

Now in conclusion, let me just say to Doug, I'm glad to be back at his side, proud to have seen a little bit of the activities here this evening, and only sorry that I didn't get a chance to tee it up and show the new Mr. Smooth form. I'm back. [Laughter] They can criticize me for hitting a golf ball, but I'm not going to stop, believe me. I love it.

So, good luck to each and every one of you participants.

*Note: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. at the Doug Sanders Celebrity Dinner, a benefit for the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) at the Greenspoint Club. In his remarks, he referred to William H. Gray, UNCF president; Sandy McCormick, co-chair of the UNCF campaign in Houston; Warren Moon, quarterback for the Houston Oilers; golfers Doug Sanders, Lee Trevino, and Arnold Palmer; Mr. Sanders' wife, Scotty, and Mr. Palmer's wife, Winnie.*

## Remarks at the Southern Methodist University Commencement Ceremony in Dallas, Texas

May 16, 1992

Thank you, Dr. Pye, for the introduction, for the invitation, and I'm just delighted to be here. Let me also thank Reverend Finnin for the invocation. And of course, I was charmed as everybody around here is by the wonderful music of the S.M.U. Symphony Orchestra. I just heard the anthem, but I'm told they're good on everything. And may I salute Ray Hunt, your distinguished chairman. You know, when things were tough for S.M.U. a few years back, this great Mustang led your wonderful university back, working with Dr. Pye and so many others, led it back to its undisputed place of integrity and excellence. And we all owe him a debt of gratitude.

It's good to be back in Texas. I'm honored by this degree, even if I haven't put in all those long hours hitting the books at "Charlie's." [Laughter] I was supposed to say the library, but I learned a little about the senior class.

Let me tell you about a graduation at Yale University. They invited the bishop. And the bishop spoke, and he went, "Y is for youth," 25 minutes. "A is for altruism"; that one lasted about 32 minutes. "L, loyalty," another 45 minutes; "E" was excellence, 25 minutes. By the time the guy finished there was a handful of students left; one was in prayer. And the bishop went over to him, and he said, "Thank you, son. I noticed you, a faithful lad, are praying to God." He said, "Yes, I am thanking God I did not go to

Southern Methodist University." [Laughter]

I will try to accommodate you. I know following this there's presentation of degrees. And I also want to single out Drs. Kay and Pelikan for their work and just am proud to be on the platform with them.

I know this is an exciting day for you and your parents, the close of one important chapter in your lives and the beginning—a way to look at it is the beginning of many, many more. Right after my own commencement, Barbara and I lit out for Odessa in our 1947 Studebaker to try our hands out there in the oil fields of west Texas. I had many reasons for coming west, but the advice from one family friend tipped the balance. "What you need to do is head out to Texas," he told me. "That's the place for ambitious young people these days."

Now, this was a few years, just a handful of years after World War II, what seems like a lifetime ago. My friend's advice was some of the best that I've ever had. I believe what he said then still holds true, not only for Texas but for all of America. Members of your graduation class hail from as far away, I'm told, as Czechoslovakia, as near as University Park, and then all the points in between. But for each of you, America is the place where ambition, energy, enthusiasm, and hard work are still rewarded;

where young people can still feel confidence in their dreams. And I'm a little tired of the pessimism in this country.

So many of us in that class of, way back then, 1948 had been through the war; we'd lost friends and loved ones. But even so, the opportunities America offered on that commencement day seemed limitless. I think many of you wonder whether that holds true for you. This morning I want to make the case that today's America is still a rising Nation, that the country you're inheriting offers those same limitless opportunities that it held for Barbara and for me and for your parents and for your grandparents.

We all are working to preserve for ourselves and the generations to come three precious legacies: Rewarding jobs for all who seek them, strong families, and a world at peace. Tomorrow, up at Notre Dame, I will discuss the things we can do to strengthen our families, the American family. Then next week, at Annapolis at the Naval Academy, I'm going to explore the great issues of war and peace. I might say parenthetically, I think we can all take some pride in the fact that the young kids in the country today go to bed at night without that awful fear of nuclear weapons that some of us had. That is progress. That's something dramatic, and that's something important.

But now let me just focus on the first of those legacies, the economic future. I'm making the case that America's best days lie before us, and I realize that I might not be taking the fashionable view. Much of the conventional wisdom these days portrays America in decline, and its energy dissipated, its possibilities exhausted, a country overrun by economic predators abroad and crippled by the insurmountable problems at home.

These declinists, as they are called, will hate to hear it, but they're saying nothing new. You flip through those history books here in the library, and you'll hear the gloomy predictions sounding again and again. As our western frontier filled up in the late 19th century, even that great American booster Walt Whitman worried that soon his country might, here's the quote, "prove the most tremendous failure in his-

tory." A few years later the American Century dawned. In the 1930's, the declinists told us the Great Depression had made capitalism outmoded. Our victory in World War II put an end to that talk. In the 1950's, the Soviets launched the first satellite and the pessimists said America had lost the space race, 12 years before Neil Armstrong, an American, walked on the moon. Still more recently, while many of you were still in grade school, some of our national leaders spoke of an era of limits and malaise, right before Americans began the longest peacetime economic expansion in the history of our country.

So the pessimists were wrong. Pessimists always are when they talk about America. The optimists have the safer bet, but there's a difference between optimism and smug self-satisfaction. Americans should never be satisfied with the way things are. "I'm an idealist," said Woodrow Wilson. "That's how I know I'm an American." We still dream big dreams and hold the highest hopes. Our restlessness, our refusal to settle for anything less, is what propels us to make those dreams real.

There's something particularly ironic about the pessimism we're seeing today, for it comes at a moment of triumph that few countries in history have been privileged to enjoy. Over the past year we have seen the collapse of a seemingly implacable adversary, an empire deeply hostile to all that Americans cherish. We've seen emerge from that totalitarian darkness a host of new nations, each struggling with a free and democratic future, each looking to us, each turning to America for leadership.

In light of this, pessimism isn't just ungracious; it's also inaccurate. The fact is America is more than the world's sole military superpower, though it is that. It's more than the world's political leader, though it is that, too. It is also the greatest economic power the world has ever seen, a country uniquely able to provide each of you unparalleled opportunity. It is certain to remain so if we refuse to settle for anything less.

First, we must see our own situation clearly. That means debunking a few myths, for myths harm our ability to distinguish our real problems from false ones. Perhaps you've heard that the American worker is

unproductive. In slow economic times people look for scapegoats. You've heard the American worker is unproductive. Well, this is a myth. The American worker is the most productive in the industrial world, 30 percent more productive than his Japanese counterpart. That's why, with one-twentieth of the world's population, we produce one-fourth of the world's goods and services.

Maybe you've heard that the American worker is unskilled. This audience here, about to enter the work force, puts the lie to that claim. In fact, more than one out of every four American workers has a college degree; another 20 percent have 1 to 3 years of college education. In Japan, only one-third of the population goes on to higher education.

Maybe you've heard that our standard of living, the average American's ability to buy goods and services, has fallen behind. Again, not true. Measured in purchasing power, our standard of living is far above other industrialized nations.

Here's another myth, that America has fallen behind in science and technology and innovation. Maybe the pessimists should come right here to the campus, come to S.M.U., talk to the grad students who will be working on the superconducting super collider next fall. Or they could ask those companies from Switzerland, Germany, Japan, Korea, and the list goes on, who open research labs in the U.S. simply to be close to the American scene.

"If not science," say the pessimists, "then how about industry?" You might have heard that American industry is on the decline, and they're wrong again. Manufacturing has grown faster than the rest of our economy. In fact, in the last decade, American manufacturing grew faster than the rest of the world combined. From one industry to another, the United States is more progressive and more efficient than its major trading partners in mining, oil and gas drilling, utilities, transportation, communications, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, construction, scientific instruments, and paper and glass products, all kinds of different products, textiles, you name it. The list, too, goes on, but I don't want to overdo it.

I don't recite these statistics so we can all pat ourselves on the back. I just want

to make a point: America is a strong nation, getting stronger, and we can learn from our success. But those pessimists ignore the lessons of America's leadership. Instead, they push protection, and they push isolation, a strategy based on the misguided fear that America can't rise to the challenges of a global economy. The danger is that for all our undeniable strengths, fear of the future could prove to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If America turned inward and insulated itself in a cocoon of defeatism, the result would be stagnation, fewer jobs with a lower pay, and a diminished standard of living for all.

Our astounding economic success is increasingly dependent on a basic fact: If we are to be prosperous at home, we must lead economically abroad. And in a word, that means trade. America is the world's leading exporter, \$422 billion worth last year alone. And over the past 5 years, our merchandise exports have grown almost 90 percent, supporting more than 7 million jobs.

The defeatists, well, they pretend that trade is zero-sum game, where one partner's gain must be offset by another's loss. But once again they're wrong, demonstrably wrong, and I refuse to squander the gains of the last generation and the hopes of coming generations in this crabbed misreading of America's place in the world. For 3 years our administration has pursued a policy of open and free trade because it does create jobs and opportunity for Americans. Right now, with the support of the people of Texas, we are on the verge of concluding an historic North American free trade agreement which will create a \$6 trillion free trade area from the Yukon to the Yucatan.

Is our policy optimistic? Well yes, I plead guilty to being an optimist about this country's ability to compete. And do not misunderstand; we've got difficulties ahead. We must now deal with a few alarming trends that endanger our world leadership and threaten your future.

I have challenged the Congress to join me in a reform agenda based on the same first principles that underlie our prosperity. Our economic success wasn't hatched in some committee room on Capitol Hill or

around a conference table in the White House. It was determined on the shop floor, in the board room, in the research lab, where free men and women weighed the options, took the risks, and made their own decisions. America is the most prosperous Nation in history because it also is the freest. That same commitment to limited Government, to personal freedom, and to personal responsibility must shape the reforms that we urgently need to undertake.

A radical transformation of our education system, for example, is long overdue. And that means we must allow communities the freedom to create their own break-the-mold schools, giving maximum flexibility to teachers and principals. The G.I. bill says: Here's some money; go to the college of your choice. And now I believe the time has come for parents to have the freedom to choose their children's schools at all levels, public, private, or religious.

In the same way, my plan to reform our health care system makes health care more affordable and accessible while preserving the all-important benefit of consumer choice.

I have proposed comprehensive steps to restore sanity to our legal system. The explosion in litigation threatens our economic well-being and, worse, weakens the ethic of personal responsibility that lies at the heart of our national character. America would be a better country if we sued each other less and reached out to help each other more.

And yes, for those of us in Washington, it is high time to get our own house in order. The Federal Government must start living within its means. And to discipline both the executive branch and the Congress, I have long favored a balanced budget amendment. We will get it, and we need it now. And it's a good thing for our country.

Finally, Y-A-L-E, S-M-U—[laughter]—finally, as our country moves forward into the next century, we must resolve that no one is left behind. The riots in L.A. reminded us that we have much more work to do in our own neighborhoods. The American dream takes root in families whole and caring, in neighborhoods safe and secure, and in schools unsullied by drugs and violence. Every American deserves the oppor-

tunity to pursue this dream, unhindered by the ugliness of racism or anti-Semitism or the benign neglect of a Government bureaucracy. We are past the time for casting blame or making excuses for despair in our inner cities. But we've got to ask ourselves this: Are the old ways, the old assumptions still good enough? I believe the time has come to try the untried, to build a new approach on the principles of dignity and personal initiative and opportunity.

Last week I presented to congressional leaders, in a very harmonious session at the White House, a six-point plan for a new America:

First, our "Weed and Seed" anticrime initiative. Weed out the criminals and then seed the neighborhoods with hope;

Second, our HOPE initiative to turn public housing into private homes. Homeownership, I think, is the key when it comes to dignity and stronger families;

Third, enterprise zones. Change the tax system so that it will serve as a magnet to bring jobs and investment to the inner city, jobs with dignity;

Then fourth, education reform, touched on that, but offer every child the chance at a world-class education;

Fifth, welfare reform, to replace the handout with the hand up;

And sixth, expanded job training for the young people of our cities.

When I visited L.A., and a very moving trip it was for me, I came away with a deepened sense of hope for America and her people. We all saw those horrifying acts of violence. But let me tell you another story from L.A. In the heat and chaos of the riots, a pastor named Bennie Newton saw a man being beaten to the ground. And despite the threats and the blows, Reverend Newton walked into the fray and draped his body over the bloody man until the beating stopped. "My heart was crying," said the pastor. He saved the man's life.

America is a nation of Bennie Newtons. You'll find him in every city, in every town, in every union hall, boy's club, Scout troop. You'll find a lot right here at S.M.U., with your proud tradition of serving others. Few of us, of course, are ever called to take the risks that Reverend Newton did. But every day we face the question posed in the New

Testament: "If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"

On countless small occasions, each of us is called to open our hearts; each of us is called to lead, to take responsibility, to show the power of faith in action. I have spoken today of our economic future, about free enterprise, personal liberty. But the freedoms we cherish mean nothing unless they're infused with the old virtues, the time-honored values: honor, honesty, thrift, faith, self-discipline, service to others.

I do not pretend to know the shape of the next century. The genius of a free people defies prediction. Certainly Barbara and I, when we loaded up that Studebaker for the trip to Odessa so long ago, could never have imagined the technological marvels that our grandchildren now take for granted, fax machines and VCR's, for example, not to mention the most amazing invention

of 1992, the supermarket scanner. [*Laughter*] But I do know this: the next century will be your century. If you believe in freedom and if you hold fast to your values and if you remain faithful to our role in the world, it is sure to be yet another American century.

Thank you again. May God bless the graduating class at S.M.U., and the United States of America. Thank you very, very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. at Moody Coliseum. In his remarks, he referred to A. Kenneth Pye, president, William M. Finnin, chaplain, and Ray Hunt, chairman of the board of trustees, Southern Methodist University; and honorary degree recipients Herma Hill Kay, dean of the Boalton School of Law, University of California, Berkeley, and Jarsoav Pelikan, Sterling professor of history and religious studies, Yale University.*

## Remarks at the University of Notre Dame Commencement Ceremony in South Bend, Indiana

May 17, 1992

Thank you, Father Malloy. It is really wonderful to be back here at Notre Dame. Whenever I visit the campus or meet a group of Notre Dame alumni, I feel this sense of family, and at Notre Dame that truly means more than just words. I think it's at the very core of what this institution is all about. And with this honorary degree that I am so very proud to have, I am proud to become a Domer. Thank you for the honor. Thank you for the privilege.

I want to salute all of the honorary degree recipients. A pleasure to be among such distinguished educators and public servants. I want to single out again Father Malloy, whose graciousness means a lot to me. A special greeting to the man we all respect so much, Chile's President Aylwin, who has done so much for democracy not just in Chile but in our whole hemisphere. We're grateful to you, sir. And another old friend I'm proud to share this dais with. He

doesn't vote with me much. I don't vote with him much. But we're good friends and have been for a long time, and I respect him, Pat Moynihan. Pat, glad to be with you. May I pay my respects to the outstanding faculty of Notre Dame. They put up with a lot and have done a great job, I'll tell you. To our distinguished provost, don't worry, sir, there's a provost opening in a junior college just outside of Nome, Alaska. And I'm sure you'll qualify. [*Laughter*] But thank you for your warm introduction to me, thank you.

Now to the graduates. For you graduates, these have been 4 long years. But I first want to say, I want to congratulate—I don't know where they are, but the class of 1992. And I want to pay a special tribute to the family, to the parents, the family members, and the friends. At today's ceremony are a group of second generation Domers; 25 percent of the graduating seniors have a