERVING OTHERS.

22A

AS EACH OF YOU BEGINS A NEW LIFE TODAY, YOU MAY FAIRLY ASK? WILL MY FUTURE BE SECURE? THIS IS NOT JUST A DOMESTIC QUESTION. IT IS A FOREIGN POLICY QUESTION.

FOR THE PAST FORTY YEARS, THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A STRUGGLE -- BECAUSE THE SOVIETS HAVE CHOSEN TO STAND APART FROM -- AND OPPOSED TO -- THE WORLD FAMILY OF NATIONS.

22B

YESTERDAY, I ANNOUNCED A NEW POLICY FOR THE 1990s -- ONE THAT MOVES BEYOND CONTAINMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION. THIS NEW POLICY SETS A GOAL OF BRINGING THE SOVIET UNION INTO THE WORLD COMMUNITY. AND IF WE SUCCEED, THE FUTURE YOU WILL KNOW WILL BE SAFER, AND THE WORLD YOU WILL KNOW WILL BE FREER.

22C

AS THE SOVIET UNION MOVES TOWARD GREATER OPENNESS AND DEMOCRATIZATION -- AS THEY MEET THE CHALLENGE OF RESPONSIBLE INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR -- WE WILL MATCH THEIR STEPS WITH STEPS OF OUR OWN.

- 23 -

TODAY, EVERY SENIOR HERE IS AN EDUCATED MAN OR WOMAN, PROUD AND SELF-ASSURED. WITH ALL THE COCKINESS OF YOUTH, SOME OF YOU -- I HOPE MOST OF YOU -- MUST BE FEELING TODAY LIKE ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

- 24 -

WELL, TRUST THOSE INSTINCTS. EVERYONE HAS A DREAM. AND EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO GIVE.

LAST MONTH I SAW A NEW MOVIE -- A MOVIE ABOUT BASEBALL AND ABOUT FAITH -- IN WHICH BURT LANCASTER PONDERES THE POWER OF HOPE. HE ASKS: "IS THERE ENOUGH MAGIC, OUT THERE IN THE MOONLIGHT, TO MAKE THIS DREAM COME TRUE?"

- 25 -

WELL, I HAVE COME TO MISSISSIPPI TODAY BECAUSE THE MAGIC OF AMERICA, AND THE MAGIC OF OUR TIMES, MEANS BELIEVING THAT YOUR BEST DAYS -- THAT OUR BEST DAYS -- ARE STILL TO COME. BORN IN AN ERA OF PEACE AND EDUCATED IN TIMES OF RELATIVE PROSPERITY, YOUR GENERATION CAN LOOK TO A NEW CENTURY RICH WITH UNIMAGINABLE OPPORTUNITIES.

- 26 -

YES, THERE IS ENOUGH MAGIC OUT THERE -- ENOUGH FOR ALL AMERICANS. AND YES, YOU CAN SEIZE THAT MAGIC WITH THE POWER OF YOUR OWN HANDS -- AND WITH THE SKILLS BEQUEATHED YOU BY THIS SPECIAL COLLEGE. AND YES, JUST AS ALCORN'S 1988 YEARBOOK WAS DEDICATED TO DR. KING, YOU CAN HONOR HIS MEMORY BY DOING WHAT HE TAUGHT US ALL TO DO -- TO HAVE A DREAM -- AND TO WORK EVERY DAY TO MAKE THAT DREAM COME TRUE.

- 27 -

AMERICA IS PROUD OF YOU AND THE FAMILIES YOU
REPRESENT. GOD BLESS YOU IN THE CHALLENGES TO COME.
AND GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES.

#

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUMDATE: 05/10/89ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: ----SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT
(05/10 9:25a.m. draft 2)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	☐	☒	MCCLURE	☐	☒
SUNUNU	☐	☒	NEWMAN	☐	☐
SCOWCROFT	☐	☐	PORTER	☐	☒
DARMAN	☐	☒	STUDDERT	☐	☒
BATES	☐	☒	UNTERMAYER	☐	☐
BREEDEN	☐	☐	ROGERS	☐	☒
CARD	☐	☒	WINSTON	☒	☒
CICCONI	☐	☒	PINKERTON	☐	☒
DEMAREST	☐	☒	_____	☐	☐
FITZWATER	☐	☒	_____	☐	☐
GRAY	☐	☒	_____	☐	☐
HAGIN	☐	☐	_____	☐	☐

REMARKS:

The attached has been forwarded to the President.

RESPONSE:

James W. Cicconi
 Assistant to the President
 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
 Ext. 2702

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1989 MAY 10 PM 7:11

May 10, 1989

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: CHRISS WINSTON *CW*
FROM: EDWARD E. McNALLY *EMN*
SUBJECT: ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

I. SUMMARY

Attached for your consideration and review are draft remarks for your commencement address at Alcorn State University on Saturday.

II. DISCUSSION

At 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 13, 1989, you are scheduled to join Dr. Walter Washington (president of Alcorn State University) to address Alcorn's graduating class of approximately 350 students. An audience of approximately 7,000 persons is expected in the field house of the Health, Physical Education & Recreation Complex.

Dr. Washington (who met with you here as part of the leadership group from Historically Black Colleges and Universities in January at the O.E.O.B. and again in April in the Rose Garden) has been president at Alcorn for the past 20 years.

(McNally/Dooley)
May 10, 1989
9:25 a.m.
Draft Two
(ALCORN)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: ALCORN ST. UNIV. COMMENCEMENT
LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1989
11:00 A.M.

((DR. WALTER WASHINGTON, ALCORN'S PRESIDENT, WILL INTRODUCE
YOU.))

Thank you, Doctor. Thank you. ((PAUSE))

You know, last month we commemorated the bicentennial of the American presidency. And Walter, I have to tell you -- after all these actors in powdered wigs -- it's a relief to finally stand beside someone who really is "President Washington."

Good morning to you all and thank you -- President Washington, in particular for your fine work here at Alcorn, respected faculty, Mississippi's distinguished congressional delegation -- the families and friends and fans of these students -- and most of all: The Alcorn State University Class of '89.

For four years, today's seniors have been part of the proud tradition they call "the Alcorn family." And this is a day for the family. But it's your own individual families -- the mothers and fathers and grandparents gathered here -- that I want to congratulate first. In a very private way, your years of hard work, sacrifice, and yes, love for your sons and daughters have brought this moment to pass. You deserve the first round of applause.

For many American families -- those fortunate families where children are raised assuming they will have the opportunity to go to college -- the drama of today's ceremony is difficult to appreciate. Many of you are the first in your families ever to attend college -- let alone stay the course to graduate.

And the economic transformation wrought by historically black colleges such as Alcorn is nothing less than astounding: While 85 percent of United Negro College Fund alumni come from blue-collar families -- almost all go on to professional or managerial positions. In many cases they are the first blacks to hold those particular positions. It's an exciting tradition -- and one of the most under-appreciated success stories in America.

It's also a tradition that's close to my heart. When I was a college senior in 1948, Barbara and I began participating in the United Negro College Fund. In the forty years since, we've continued to do our small part along the way. And even before becoming President -- back in January, about a week before the Inauguration -- Walter Washington and some of his colleagues met with me to talk about how the Administration can best support this unique tradition.

Some good ideas came out of that gathering. And several are already in effect -- begun last month when Walter and others joined me in the Rose Garden to launch the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Now, I understand that several of today's graduates are joining me in federal service -- in agriculture, defense,

transportation and other critical areas. I'm proud of you -- we welcome you -- America needs your talent. And that's not idle talk. Last month's Order also directed that the federal personnel office develop a program to improve recruitment at Alcorn and similar colleges for part-time and summer positions, to help get you started in the federal public service.

I also understand that a campaign is underway here now to raise half a million dollars through a federal challenge grant program. Well, I've signed an order bringing \$60 million in new funds over the next four years to boost the endowment matching grants available to schools like Alcorn.

Now, as I told the college presidents who gathered at the White House last month, these new initiatives are just a start. More must be done.

But on a day like today, there is much of which we can be proud. Just as I have covered a fair piece of ground since my own days as a college senior, so too has Alcorn come a long way since 1948. That was the landmark year Alcorn first earned an "A" rating as an accredited college. And that was the year "The Seven Mile Stretch" ((ALCORN'S ENTRANCE ROAD)) was finally paved -- a milestone that was resoundingly cheered by the graduating class.

They were only 60 in number -- barely a fifth of the total receiving degrees today -- a ceremony so small that it fit comfortably in the Oakland Chapel.

Like my classmates in Connecticut, many of the men at Alcorn in 1948 were veterans, soldiers who had fought for democracy while serving in segregated units. And like many of you today, the Alcornites of 1948 were graduating with skills that would enable them to feed the hungry, nurse the sick, and teach the young.

Future Pittsburgh Steeler Jack Spinks -- the first black pro athlete to come out of Mississippi -- was getting ready to start his freshman year. He would soon be practicing in a ramshackle wooden building that everyone called the "Old Chicken Coop." Jack says that when it rained during basketball games, the roof leaked so bad people had to keep their umbrellas open. The modern field house in which we're gathered today was then not even a dream. And Jack is somewhere out there today -- and I understand his youngest son is part of the graduating class.

The forty years of schooling that separate Jack and his son embrace an era of tremendous change -- for Alcorn, and for America -- a time of upheaval, and finally, a time of growth and maybe something like wisdom.

Not everything has changed. The threads woven through the fabric of Alcorn -- and any place where excellence is sought -- are what used to be called simple family values. We're not talking about two sets of values -- family values are the same for black and white. And they are not complicated. Honesty. Faith. Frugality. Acceptance of responsibility. The importance of work. A tradition of helping one's neighbors. And, as I have

said before, any definition of a successful life must include serving others.

Martin Luther King argued that "intelligence is not enough." He said: "Intelligence plus character -- that is the goal of true education."

Well, you at Alcorn are lucky. Alcorn is a place where -- as your old football coach put it -- "the air is a little bit cleaner, the grass is a little bit greener, the water is a little bit sweeter. . .it's just a little bit closer to heaven." This place has character -- it is a university with a mission. And to paraphrase a new song that's climbing the charts this month, this special, secluded college has been "the wind beneath your wings." For you -- and for young Americans graduating all across our country this month -- it is time for you to take that wind and soar.

For some of you, I hope there comes a day when you ride those winds into the political arena, to fight for what you believe in, to grapple not only with your own dreams, but also those of your countrymen.

But politics is hardly the only arena where a new breeze is blowing. When I got out of college, I piled everything I had into an old Studebaker and went to Texas to learn the oil business. Before long we started a company -- made a little money -- but the bigger reward was building something on my own. And creating 215 jobs for 215 families.

Now, business can be pretty rough and tumble. But America is successful because we are a nation of risk-takers. The Alcorn Braves know that you can't steal second base and keep one foot on first.

Every senior here is an educated man or woman, proud and self-assured. With all the cockiness of youth, some of you -- I hope most of you -- must be feeling today like anything is possible.

Well, trust those instincts. Everyone has a dream. And everyone has something to give.

Last month I saw a new movie -- a movie about baseball and about faith -- in which Burt Lancaster ponders the power of hope. He asks: "Is there enough magic, out there in the moonlight, to make this dream come true?"

Well, I have come to Mississippi today because the magic of America, and the magic of our times, means believing that your best days -- that our best days -- are still to come. Born in an era of peace and educated in times of relative prosperity, your generation can look to a new century rich with unimaginable opportunities.

Yes, there is enough magic out there -- enough for all Americans. And yes, you can seize that magic with the power of your own hands -- and with the skills bequeathed you by this special college. And yes, just as Alcorn's 1988 yearbook was dedicated to Dr. King, you can honor his memory by doing what he

taught us all to do -- to have a dream -- and to work every day to make that dream come true.

America is proud of you and the families you represent. God bless you in the challenges to come. And God bless the United States.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Lorman, Mississippi)

For Immediate Release

May 13, 1989

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

Alcorn State University
Lorman, Mississippi

11:15 A.M. CDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all, and especially, my thanks to you, Dr. Washington. You know, last month we commemorated the bicentennial of the American presidency. And, Walter, I have to tell you -- after all these actors in powdered wigs -- it is a relief to stand beside someone who really is "President Washington." (Laughter and applause.) Good morning.

But to you and your wonderful faculty here at Alcorn, I just say I am delighted to be here. Incidentally, Dr. Washington's ears should have been burning because when I road down on the helicopter from Jackson with the two United States Senators from Mississippi, they were telling me in considerable detail more than I knew from my briefing papers of this man's commitment to excellence. And so I salute him and his service to this wonderful university. (Applause.)

Lieutenant-Governor Dye, it's a pleasure to be with you, sir. I'm, of course, delighted that Thad Cochran and Trent Lott are with us today, a tribute to all here. I'm very pleased that my good friend, Sonny Montgomery, a Congressman whose home is in Meridian, is here. We're in Congressman Mike Espy's district, and I salute him. Congressman Mike Parker is here, and many other distinguished guests. I also want to say thanks to all of them.

Congratulations also to the families and the friends and the fans of these students. But I think most of all, to the Alcorn State University Class of 1989, we salute you and I'm proud to be with you. (Applause.) You've been part of what they call "the Alcorn family." And this is a day for the family. But it's your own individual families -- the mothers and fathers and grandparents gathered here -- that I want to congratulate. In a very private way, your years of hard work and your years of sacrifice and, yes, love for your sons and daughters have brought this moment to pass. And I think you, really -- although the first round of applause has died now -- I think you all really deserve the first round of applause. The parents and the grandparents of the graduates here today. (Applause.)

I know how deadly long graduation speeches can be. I'll never forget Yale University where I went. A man got up, he says, "I'm going to give you a brief graduation speech. And I will choose, because our school has a short name -- Y, Y -- is for youth." He went on for about 30 minutes -- "and then it's A, altruism." (Laughter.) Another 20 -- L, loyalty. Rushed that off in about 18 minutes. And then, of course, E, for excellence. He concluded about an hour and half after he started. And there was one person left, his head bent in prayer. And the minister, the speaker, very touched by it, said, "Well, sir, I see that you are praying for these values." The man said, "No, no." He said, "I wasn't praying for the values. I was giving thanks to the Lord that I did not go to Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi." (Laughter.)

I'll try to be a little more considerate.

MORE

Dr. David Matthews, in his lovely invocation, alluded to family. He alluded to some of the problems that we face. And the American family has been under siege in recent times. But as the months unfold, I've become more and more certain that the answer to our problems can be found in the strength of the American family. Looking around this room, you can sense the feeling of pride -- and it's a powerful force for good. And as President, I will do everything I can to promote the family -- excellence in education; to protect the family, in the fight against narcotics; and to reaffirm the family values that brought your kids through these four challenging years. (Applause.)

For some American families -- those fortunate families where children are raised assuming that they'll have the opportunity to go to college -- the drama of today's ceremony is difficult to appreciate. Many of you are the first, though, in your families ever to attend college -- let alone stay the course through graduation.

And the economic transformation wrought by the historically black colleges such as Alcorn is nothing less than astounding: while 85 percent of the United Negro College Fund alumni come from blue-collar families, almost all go on to professional or managerial positions. And in many cases, they're the first blacks to hold these particular positions. It's an exciting tradition -- and one of the most under-appreciated success stories in America.

It's also a tradition that is close to my heart, because way back in 1948, when I was a senior at Y-A-L-E, 41 years ago, my wife, Barbara -- still my wife, Barbara; then she and I had been married just a few years -- we began participating in the United Negro College Fund. And in the 40 years since then, we've continued to try to do our small part. And even before becoming President -- back in January, just a week before the Inauguration -- Dr. Washington and some of his colleagues came to Washington, D.C., met with me to talk about how the new administration can best support this unique tradition.

And some good ideas came out of that gathering. And several are already in effect -- begun last month in the meeting that he alluded to when Dr. Washington and others joined me in the Rose Garden to launch the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

And now, I understand that several of today's graduates are going to be joining in federal service -- in agriculture, defense, transportation and other critical areas. And I'm proud of you, and we welcome you, and we need excellence in federal service. America needs your talents. And that's not idle talk. Last month's order also directed that the federal personnel office develop a program to improve recruitment at Alcorn and similar colleges for part-time and summer positions, to help people get started in the concept of federal public service. (Applause.)

And I understand that a campaign is underway here now to raise a half a million dollars through a federal challenge grant program. Recently, I signed an order bringing \$60 million in new funds to boost the endowment matching grants available to schools like Alcorn.

As I told the college presidents who gathered at the White House last month, these new initiatives are just a start. More must be done.

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Do you know how many graduated back in 1948? Trivial Pursuit question -- how many? Sixty in number -- barely a fifth of the total receiving degrees today -- a ceremony so small that it fit comfortably into the Oakland Chapel.

And like my classmates in Connecticut, many of the men at Alcorn in 1948 were veterans, soldiers who had fought for democracy -- many of them serving in segregated units. And like many of you today, the Alcornites of 1948 were graduating with skills that would enable them to feed the hungry, nurse the sick, and reach out to help the young through education.

Future Pittsburgh Steeler Jack Spinks -- the first black pro athlete to come out of Mississippi -- was getting ready to start his freshman year. He would soon be practicing in a ramshackle wooden building that everyone called the "Old Chicken Coop." And Jack says that when it rained during basketball games, the roof leaked so bad that people had to keep their umbrellas open. The modern field house in which we're gathered today was not then even a dream. And Jack, I am told, is somewhere out here today -- and I understand that his youngest son is part of the graduating class. (Applause.)

But these 40 years of schooling that separate father and son -- the years that separate them -- embrace an era of tremendous change -- for Alcorn and for the United States of America -- a time of upheaval and, finally, a time of growth and maybe something like wisdom.

Not everything has changed. The threads woven through the fabric at Alcorn -- and anyplace where excellence is sought -- are what used to be called simple family values. We're not talking about two sets of values. Family values are the same regardless of race, color, or creed. Family values -- they're not complicated. Honesty, faith, frugality, acceptance of responsibility, the importance of work, a tradition of helping one's neighbor.

Martin Luther King argued that "intelligence is not enough." He said, "Intelligence plus character -- that is the goal of the true education."

Well, you here at Alcorn are lucky. This is a place where -- as your old football coach put it -- "the air is a little bit cleaner, the grass is a little bit greener, and the water is a little bit sweeter -- it's just a little bit closer to heaven." (Applause.) You see, this place has character -- it is a university with a mission. And to paraphrase a new song that's climbing the charts this month, this special, secluded college has been "the wind beneath your wings." And for you -- and for young Americans graduating all across this country this month -- it is time for you to take that wind and soar.

And for some of you, I hope there comes a day when you ride those winds into the political arena, to fight for what you believe in, to grapple not only with your own dreams, but also those of your countrymen.

But politics is hardly the only arena where a new breeze is blowing. Some of you will land in business, maybe even start a business where you can create jobs adding to the opportunity of other Americans. And that's public service too.

Now, business can be pretty rough and tumble. But America is successful because we're a nation of risk-takers. The Alcorn Braves know that you can't steal second base and keep one foot on first. That's profound. (Laughter.) Others will teach the next generation and put wind beneath their wings. Your touch tone should be excellence, accountability and choice. The system -- the educational system must offer parents quality choice in education. Alcorn's a good example. But our schools must also be more accountable and those of you who will know the joy of helping a child learn are an important part of that responsibility. Others are headed for health care, agriculture, journalism, the professions.

Whatever you choose, it is within you to change the world and any definition of a successful life must, of course, include serving others. As each of you begins a new life today, you may fairly ask, will my future be secure? This isn't just a domestic question. It's a foreign policy question. For the past 40 years, the United States and the Soviet Union have been engaged in a struggle because the Soviets have chosen to stand apart from and opposed to the world family of nations.

Yesterday I announced a new policy for the 1990's, one that moves beyond our country just trying to contain the Soviet Union. It sets a goal of bringing the Soviet Union into the world community, a policy of reintegration if you will. And if we succeed, I can guarantee to you and your kids that the future you know is going to be safer and the world you know will be freer. This I see as a primary objective of any President of the United States of America. As the Soviet Union moves towards greater openness and democratization and as they meet the challenge of responsible international behavior, we will match their steps with steps of our own.

Today, every senior here is an educated man or woman, proud, self-assured. With all the cockiness of youth, some of you -- I hope most of you -- must be feeling like anything is possible today.

Well, trust those instincts. Everyone has a dream. Everyone has something to give.

Last month I saw a new movie, maybe some of you all saw it -- a movie about baseball and about faith -- in which Burt Lancaster ponders the power of hope. And he asks: "Is there enough magic out there in the moonlight to make this dream come true?"

Well, I have come to Mississippi today because the magic of America, and the magic of our times, means believing that your best days -- that our best days -- are still to come. Born in an era of peace and educated in times of relative prosperity, your generation can look to a new century rich with unimaginable opportunities.

And yes, there is enough magic out there -- enough for all Americans. And yes, you can seize the magic with the power of your own hands -- and with the skills bequeathed to you by this special university. And yes, just as Alcorn's 1988 yearbook was dedicated to Dr. King, you can honor his memory by doing what he taught this nation to do -- to have a dream -- and to work every day to make that dream come true.

America is proud of you and of your families that you represent. God bless you in the challenge to come. And God bless the United States of America. I am honored to be your guest today. Thank you. (Applause.)

END

11:34 A.M. CDT