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(Smith)  
April 29, 1989  
Draft Two  
MISS

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: COMMENCEMENT  
MISSISSIPPI STATE U.  
MAY 1989

President \_\_\_\_, Members of the Board of Trustees, soon-to-be fellow graduates, faculty, administrators, friends.

Thank you for your warm reception. And let me express my appreciation for that gracious introduction.

In fact, I have to admit that listening to those words of welcome, I'm reminded of something one of our former Presidents said when he heard an introduction that even he considered generous.

"I only wish my parents could have been alive to hear that introduction," Lyndon Johnson told his audience. "My father would have enjoyed it. And my mother would have believed it!"

My friends, I'm enjoying it -- being here today. And I know that you'll believe me when I say what a pleasure it is to address these ceremonies.

We meet, to begin, at a special school -- special because for \_\_ years, Mississippi State has made education a bequest.

We gather, too, in a special State -- special for its people. You know that what we are matters more than what we have. You cherish home and people's feelings and how they grew up.

We assemble, finally, on a special day -- for the very word "Commencement" means "Beginning." My friends, today embodies your beginning. And it asks you to give to life, the life you have received from this University: to right wrong, love justice, and serve the gentler impulses of mankind.

You know, as Air Force One flies, it's \_\_\_ miles from Washington to \_\_\_. I know: Barbara checked her trip-tik this morning. But for me, today also marks another journey: Back to some of my pivotal years -- the years I spent as an undergraduate.

It was 41 years ago this \_\_\_ that I, too, received my degree. I'll never forget it . . . nor will my teachers . . . they're still in shock.

At home, it was a time of housing shortage, black markets, and high inflation; abroad, the Cold War proclaimed by Winston Churchill had turned downright frigid. The Communist bloc was monolithic. China and the Middle East were rent by war. The

Marshall Plan was in its infancy. And in a Europe torn by conflicting ideologies, the Soviets were blockading West Berlin.

Milton Berle was Mr. Television, and taking pies in the face. Harry Truman was Mr. President, and he was giving 'em hell. The traditional family was in its glory -- what columnist Carl Rowan would later call "the time-honored family portrait of dad at work, mom home cooking apple pie, the kids playing with gramps." It was a different and, in many ways, simpler America. It was a different and, in many ways, more perilous world.

Nor will I forget how within a week of graduation, Bar and I packed our belongings, and moved halfway across the country. New State -- Texas. New life -- raising \_\_ kids in a \_\_-room house in Odessa. Started an oil company. Built a business. Charted unexplored frontiers -- like you, beginning now.

Since then, we've had a few mailing addresses -- China, Washington, the Great American South. A computer gauged the total once: \_\_ moves in \_\_ years. And we've had more than a few adventures. ~~New people.~~ New vistas. And, always, the distinctly American challenge of the unknown. Course, we hope now to stay in the same place for awhile. As John Kennedy once said of the White House: "I have a nice home, and the office is close by."

But, you know, it's funny. Over all those years, and all those miles, and all that wonderful experience, I learned a few things about America. And her people. And about life -- a successful life -- the life that, by definition, must include serving others.

I learned, for example, that we are not black and white, rural and urban, the privileged and the poor. Instead, we are Americans and members of a family. For we all inhabit a common earth. And our fate is not divisible.

At the heart of this family -- America's family -- is, of course, our family -- yours, and mine. It is the hub, and we are the spokes. And at its core are values -- for we are not the sum of our possessions, but of how we conduct ourselves. Simple, basic values like decency, kindness, self-sacrifice, courage.

You know, I've been blessed with a wonderful wife and five great kids. And eleven brimming grandkids -- by themselves, they could field the Tigers' offensive football team. Like all kids, they provide a Rubik's Cube of questions. And, like most families, they supply that loyalty and love which make us less alone. Course, even the Brady Bunch can't always shield us from brutality. I'm reminded of the alumnus who sent his coach a telegram before the big game. It read: "Remember, coach. We're all behind you -- win or tie."

Yes, in the end we do chart our lives -- each one of us, individually. But a successful life says that we are not islands unto ourselves. That is why as President, I want to strengthen the family unit -- by example, hopefully, and by deed.

Education, for instance, can nurture families that are strong, and independent. So, we have unveiled an education program which rewards achievement, demands accountability, and invests in our children.

Child care, too, can keep families together. So, we have announced an initiative which responds to today's changing demographics. Our proposal puts money in the hands of lower-income parents, limits Federal intervention, and increases options. A church can help, or professional nurse, or grandparents [PAUSE] . . . my daughter Dora especially likes that part.

Let us protect the family. By keeping America at peace abroad. And well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed at home. By stopping the scourge of drug abuse. And putting criminals behind bars. And for those who, for whatever reason -- divorce, poverty, death -- feel alone and isolated, let us become their family: Not in a legal sense, but in a human sense -- helping, enriching, and caring for each other.

Today, millions of Americans are doing that -- giving of, not to, themselves. We term it volunteerism, or voluntary service, or community service. It means lending a hand, tending a wound, and helping the less fortunate.

We see these Americans everywhere -- at a child care center, at Choir Practice, at Little League, at the PTA. And they are heroes -- for volunteerism is among the highest planes of patriotism. There is an America of good, quiet, decent people -- a high-school teacher, a elderly laborer, the men who till our farms. They work and pay their taxes. They make government programs possible. And they reflect the values of "Do Unto Others" --- values I respect, and that as President I will serve.

For, you see, those values aren't abstract ideals. They live; they're flesh and blood; they make achievement possible. Compassion helps one child escape heroin addiction. Generosity allows another to partake of a decent meal. Civility helps a third overcome bigotry and hatred. Through faith in God, still another finally views the world as a warm, not sullen, place.

I have said I like what works. Community service works. That is why I have created the Office of National Service, which is leading our Administration's national service program. This office will enlist new volunteers in community-based efforts to

meet unmet social needs. For some, it can create an extended family. For all, it can unite the American family.

Project Victory, or Mission Impossible? Look to the heroes of today for an answer. Look, for example, to Ohio's Rose Tichey, who in 11 years has written 32 books, and edited over 100, for her church-sponsored literacy program. Or Chessie Davis next door in Alabama, who has provided a home for more than 800 abandoned children -- that's about 10 for each of her 82 years.

These Americans, like you, know that life is not a ledger board. And they know that the private sector -- and individuals -- have the resources -- and the responsibility -- to confront issues like hunger and health care, teen pregnancy and drug abuse, homelessness and illiteracy. Branch Rickey said: "Luck is the residue of design." Well, America's luck can be the residue of volunteerism's design.

My friends, Mississippi has given America some indelible leaders -- in politics, my good friend John Stennis; in education, a Lucius Q.C. Lamar; in opera, the soaring Leontyne Price. And, always, you've treasured what Mississippi's native son, William Faulkner termed "the old verities and truths of the heart."

Community service -- national service -- reflects those verities: "Love and honor . . . and pride and compassion and

sacrifice." Values which are as great and good as all America. Values which can make ours a more just, more decent, more giving land.

Let Faulkner's "verities of the heart" be our values -- not merely for this generation, but for future generations. And inspired by America's good, quiet, decent people, let us help enrich America -- so that America can enrich the world.

Thank you for inviting me. Good luck, and my heart-felt congratulations. May you treasure the road marked tomorrow. And may your future be worthy of your dreams. God bless you, and God bless America.

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532-6254

(Smith)  
May 5, 1989  
Draft Four  
MISS

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS  
MISSISSIPPI STATE U.  
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1989

President Zacharias, Members of the Board of Trustees, soon-to-be fellow graduates, faculty, administrators, friends.

You know, one of my favorite Presidents was the man who first coined the term "bully pulpit." The story goes that Teddy Roosevelt would roam the halls of the White House, shouting "bully, bully." Well, having just met your mascot, I ~~am~~ <sup>think</sup> <sup>Teddy</sup> ~~delighted to say "bully" today.~~ <sup>would have felt right at home.</sup>

I want first to say what an honor it is to see again one of the great patriots of this or any era, the Honorable John Stennis. Ask anyone: John Stennis doesn't merely hail from Mississippi. He is Mississippi.

Another long-time friend, of course, is your Congressman, Sonny Montgomery -- and I'm glad that he, too, is here. You know, each week Sonny and I play paddleball. And he always kids me that I win only when I'm wearing my Mississippi State sweat-shirt [PAUSE] . . . . When I lose, I'm wearing Ole Miss.

I want to thank you for that warm introduction. And for the generosity of your welcome. ~~And let me say how pleased I am that these ceremonies are being held only 400 yards from the Left Field Lounge.~~

*Mississippi State is a wonderful place to live.*

As you may know, I love the national pastime. Played it. Follow it. In fact, I've often said that my favorite philosopher is that master linguist, baseball's Yogi Berra, who yesterday celebrated his \_\_\_th birthday.

It was Yogi who, when asked if he was a fatalist, replied, "No, I never collected postage stamps." Well, I'll bet that regarding your success on the field, and your all-time attendance record, Yogi would be even more articulate. He would say, as I do, too: "Ron Polk's baseball team is No. 1."

*oh!*

Among Mississippi State's leading alumni is Rafael Palmero [Rah-fey-El Pal-MARE-o] of the Texas Rangers. They're owned by a guy I know something about -- my son, George. And the eyes of ~~the~~ Texas are upon them.

*After you I've been the son of a gun is the best team ever you'll see*

Well, today, my friends, the eyes of America are upon Jackson, Mississippi.

For we meet, to begin with, at a special school -- special because for \_\_\_ years, Mississippi State has made education a lasting legacy, and opportunity its bequest.

We gather, too, in a special State -- special for its people. You know that what we are matters more than what we have. You cherish home and people's feelings and how they grew up.

We assemble, finally, on a special day -- for the very word "Commencement" means "Beginning." My friends, today embodies your beginning. And it asks you to enrich the future through the timeless values of the past.

You know, as ~~Air Force One flies, it's~~ \_\_\_\_\_ miles from Washington to Jackson. I know: ~~Barbara checked her trip-tik this morning.~~ But for me, today also marks another journey: Back to some of my pivotal years -- the years I spent as an undergraduate.

It was 41 years ago next month that I, too, received my degree. I'll never forget it . . . nor will my teachers . . . they're still in shock.

In 1948, Milton Berle was Mr. Television, and taking pies in the face. Harry Truman was Mr. President, and he was giving 'em hell. In many ways, it was a different, simpler America. ~~Not worse or better, just simpler.~~ Less congestion. Less pollution. Less high technology. PacMan was a camper, not a video game.

We had problems, sure. At home, ~~of~~ gas lines, a housing shortage, and high inflation. And ~~of~~ veterans adjusting to domestic life. Abroad, ~~of~~ a Cold War turned downright frigid. The Communist bloc was monolithic. China and the Middle East were rent by war. And in a Europe torn by conflicting ideologies, the Soviets were blockading West Berlin.

But we met our problems together. For we took pride in our identity as a Nation. And solace in our faith in God. Yes, there was intolerance. But in the end, ~~it was our morality -- our belief that The Golden Rule must uplift, not maim -- that allowed decency to conquer bigotry.~~ For we are not black and white, rural and urban, the privileged and the poor. My friends, we are Americans. And we are members of a family.

As we all, we believe

Tom Paine once wrote that "the world has turned over many times." It has since I graduated. But there are some things that haven't changed. And I pray that never will.

Now who can it be?

I'm referring, of course, to basic things like kindness, civility, self-sacrifice, courage. Values which ~~know no time, no place, and which span the generations.~~ These values form the heart of America's family ~~in my youth, and yours.~~ And within that family are your families, and mine. Families which show that ~~life is not a celebration of self.~~ And that life -- a successful life -- must include serving others.

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family: dad as sole wage earner, mom as full-time homemaker, and one or more children.

To protect ~~today's~~ family, let us keep America at peace ~~abroad~~. And well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed ~~at home~~. Let us stop the scourge of drug abuse. And put criminals behind bars. And for those who, for whatever reason -- divorce, poverty, death -- feel alone and isolated, ~~let us~~ become their family: Not in a legal sense, but in a human sense -- helping, enriching, and caring for each other.

Today, millions of Americans are doing that -- giving of, not to, themselves. We term it volunteerism, or community service, ~~it~~ means lending a hand, tending a wound, and helping the less fortunate.

We see these Americans everywhere -- at a child care center, at Choir Practice, at PTA. And they are heroes -- for volunteerism is among the highest planes of patriotism. There is an America of good, quiet, decent people -- a high-school teacher, an elderly laborer, the men who till our farms. They work and pay their taxes. They make government programs possible. And they reflect the values of "Do Unto Others" -- values I respect, and that as President I will serve.

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Project Victory, or Mission Impossible? Look to the heroes of today for an answer. Look, for example, to your Delta Gamma and Chi Omega Sororities, whose members read to blind students. Or Steven Cooper, your student association president, who works in Starkville's "Help Find the Children" campaign. Or students who work at adult education centers, combating the problem of illiteracy.

These Americans know that life is not a ledger board. And that the private sector -- and individuals -- have the resources -- and the responsibility -- to confront issues like hunger and health care, drug abuse and teen pregnancy. A famous adage says that "Luck is the residue of design." Well, America's luck can be the residue of volunteerism's design.

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