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LEHMAN BROTHERS

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MESSAGE:

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THANK YOU. IT IS ALWAYS NICE TO COME BACK TO A PLACE THAT I ONCE CALLED HOME. I AM HONORED TO BE HERE. AND, AS A BONUS, I HAVE HAD A BIG PUZZLE IN MY LIFE RESOLVED. I CAME TO THIS SPLENDID CAMPUS BACK IN 1958 BECAUSE SOMEONE ANONYMOUSLY PAID FOR IT. I NEVER KNEW WHO IT WAS UNTIL A FEW DAYS AGO. I READ THAT IT WAS PROBABLY JOHN HANNAH, OUR FORMER PRESIDENT. I'M GRATEFUL, BUT I MUST ADMIT THAT I AM A LITTLE WORRIED. I WONDER HOW MANY TIMES HE WANTED TO TAKE THE MONEY BACK WHEN HE PEERED OUT HIS WINDOW AND SAW ME LEADING STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND PICKETING HIS OFFICE DURING OUR STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS. BUT I'M SURE THAT IF HE WERE HERE WITH US TODAY, HE WOULD BE AS EXHILARATED AS I AM. HE WAS AHEAD OF HIS TIME. HE OFFERED ME A GREAT OPPORTUNITY, AT A TIME WHEN THOSE DOORS DIDN'T OFTEN OPEN FOR AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN WHO COULDN'T DRIBBLE, TACKLE OR HIT A BASEBALL. AS I LOOK AROUND AT THE WHITE, BLACK AND BROWN FACES AMONG YOU GRADUATES, YOU PAINT AN ATTRACTIVE RAINBOW THAT WASN'T HERE 36 YEARS AGO. IN FACT, WHEN I FIRST GOT HERE AS A FRESHMAN, I REMEMBER AN ENCOUNTER WITH A PUZZLED FOOTBALL PLAYER. WE WERE BOTH BLACK, BUT HE SENSED SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT ME.

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"WHAT DO YOU DO?" HE ASKED.

"I'M A FRESHMEN, I'M A STUDENT," I SAID.

"NO, NO, NO WHAT DO YOU DO??? YOU ARE TOO SMALL TO PLAY FOOTBALL, YOU ARE TOO SHORT TO PLAY BASKETBALL, YOU LOOK TOO SLOW TO RUN TRACK, YOU MUST BE HERE ON A SOCCER SCHOLARSHIP."

BUT HE WAS WRONG. I WAS HERE TO LEARN. THANKS TO JOHN HANNAH AND PEOPLE WHO FOLLOWED IN HIS FOOTSTEPS, WE ARE SURROUNDED TODAY BY A RAINBOW OF GRADUATES WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED FOR THE JOBS OF TOMORROW. YOUR CHALLENGE WILL NOT BE LIKE MINE, WHICH WAS TO CONVINCE PEOPLE I BELONGED. YOUR CHALLENGE WILL BE TO KEEP PACE IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD. WE NEED ONLY TO LOOK ACROSS THE SEAS AT SOUTH AFRICA TO WITNESS GREAT CHALLENGE, COURAGE AND CHANGE. TWO LEADERS, NELSON MANDELA AND FREDERIC DE KLERK, HAVE SET A NATION ON A NEW COURSE. SOUTH AFRICA IS NOW FREE. ITS SYSTEM OF BLATANT RACISM DIED BECAUSE BITTER ENEMIES JOINED FORCES TO SEE THEIR NATION SURVIVE. THE JAILED AND JAILERS WORKED HAND IN HAND TO USHER IN A TRUE DEMOCRACY, WHERE THE MAJORITY WILL RULE. ALL OF US CAN LEARN FROM

THIS: NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE SO DIRE THAT THEY CAN'T BE RESOLVED, IF WE ARE WILLING TO WORK TOGETHER.

I WANT YOU TO WALK AWAY FROM HERE TODAY WITH A RICHNESS OF KNOWLEDGE AND FRIENDS THAT YOU WILL CHERISH FOREVER. SOME OF YOU MAY THINK THAT YOU CROSSED THE BURNING SANDS ALREADY, THAT PASSING THOSE FINAL EXAMS WAS THE TOUGH PART. BUT THE TRUTH IS THE HARD WORK IN YOUR LIFE HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN. I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MOTIVATED BY THE WORDS OF A. PHILIP RANDOLPH, "AT THE BANQUET TABLE OF LIFE, THERE ARE NO RESERVED SEATS." IN OTHER WORDS NO GURANTEES. THIS GREAT UNIVERSITY GAVE YOU TOOLS TO WORK WITH, BUT NOW IT IS UP TO EACH OF YOU TO BECOME THE SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS, TEACHERS AND FINANCIAL EXPERTS THAT LEAD OUR NATION INTO THE NEXT CENTURY.

¶ BUT TO MOVE FORWARD, WE MUST ALSO UNDERSTAND THE PAST. WE MUST BE WILLING TO LOOK AT OUR MISTAKES. AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A NATION, WE MUST VIE NOT TO REPEAT THE ERRORS. AS JUSTICE LEWIS F. POWELL JR. ONCE PUT IT, "HISTORY BALANCES THE FRUSTRATION OF 'HOW FAR WE HAVE TO GO' WITH THE SATISFACTION OF 'HOW FAR WE HAVE COME.' IT TEACHES US TOLERANCE FOR THE HUMAN SHORTCOMINGS AND IMPERFECTIONS WHICH ARE

NOT UNIQUELY OF OUR GENERATION, BUT OF ALL TIME." INDEED, WHAT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT TODAY IS AN HISTORIC EVENT IN OUR PAST. ONE THAT BROUGHT TEARS OF JOY TO SOME, GREAT ANGUISH TO OTHERS. IT GREATLY IMPACTED MY LIFE. AND IT SET IN MOTION THE BIGGEST CHANGES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFRICAN AMERICANS AND WHITES SINCE THE DARK DAYS OF SLAVERY ENDED. IN THE NEXT FEW MINUTES, I WANT YOU TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF EDUCATION, TO HEAR HOW EDUCATION CHANGED THE LIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS OF MY GENERATION, AND TO REALIZE THAT WE, AS A NATION, MUST STILL FIND THE ANSWERS TO SOME PRESSING SOCIAL PROBLEMS. THIS MONTH, MARKS THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LANDMARK SUPREME COURT DECISION, BROWN VS. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA, KANSAS, THAT REQUIRED BLACK AND WHITE CHILDREN TO ATTEND THE SAME PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

¶ ON MAY 17, 1954, THE SUPREME COURT RULED THAT OLIVER BROWN WAS RIGHT WHEN HE SAID IT WAS UNLAWFUL FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO FORCE HIS SEVEN-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER LINDA TO ATTEND A SCHOOL ACROSS TOWN, RATHER THAN ONE CLOSE TO THEIR HOME, JUST BECAUSE SHE WAS BLACK. THE SUPREME COURT AFFIRMED WHAT AFRICAN AMERICANS HAD KNOWN FOR

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DECADES -- IT WAS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND MORALLY WRONG FOR PUBLIC DOLLARS TO SUPPORT TWO SEPARATE SCHOOL SYSTEMS. ONE THAT HAD NEW BOOKS, BETTER FACILITIES AND A STRONG CURRICULUM FOR WHITE STUDENTS, AND ONE WITH HANDED-DOWN BOOKS AND BATTERED CLASSROOMS FOR BLACK CHILDREN. THE SUPREME COURT REAFFIRMED THAT SEGREGATED SCHOOLS DEPRIVE BLACKS OF AN EQUAL EDUCATION. WITH THE STROKE OF A PEN, THE SUPREME COURT HELPED PAVE THE WAY FOR AN END TO THE JIM CROW ERA. WITH MUCH BLOOD AND PAIN, THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS. ROSA PARKS REFUSED TO MOVE TO THE BACK OF A BUS, A CHURCH WAS BOMBED IN BIRMINGHAM, THERE WAS BLOODSHED ON THE PETUS BRIDGE IN SELMA. OVER THE NEXT TWO DECADES, THE FIGHT WAS WON FOR VOTING RIGHTS, PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS, FAIR HOUSING AND JOB DISCRIMINATION LAWS. THE CONCEPT OF "SEPARATE BUT EQUAL" SET OUT IN THE 1896 PLESSY VERSUS FERGUSON DECISION WAS REPUDIATED AND ERASED AS A WAY OF LIFE.

¶ TODAY, AS YOU ENTER A NEW WORLD, I WANT TO TAKE YOU BACK TO AN OLD WORLD. TO MY WORLD AS A CHILD. IT WILL HELP YOU SEE HOW FAR WE HAVE COME AS A NATION AND HOW MUCH FURTHER WE MUST STILL GO TO

MAKE THE NEXT CENTURY A TIME AND PLACE WHERE PEOPLE OF ALL RACES
CAN ACHIEVE BASED ON ABILITY, NOT THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN.

¶ GROWING UP IN LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, A PLACE THAT MY FRIENDS, BILL
AND HILLARY CLINTON HAVE MADE FAMOUS, AND THE WASHINGTON PRESS
CORPS EACH DAY TRIES TO MAKE INFAMOUS, I LEARNED THAT SEPARATE DID
NOT MEAN EQUAL. WHEN I WAS FIVE YEARS OLD, THE SAME AGE AS MY OWN
DAUGHTER MCKENZIE IS NOW, I REMEMBER BEING IN A DOWNTOWN
DEPARTMENT STORE ON A BLISTERING HOT DAY. I NEEDED A DRINK OF WATER,
SO I WENT TO THE NEARBY FOUNTAIN. I WAS STOPPED BY A STORE ATTENDANT,
WHO BLOCKED MY PATH, AND WOULDN'T LET ME DRINK. ANOTHER DAY, I
REMEMBER PLAYING IN A STORE WITH A WHITE CHILD MY AGE, WHEN
SUDDENLY HIS MOTHER SWOOPED DOWN LIKE A PLANE AND WHISKED HIM
AWAY. THAT LITTLE BOY DIDN'T KNOW DISCRIMINATION, BUT HIS PARENTS
DID. HE WAS NOT ALLOWED TO PLAY WITH A BLACK CHILD. ONE SUMMER
NIGHT, MY MOTHER, BROTHER, SISTER AND AUNT WENT OUT AS A FAMILY TO
HEAR A BAND CONCERT AT MACARTHUR PARK. A POLICE OFFICER STOPPED US
AT THE GATE. "THIS IS OFF LIMITS TO COLORED PEOPLE," HE BARKED. WE HAD
BEEN TURNED AWAY AT A PUBLIC PARK. MY HEART SUNK. IT MADE YOU FEEL

LESS THAN SOMEONE ELSE; "YOU ARE NOT EQUAL" WAS THE MESSAGE THAT WAS SENT FROM THIS PETTINESS. THESE INDIGNITIES WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE TODAY. MY CHILD, AND YOUR CHILDREN A FEW YEARS FROM NOW, WON'T BE FORCEFULLY SEPARATED, AND MADE SUSPICIOUS OF EACH OTHER. FOR THAT, WE SHOULD ALL BE THANKFUL.

¶ UNFORTUNATELY, 40 YEARS AFTER OFFICIAL SEGREGATION BEGAN TO UNRAVEL WITH THE BROWN DECISION, AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE STILL FAR FROM EQUAL. THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WAS A GATEWAY FOR THOSE OF US POISED AT THE DOOR, BUT THE BENEFITS WERE NOT EVENLY DISPENSED TO THOSE FURTHER BACK IN LINE. MANY COMMUNITIES ARE RAVAGED BY DRUGS AND VIOLENCE; OUR CHILDREN ARE FALLING BEHIND IN SCHOOL; BLACK MALES ARE MURDERED AT ALARMING RATES OR END UP IN PRISON; PARENTS ARE SO OVERBURDENED WITH SURVIVAL THEY DON'T HAVE TIME TO NURTURE THEIR CHILDREN. WE HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS. BUT THERE SHOULD BE NO DISPUTING THAT SCHOOL DESEGREGATION PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN BLACKS AND WHITES. IT IS THE REASON THAT CAN STAND HERE TODAY. EDUCATION MADE THE DIFFERENCE IN MY LIFE.

¶ I REMEMBER SO CLEARLY THE ELECTRIC BUZZ AROUND THE SCHOOL ON MAY 17, 1954, WHEN THE BROWN DECISION WAS HANDED DOWN. IT WAS LIKE THE WORLD HAD STOPPED, EVERYONE FOCUSED ON IT. I KNEW THAT VERY DAY I WOULD BE GOING TO CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL. IT WAS CLOSE TO MY HOUSE AND I WANTED WHAT THEY OFFERED. AT HORACE MANN, THE BLACK HIGH SCHOOL, WE GOT BOOKS YEARS AFTER THE WHITE KIDS USED THEM. MY MOTHER, LOTHAIRE, HAD GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE AND WAS A SCHOOL TEACHER, AND SHE TAUGHT ME THE VALUE OF EDUCATION. I KNEW THAT CENTRAL COULD BETTER PREPARE ME FOR COLLEGE AND THE WORKPLACE. TWO YEARS LATER, THE SCHOOL BOARD AGREED TO GRADUAL DESEGREGATION. I WAS ONE OF NINE BLACK STUDENTS, KNOWN NOW AS THE LITTLE ROCK NINE, WHO ENROLLED AT CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL. OUR STRUGGLE WAS REWARDED LATER IN LIFE, AND IT HELPED PAVE THE WAY FOR SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN THE WAY BLACKS WERE TREATED IN THIS COUNTRY. TODAY, SUCH VALOR MAY NOT EVEN BE NOTICED IN A CLIMATE WHERE TAKING RISKS IS TOO OFTEN DISCOURAGED. BUT THAT IS HOW A NATION BOLDLY MOVES FORWARD. EVERY UNDERDOG, FACING A TOUGH CHALLENGE, SHOULD REMEMBER THE WORDS OF W. E. B. DU BOIS, "THERE IS IN

THIS WORLD NO SUCH FORCE AS THE FORCE OF A MAN DETERMINED TO RISE.

THE HUMAN SOUL CANNOT BE PERMANENTLY CHAINED."

WHEN AT 15, I DECIDED TO GO TO CENTRAL, THERE WAS TENSION ON ALL SIDES.

EVEN A BLACK NEIGHBOR THOUGHT IT WAS WRONG. SHE FEARED THAT BY

CHALLENGING WHITES, MAKING THEM TAKE US INTO THEIR SCHOOLS, IT

WOULD CREATE A SPIRALING BACKLASH THAT WOULD MAKE LIFE MORE

DIFFICULT -- NOT BETTER -- FOR A PEOPLE STILL TRYING TO CHUCK ASIDE THE

REMAINING SHACKLES OF SLAVERY. THANK GOD SHE WAS WRONG. THERE WAS

A BACKLASH, BUT IT WAS AGAINST THE FORCES THAT TRIED TO BLOCK US

FROM AN EDUCATION THAT WAS RIGHTFULLY OURS.

¶ TWICE, WE WERE TURNED AWAY BY MOBS. BUT PRESIDENT EISENHOWER

HEARD OUR PLEAS FOR HELP. HE SENT IN THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION TO

ESCORT US TO CLASS. ON SEPTEMBER 25, 1957, THE NINE OF US GATHERED AT

THE HOME OF CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS L.C. AND DAISY BATES AND WERE

LOADED INTO A STATION WAGON. JEEPS FILLED WITH SOLDIERS SURROUNDED

US. REMEMBER TURNING TO ONE OF MY FRIENDS, TERRANCE ROBERTS, AND

SAYING, "I GUESS WE ARE GOING TO GET INTO SCHOOL TODAY."

¶ BUT WALKING THROUGH THOSE DOORS, WHERE NO BLACK STUDENTS HAD EVER PASSED BEFORE, WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING. ONCE THE SOLDIERS LEFT, WE GOT BOMB THREATS AND LETTERS THREATENING TO LYNCH US. ONE STUDENT, MINNIE JEAN BROWN, WAS EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL. A BOY TAUTED HER AND SHE POURED A BOWL OF SOUP ON HIM, WHEN SHE RETALIATED--SHE WAS KICKED OUT. THIS IS WHAT WE ENDURED FOR OUR EDUCATION. IF MORE YOUTHS TODAY UNDERSTOOD WHAT WE FACED, MAYBE TODAY'S OPPORTUNITIES WOULD BE BETTER APPRECIATED. FOR A WHOLE SCHOOL YEAR, I TOOK ABUSE BECAUSE I WANTED A FUTURE, AND WOULD NOT BE DISTRACTED FROM MY GOALS. THEY WANTED ERNEST GREEN TO FAIL. I WOULDN'T LET IT HAPPEN. MY MOTHER WOULDN'T LET IT HAPPEN. AND OUR COMMUNITY STOOD BY US. OUR CHURCHES AND YOUTH GROUPS, LIKE THE BOY SCOUTS, GAVE US A SUPPORT NETWORK THAT CONVINCED US WE WERE AS GOOD AS ANYONE ELSE. IT SHIELDED US FROM THE VOICES OF RACIAL HATRED. I WAS THE FIRST BLACK STUDENT TO GRADUATE FROM CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL. WHEN I WALKED UP AND GOT MY DIPLOMA THAT SPRING, IT SYMBOLIZED SO MANY BARRIERS BEING TORN DOWN, IT MEANT THAT SO MANY PEOPLE WHO HAD LEFT THIS EARTH SCORNEED DID SO FOR A CAUSE

WORTH FIGHTING. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ATTENDED MY GRADUATION CEREMONY. AND EVEN TODAY, AS WE ARE LIFTED BY THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM IN SOUTH AFRICA, HIS WORDS RING TRUE. "INJUSTICE ANYWHERE," DR. KING SAID, "IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE."

¶ WHY WAS DESEGREGATION SO IMPORTANT? WHAT DIFFERENCE DID IT MAKE WHERE MY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA CAME FROM? PUTTING ASIDE FOR A MOMENT THE SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE, ALLOWING BLACKS TO LEARN SIDE BY SIDE WITH WHITES IS ESSENTIAL FOR A DIVERSE WORKPLACE. HOW COULD WE POSSIBLY EXPECT SOMEONE TO ATTENDED A SEGREGATED SCHOOL FOR 12 YEARS, THEN SUDDENLY ADJUST TO AN INTEGRATED WORKPLACE. I LEARNED ALOT ABOUT LIFE AT CENTRAL. I LEARNED THAT SOME KIDS WERE GOOD AND SOME WERE BAD. I LEARNED THAT SOME WERE SMART. BUT OTHERS WEREN'T SO BRIGHT. I LEARNED THAT THEY WERE JUST LIKE ME AND MY FRIENDS, AND THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE INTIMIDATED ABOUT. SOME BLACK CHILDREN LEARNED ABOUT COLLEGE AND HOW TO GET A GOOD JOB. THIS KIND OF EXPERIENCE IS OFTEN LOST IN THE HOOPLA OVER SCHOOL DESEGREGATION, BUT IT'S JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE CLASSROOM.

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I WAS INSPIRED BY DR. PIPES, A LITTLE ROCK COLLEGE TEACHER, WHO BECAME ONE OF THE FIRST BLACK FACULTY MEMBERS HERE AT MICHIGAN STATE. THIS IS A SCHOOL THAT REMINDS ME OF MYSELF, A FIGHTING UNDERDOG. IT WAS THE FIRST LAND GRANT COLLEGE IN THE NATION, AN AGRICULTURE SCHOOL THAT WAS LOOKED DOWN UPON BY THE BIG STATE UNIVERSITY IN THE OTHER PARTS OF THE STATE. THIS SCHOOL GIVES PEOPLE LIKE ME AND YOU A CHANCE. THE WORKING CLASS THAT GIVES THIS COUNTRY ITS FIBER. I'M PROUD OF MY CLASSMATES WHO HAVE MADE GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS. PETER MCPHERSON, OUR PRESIDENT WHO IS GUIDING THIS UNIVERSITY; AMBASSADOR JIM BLANCHARD WHO WAS GOVERNOR OF THIS STATE; AND MY SPECIAL FRIEND, JOEL FERGUSON (CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD), WHO IS NOW RUNNING FOR THE US SENATE.

I LIKED MSU SO MUCH THAT I STAYED TO GET A MASTER'S DEGREE. I BECAME PART OF THE NEW BREED OF PROFESSIONAL BLACKS WHO LATER TASTED ECONOMIC POWER. AND WE TURNED IT INTO POLITICAL CLOUT. THERE ARE NOW OVER 8000 BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS IN THE UNITED STATES, PEOPLE WHO FILL CITY HALLS, STATE HOUSES AND COURTROOMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITH A PRESENCE THAT FEW THOUGHT POSSIBLE 40 YEARS AGO

WHEN BLACKS WERE STILL DISCOURAGED FROM VOTING. NOW, IN MANY SOUTHERN STATES, AFRICAN AMERICANS HOLD THE BALANCE OF POLITICAL POWER -- WHEN THEY COME OUT TO VOTE. WHAT A LESSON WE ARE LEARNING FROM SOUTH AFRICA. CAN ANYONE HERE, EVER HAVE AN EXCUSE NOT TO VOTE, NOT TO TAKE PART IN OUR DEMOCRACY, AFTER WATCHING PEOPLE STAND IN LINES FIVE AND SIX MILES LONG TO CAST BALLOTS? NELSON MANDELA SPENT 27 YEARS IN PRISON AND NOW HE A PRESIDENT. THEIR SPIRIT SHOULD INSPIRE YOU TO REGISTER AND VOTE. IF YOU WANT CHANGE IN THIS COUNTRY, GET IT WITH YOUR VOTES.

¶ YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK ANY FURTHER THAN THE WHITE HOUSE TO SEE THE IMPACT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA. NOT ONLY BLACKS BENEFITED FROM THE NEW OPENNESS. FOR DECADES, SOUTHERN WHITES WERE SHUNNED. BUT AS BLACKS SLOWLY BECAME ACCEPTED, SO TO DID THEIR SOUTHERN BRETHREN. DOORS WERE OPENED TO OUR BEST COLLEGES. THAT CHANGE IN ATTITUDE ALLOWED A WORKING CLASS MAN FROM HOPE, ARKANSAS TO BE EDUCATED AT GEORGETOWN, OXFORD AND YALE. AND WHEN HE WENT BACK HOME TO BE A POLITICAL LEADER, BILL CLINTON DID NOT FORGET HIS OWN ROOTS. AS A CHILD HE PLAYED WITH BLACK CHILDREN AT HIS GRANDFATHER'S

STORE, AND WHEN HE WAS GOVERNOR HE COURTED BLACK VOTES. HE BUILT A RAINBOW COALITION OF SUPPORT THAT ALLOWED HIM TO PRACTICE A MODERATE BRAND OF POLITICS THAT HAS CARRIED HIM TO WASHINGTON. ALL ACROSS THE SOUTH, MODERATE POLITICIANS, PEOPLE LIKE AL GORE AND JOHN BREAUX, EMERGED BECAUSE OUR VOTES ALLOWED THEM TO BREAK WITH THE PAST. THE BEST EXAMPLE OF OUR POLITICAL MIGHT CAME WITH THE SENATE'S REJECTION OF JUDGE ROBERT BORK TO THE SUPREME COURT. SOUTHERN DEMOCRATS WERE TOLD POINT BLANK THAT IF THEY VOTED FOR MR. BORK THEY COULD NO LONGER COUNT ON OUR VOTES. THAT MANEUVER TURNED AWAY A MAN WHO WANTED TO CARRY THIS NATION BACK TO ITS UGLY PAST, RATHER THAN MOVE IT FORWARD TO A BRIGHT NEW DAY.

AND IN THIS WHITE HOUSE WE ARE INDEED SEEING A BRIGHT NEW DAY FOR THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION, RATHER THAN EXCLUSION. FOR THOSE WHO CARE ABOUT FEEDING THE HUNGRY, HOUSING THE HOMELESS AND BRINGING SIMPLE PLEASURES TO THE POOR. THIS WHITE HOUSE CARES ABOUT CREATING JOBS FOR WORKING PEOPLE. THEY ARE TRYING TO MAKE GOVERNMENT WORK FOR YOU AND ME, AND NOT BE A TOOL OF THE RICH. IF MARTIN LUTHER KING AND BOBBY KENNEDY HAD NOT BEEN

CUT DOWN IN THEIR PRIME, FIGHTING FOR CHANGE, THESE ARE THE MISSIONS THAT THEY WOULD WANT GOVERNMENT TO EMBARK ON. THEIR BLOOD WAS NOT SPILLED IN VAIN. THEIR STRUGGLE HELPED MANKIND UNDERSTAND THAT DISCRIMINATION WAS WRONG, THAT THE POOREST BLACK BABY BORN TO AN UNWED MOTHER IN DETROIT DESERVED THE SAME CHANCES TO SUCCEED AS THE WHITE BABY BORN WITH A SILVER SPOON IN BLOOMFIELD HILLS.

LOOK AROUND US. MANY OF YOUR PARENTS AND FRIENDS IN THE AUDIENCE GRABBED A PIECE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM. WE HAVE MORTGAGES, CAR PAYMENTS, SCHOOL TUITIONS, ETC. WE ARE EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS. BUT A WAYWARD TEENAGER BRANDISHING A GUN ON A STREET CORNER IS POISED TO TAKE IT AWAY. SOMETHING IS STILL VERY WRONG. OUR PROGRESS HAS NOT FILTERED DOWN. IT IS A PROBLEM FOR EVERY DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. YOUR CHALLENGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY WILL BE TO FIND NEW WAYS TO BOOST THE UNDERCLASS. THEY MUST BE SEEN AS A GREAT ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY. IF OUR SOCIETY IGNORES THEM, RATHER THAN NOURISHING THEM, WE WILL SLIP TO A SECOND RATE NATION. AS LONG AS THAT TEENAGER ON THE STREET CORNER IS WILLING TO USE VIOLENCE TO GET HIS PIECE OF THE DREAM, IT THREATENS ALL OF US. PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT SET THE STANDARD FOR HOW

TO JUDGE PROGRESS. "THE TEST OF OUR PROGRESS," THE PRESIDENT SAID, "IS NOT WHETHER WE ADD MORE TO THE ABUNDANCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE MUCH; IT IS WHETHER WE PROVIDE ENOUGH FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TOO LITTLE."

LET US REFLECT FOR A MOMENT ON SOME COLD NUMBERS THAT TELL US HOW MUCH WE HAVE FAILED. UNEMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR IS ABOUT 14 PERCENT TODAY, MORE THAN DOUBLE THE NATIONAL RATE. IN URBAN AREAS, WHERE OUR ONCE GREAT CITIES ARE DECAYING, MINORITY UNEMPLOYMENT REACHES AS HIGH AS 60 PERCENT. AIDS IS A TERRIBLE CRISIS THAT CAN AFFLICT ANYONE, BUT MOSTLY IT KILLS MINORITIES. HISPANICS AND BLACKS COMPRISE NEARLY HALF OF ALL THE REPORTED AIDS CASES. FORTY-TWO PERCENT OF THE BLACK HOUSEHOLDS IN THIS COUNTRY EARN AN ANNUAL INCOME OF LESS THAN \$15,000. TESTS SHOW THAT 43 PERCENT OF BLACK 13-YEAR-OLDS ARE ACHIEVING BELOW THEIR GRADE LEVELS. AND WHILE AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE 12 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S POPULATION, THEY ARE 47 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION IN STATE AND FEDERAL PRISONS.

¶ WHERE DID WE GO WRONG? WHY WEREN'T MORE PEOPLE HELPED BY THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT? WE WERE ALL NAIVE TO THINK THAT BY SIMPLY OPENING UP OPPORTUNITIES, UTOPIA WAS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER FOR

EVERYONE. THE BLAME CAN BE SPREAD TO ALL OF US, INDIVIDUALS AND GOVERNMENT ALIKE. WHEN YOU GO HOME TONIGHT AND WATCH THE 11 O'CLOCK NEWS, YOU SEE STORIES ABOUT TEEN VIOLENCE. WHAT YOU WON'T SEE ARE POSITIVE STORIES. SO OUR YOUNGSTERS ARE GLORIFIED FOR VIOLENCE, BUT IGNORED WHEN THEY BAND TOGETHER TO CLEAN UP A PARK OR KEEP DRUGS OFF THEIR BLOCK. THAT HAS TO CHANGE IF WE ARE EVER GOING TO GET KIDS TO REACH OUT FOR THE POSITIVE, RATHER THAN THE NEGATIVE. AND WHEN WE PUT TOGETHER THE ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS OF THE 60S AND 70S, WE FORGOT TO LET PEOPLE KNOW THAT THEY STILL HAD RESPONSIBILITIES. GOVERNMENT WAS WILLING TO TRAIN THEM FOR JOBS, ASSIST IN PROVIDING DAYCARE, AND DELIVER FOOD STAMPS SO THEY DID NOT GO HUNGRY. BUT WE MISSED THE BOAT BY NOT COUNSELING THAT BY ACCEPTING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE THEY WERE SIGNING A PACT TO BETTER THEIR OWN LIVES, THAT THEY HAD TO CLEAN THEIR COMMUNITIES, THAT UNWED MOTHERS HAD TO STOP HAVING BABIES AND THAT FATHERS HAD TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BABIES THEY PRODUCE. "IF YOU ARE ABLE TO MAKE A BABY, YOU MUST ALSO BE READY TO SUPPORT THAT CHILD." PARENTING WILL BE THE TOUGHEST AND MOST IMPORTANT JOB OF YOUR

LIFETIME. YOU MUST PASS ON YOUR VALUES TO LEFT THE NEXT GENERATION.

IT'S A VEXING TASK THAT ALL OF SOCIETY STRUGGLES WITH. BUT YOU CAN'T

NEVER GIVE UP ON YOUR KIDS. TURN TO INSTITUTIONS AROUND YOU FOR HELP,

YOUR CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS, LITTLE LEAGUE AND GIRL SCOUTS. THESE

SUPPORT GROUPS HELPED GENERATIONS BEFORE YOU.

¶ ONE OF OUR GREATEST FAILURES WAS NOT FIGHTING BACK WHEN

GOVERNMENT SLASHED AWAY AT SOCIAL PROGRAMS. WE DID NOT COME UP

WITH A RATIONALE TO PRESERVE INVESTING IN PEOPLE AT A TIME WHEN

DEFICITS WERE MOUNTING. IF ONLY WE KNEW THEN, WHAT WE KNOW NOW.

THAT OUR SCHOOLS WOULD BECOME ARMED CAMPS, THAT OUR INNER CITIES

WOULD BE WAR-TORN WASTELANDS, THAT AN UNDER-CLASS OF DISCOURAGED

AND DISILLUSIONED WOULD AIMLESSLY SEARCH FOR THEIR PIECE OF THE PIE

AND TURN TO DRUGS OR PICK UP A GUN TO GET IT.

¶ WE NEED TO TURN THINGS AROUND. WE NEED FOR FAMILIES TO BE FAMILIES

AGAIN. BASIC ECONOMICS SAYS THAT A FAMILY HEADED BY A MOTHER AND

FATHER CAN ACCOMPLISH MORE TOGETHER THAN EITHER COULD ON THEIR

OWN. THE FUTURE FOR YOUR GENERATION CAN BE BRIGHTER THAN ANY

BEFORE YOU. BUT YOU MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR OPPORTUNITIES.

YOU MUST UTILIZE THE AMERICAN FRANCHISE, AND TEACH OTHERS TO DO THE SAME. IMMIGRANTS COME TO THIS COUNTRY ACROSS OCEANS AND BORDERS BECAUSE THEY SEE A LAND OF GREATER PROMISE AND OPPORTUNITY. WE MUST MAKE ALL AMERICANS FEEL STRONG ABOUT THEIR ABILITIES TO SUCCEED. EVERYONE MUST SEE THIS COUNTRY AS A PLACE WHERE THEY CAN FLOURISH, AND NOT LANGUISH ON STREET CORNERS, IN BARS AND CRACK HOUSES. LOOK AT THE CHANGING WORLD AROUND US. WE HAVE PUT THE SHADOW OF VIETNAM BEHIND US, AND SOON WILL BE SELLING OUR PRODUCTS THERE. THE COLD WORLD IS OVER. OUR WORLD HAS TRIBAL AND ETHNIC CONFLICTS TO RESOLVE, AS THE SLAUGHTERS IN RWANDA AND BOSNIA REMIND US. RESOLVING THESE DISPUTES ARE CHALLENGES, BUT NONE ARE AS THREATENING TO OUR WELL BEING AS THE PERIOD WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH. AND THINK ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA. JUST AS AMERICA TOSSED ASIDE JIM CROW, WE CAN FINALLY SAY APARTHEID IS DEAD. THOSE WORDS FEEL SO GOOD. OUR CHILDREN WON'T GROW UP ASKING WHY THE MINORITY RULED OVER THE MAJORITY, ONLY BECAUSE OF THEIR SKIN COLOR. WE ARE TRULY IN A NEW ERA. ALL THE BRAIN POWER AND TECHNOLOGY THAT WAS TIED UP MAKING WEAPONS, CAN BE UNLEASHED TO HELP OUR SOCIETY INSTEAD OF

DESTROYING IT. YET YOUR CHALLENGE IS TO APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES SO THAT EVERYONE BENEFITS, NOT JUST THE FEW. YOU WILL LEAVE HERE TODAY WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHAPE A BETTER WORLD, DON'T SQUANDER OR WASTE THAT OPPORTUNITY. YOUR MINDS WILL CARRY THIS GREAT NATION INTO THE FUTURE. SOME OF YOU HAVE ALREADY EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS. YOU ARE THE FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION OF COLLEGE GRADUATES IN YOUR FAMILIES. BUT DON'T BE CONTENT. AS A 1962 UNDERGRADUATE, IT HAS MEANT SO MUCH TO ME TO BE INVITED BACK TO SHARE IN YOUR CELEBRATION TODAY. I WANT IT TO LAUNCH YOU INTO A FULFILLING LIFE, JUST AS IT DID FOR ME. YOU MUST PICK UP THE TORCH AND BE OUR GUIDING LIGHT THROUGH THE FUTURE AND NOT LET ANYTHING PUSH US BACK TO THE PAST. YOU MUST TEACH YOUR CHILDREN THAT EDUCATION IS THE GIFT THAT PEOPLE ONCE FOUGHT AND DIED FOR.

¶ MY OWN FATHER DIED WHEN I WAS 11-YEARS-OLD; AND MY MOTHER DIED BEFORE I HAD ACHIEVED MUCH SUCCESS IN MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER. BUT WHAT THEY LEFT ME WAS THE COURAGE AND VISION TO STRIDE FORWARD, TO DO WHAT WAS RIGHT, NOT WHAT WAS CONVENIENT. THEY GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO CHALLENGE OUR SOCIETY TO DO BETTER, NOT BE EASILY

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APPEASED. THEY TAUGHT ME TO HOLD MY HEAD HIGH AS AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN, THAT I WAS AS SMART AND AS DILIGENT AS ANYBODY ELSE. I WANT ALL OF YOU TO FEEL PRIDE, AND I WILL LEAVE YOU WITH SOME THOUGHTS FROM DR. KING. "THE ULTIMATE MEASURE OF A MAN IS NOT WHERE HE STANDS IN MOMENTS OF COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE, BUT WHERE HE STANDS AT TIMES OF CHALLENGE AND CONTROVERSY." I HOPE ALL OF YOU WILL STAND TALL. THANK YOU.