

6/14/75

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

COMMENCEMENT  
ADDRESS

by

THE HONORABLE LEROY COLLINS

Former Governor  
State of Florida



Citation for Honorary Degree of

DOCTOR of PUBLIC SERVICE

for

LeROY COLLINS

Service to people has been a way of life for LeRoy Collins. At age 25 he began an exemplary legislative career, serving in both the House of Representatives and Senate of the State of Florida. Recognizing his dedication and skill, the citizens of Florida not only elected him as their Governor, but proudly made him the first Governor in Florida's history to serve two successive terms.

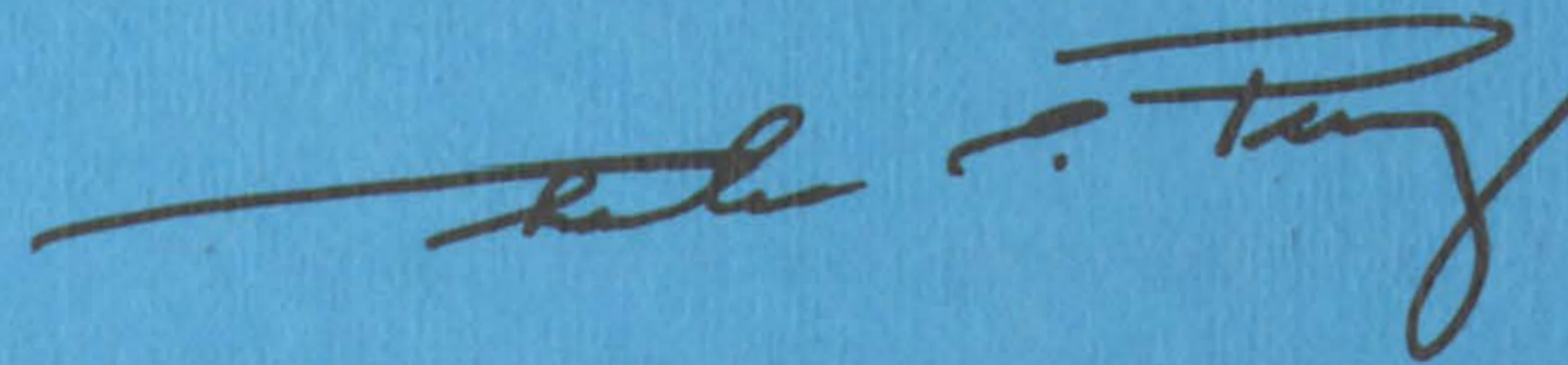
Our nation's President then called upon Governor Collins for public service on the national scene - to head a new Federal office as Director of Community Relations Service and later to become the United States Under Secretary of Commerce.

After distinguished service in Washington, he returned to the city of his birth, Tallahassee, and resumed his legal profession as one of Florida's most able lawyers. Far beyond his commendable career of public service, LeRoy Collins has given his time and his ability to a variety of organizations seeking to improve our quality of life. They range from the Peace Corps to the Council on Crime and Delinquency; and involve tasks ranging from Area Redevelopment to Outdoor Recreation Resources Review.

Through the years he has been committed to education, serving as Chairman of the Southern Regional Education Board and later as a member of the Commission on goals for Higher Education in the South. He has been a trustee of Randolph-Macon Woman's College and National Cathedral School. Governor Collins was also one of the guiding forces behind the development of the community college system in Florida and he served on the National Advisory Committee for Junior Colleges.

In recognition of these and other outstanding achievements, which are in keeping with the spirit and mission of Florida International University, we are proud to award LeRoy Collins the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Public Service.

"Service to mankind is in itself both the ultimate goal and the ultimate reward, but Florida International University, in keeping with academic tradition, desires to give special recognition to those who have provided outstanding service by conferring upon them honorary degrees. We are pleased tonight to present such a degree to a distinguished person, LeRoy Collins."



Dr. Charles E. Perry  
President  
Florida International University  
June 14, 1975

## Commencement Address

Dr. Perry, members of the faculty, graduates and your families, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

To be here tonight and have a part on this FIU commencement program is one of the greatest honors I have received. There is so much vitality and excitement in this University and its leadership. The demands upon it are enormous and what has been done here by President Perry, the administration, faculty, and students, has been of conspicuous merit.

A glance at the map makes the strategic geographic position of Miami, and thus of FIU, obvious. Jutting into the heart of the Caribbean, and Central America, this area of Florida has facilitated the entry and settlement of Spanish-speaking inhabitants who now comprise 52 per cent of the population of the city of Miami.

A bilingual city in the true meaning of the concept, Miami's evolving social structure and cultural patterns today run the gamut between two poles, from "pure" Anglo-Saxon Protestant, to "pure" Hispanic Latin American Catholic--with an ever-increasing mass of individuals in between, all forming an exciting new culture combining the traits of both types.

Carrying the intellectual strength of the international mission here is the faculty. FIU enjoys a very high ratio of foreign to national faculty. Over 20 per cent of the faculty is foreign, led by the College of Arts and Sciences which has 30 full-time foreign faculty members. The Dean of Arts and Sciences is Panamanian, the Dean of International Affairs is Trinidadian, the Associate Dean of the Business School is Yugoslavian, the Dean of the Division of Continuing Education is Cuban.

And this foreign faculty is joined by a large group of native Americans who have themselves studied, or done extensive research abroad.

Together they provide programs of solid accomplishment, and even greater promise, for a student body which has grown monumentally in three years, and now represents 72 foreign countries as different as Colombia (with 50) and Pakistan (with 47).

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I realize that in saying these things I am reminding you of what you already know, but I am deeply proud of FIU, as you are.

Besides, I believe that this international strength which is being developed here is of extraordinary importance to our country as it faces critical needs in its international relations.

The proven destructive potential of nuclear warfare is so awesome as to be incomprehensible. To talk about it now tends to bore people, more than to alarm them. Yet the possibilities of another world war, should above all other reasons cause us to recognize our growing interdependence with other nations.

Our interests in other people throughout the world, however, reach far beyond our traditional concerns over war and peace. There can be no doubt that the United States is a long way from economic self-sufficiency. When our dollar weakens in world markets, as it has done recently, the direct consequences are increased costs for the minerals and other goods we must import from abroad.

Population increases anywhere mean greater and greater demands on our own resources.

Pollution anywhere can mean pollution everywhere.

We must make no mistake about it. We have no self-sufficient fortress America. Foreign policy no longer starts at the water's edge. It starts at every gas pump, every light switch, every supermarket check out counter, even every soybean hill.

This is a time for honest self-examination and evaluation.

In the recent Special Bicentennial edition of Fortune Magazine, the lead article written by Peter Berger is entitled "Battered Pillars of the American System." As support for America's traditional faith in itself, three Corinthian pillars are pictured, all of which are shown to be chipped, scarred, and in a bad state of deterioration. One is labeled "Religion," a second "Education," and the third "Science."

I think it is true that America's faith in the past has been rooted in a faith in God, in the unlimited ability of education to develop human potentialities, and in the confident assurance that science would give us the technology to have and enjoy an endless ever increasing procession of new and more comfortable things, to enjoy for our longer and longer lives.

None of these three traditional pillars of support can be said to have fallen, but each is being severely battered in our time, and Mr. Berger asserts that there have been "somber warnings that one pillar or another--if not all--has become too weak to provide support any longer."

I have mentioned this in passing to provide a premise, or jumping off place, for the main points I wish to make this evening.

America cannot succeed in its historic search for freedom and self fulfillment without a voluntary social cohesion in which free people can work to achieve their goals. Since government offers the only means by which all the people can work together, this cannot occur if the people lose their respect for government, and this is precisely what is happening in our country now.

To achieve such respect it will have to be earned. It cannot come by simply wishing we had it. It cannot come by simply following the admonitions of the President to close our eyes to past wrongs and look forward with more patriotic pride. It cannot be earned by stock market improvements or increases in our gross national product. Respect for government can only be earned in my opinion by facing the realities of our failures, righting our wrongs, marking clearly a road ahead, and working on it.

How do we do this?

Hopefully more effective leadership will develop in the Congress and other places of public authority that will be helpful, but we cannot rely upon this too strongly. While it has many individual members of outstanding competence, Congress is a chorus of over 500 voices. It can and does follow well at times, but by its very nature it seldom becomes an important united force on its own. It responds to public thinking but

rarely has it as a group molded public thought. Congressmen with public acquiescence if not affirmative approval, have made of their offices high paid, well staffed and well pensioned, power bases for life tenure, if they can just sing in harmony with the average of their constituencies. This has tended to encourage more mediocrity than excellence.

I think the country needs as never before the help of its scholars. Our scholars can see and understand. They can advise and counsel. They can teach and lead. They can stimulate and inspire. Wherever they are, in whatever else they may be doing, they can do all these things too.

The scholarly mind is necessary to the nation to apply learning to practical affairs. This is thwarted whenever a potentially strong intellect is denied the fulfillment that a good education makes possible. It is also thwarted when the highly trained mind is imprisoned in a professor's study, or revealed only in a paper presented to a specially initiated group, in an isolated corner of society.

A few weeks back, in looking over some bits and pieces of notes to myself that I have the habit of making and sticking away in all sorts of strange places, I ran across a quotation from the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter. I don't know whether it came from one of his opinions while he was on the Court, or from a speech, or lecture to one of his Harvard classes, but this is what he wrote:

In life, lines have to be drawn. But the fact that a line has to be drawn somewhere does not justify its being drawn anywhere. The line must follow some directions of policy, whether rooted in logic or experience. Lines should not be drawn simply for the sake of drawing lines.

I think this says something to all of us.

These are indeed times when lines need to be drawn and our scholars must participate in drawing them. To have ideas and ideals is not enough. We must be more specific. We need better lines to

live by, to work by, and to succeed by. So does government. And as Frankfurter warned, these lines must follow directions of policy and be rooted in logic or experience, not drawn haphazardly like the course of the tumbleweed in the back yard, blown hither and yon by every brief gust of new wind that comes by.

Here are some of the needs, as I see them.

All the signs would indicate that with more and more armaments being manufactured and distributed around the world, with divisive political ideologies that inflame militant nationalism, with serious economic pressures and growing competition between nations, with grave shortages of food in many places, the world is presently highly vulnerable to a major war.

I say we need to draw some lines we can follow to avoid such a holocaust.

The United States is the world's largest armament maker and seller. This helps our balance of payments, but what else is it doing? What is being bartered for or against as it is decided who gets what? Should the country be doing more to restrain rather than enhance this business of our being the world's arsenal.

We need to get the facts and draw some lines that will serve well our nation's purpose for peace, not conflict.

Just how did we go wrong in South Vietnam? We have claimed we were trying to save a free people from the communists. But there were many indications that there was very little interest on the part of the Vietnamese people that their country be made free by our force, and we should carefully examine any underlying self interest which may have been involved in the motivation of our efforts. We need to raise questions and get answers about Vietnam, not try to sweep away questions and hide from answers, pretending that the frog was really a prince. My own view of Vietnam in retrospect is that it was the result of gross mismanagement, misperception, deception, and ignorance, in U.S. foreign policy.

Yes, I think we need to draw some lines.

What of the relationships between the United States Government and companies that are engaged in private business in foreign countries? For example how far should private business go in activities in foreign countries which endanger peace and are provocative of war, before the United States Government may force restraints which are necessary in the public interest. Recent admissions indicate serious meddling in foreign countries by American private businesses, including efforts to bribe foreign officials and influence internal political issues for private benefit. In any given situation this could have grave and serious consequences for us all.

I say we need some lines drawn in this area.

Suggestions have been made by people in high authority including the President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense, that in certain extreme economic conditions the United States will resort to force to coerce oil rich nations in the Middle East to let us have their oil.

It is my view that we in the United States would never recognize any foreign country's economic need to be so great as to justify it in moving into our own country and by force seeking to take anything we have. And by the same token we should grant to every other nation that same right of integrity for its own borders.

I realize many people feel that the talk of force to get oil from the Arabian countries is a part of a psychological bluff to bring about diplomatic concessions. Well, bluff or not, I do not believe it is becoming to the United States, or in our national interest, to play that kind of world poker.

I say we need to draw some lines that will give assurance to the world that we would do no such thing.

In the area of foreign aid, questions are often asked which go beyond the direct purpose of helping the beneficiary nations such as: To what degree is economic aid used in bargaining for reciprocal concessions, and who makes the judgments as to how good or bad the bargaining, or how good or bad the concessions? To what degree are our manufacturers who are looking for foreign markets for their own profit allowed to influence the kind and quantity of aid authorized and granted? And how is any such influence applied?

Is our country properly utilizing the facilities of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States in the development and administration of our aid program?

The country needs better to understand the facts and to draw some lines consistent with our public interest.

How about the role of the CIA in world, as well as in domestic, affairs? I do not believe the people of the United States want this agency engaged in efforts to influence political decisions here or elsewhere. Its basic purpose was, and should continue to be, the gathering of information. It should have no power to recruit mercenaries and make war--no power to seek to bring down any government. It should have no open master charge card to use in buying what it wants, or whom it wants. Its budget should be a more open one, not one shrouded in secrecy which we well know from painful experience often incubates wrong doing. It is encouraging that investigations are now being made which may prove very helpful in this area.

We need to draw some new lines better defining and circumscribing the powers of the CIA.

President Woodrow Wilson said in 1918:

Diplomacy should proceed always  
frankly and in the public view.

This is a principle that of course must have its exceptions. But still, in a country committed to the principle of individual freedom and rule by the consent of the governed, it is a paradox that our diplomacy is so preoccupied with secrecy.

We need to draw some lines better to assure openness in diplomacy.

In the area of private business the current recession has pointed up serious flaws in our system of free enterprise. Strangely, some of the most vocal supporters of our capitalist system, seem to be striving to destroy it through the elimination of its most vital ingredient of competition. If private business isn't competitive it simply cannot be free. If it is controlled by those involved through combinations to serve self interests, the public interest becomes imperiled, and the government moves in.

On the other side of the coin, private business needs the elimination of all restrictive burdens of government which are not essential to the public interest.

The nation's and the state's economic strength depend upon sound controls of government taxation and spending policies. The Secretary of the Treasury of the United States said a few weeks back that if the present rate of increase in federal employment continues, we will more than double the number now on the federal payroll within six years. The increase in state employment in the last 10 years has been proportionately even greater. There is the feeling in many quarters that once someone gets on a public payroll, he should not be taken off even though he is inefficient or his services are not longer needed. This is government for the benefit of those doing the governing, and not for those being governed.

New programs seem to grow like Topsy. Once a new government program is started it is almost impossible to stop, often simply because of the pressure to avoid the loss of jobs by those directly affected. No government program should ever achieve the status of an untouchable.

We need planning, budgeting, and evaluation processes that will bring to the surface functional success and failure, so that inefficiency and waste will be eliminated, and priorities of need clearly and justly established.

To check the malignancy of excessive government we need to draw some lines for improvement in public administration.

Last month the Chief Justice of the United States, Warren Burger, by special invitation made a speech before the annual meeting in Washington of the National Association of Newspaper Editors. The Chief Justice has been a very outspoken advocate of legal practice reform and education reform, and the editors were prepared for an interesting evening of give and take with many areas of special interest to both the judiciary and the press in mind, such as: free press vs. fair trial; whether reporters should be required to reveal their sources; can national security be used to hide information from the public, and so on.

But the Chief Justice surprised everyone by concentrating most of his remarks on the inadequate pay of court judges.

The speech was generally ignored by the press in the news reports that followed but a woman editor, Shana Alexander who was present, in a full page report in Newsweek Magazine, took the Chief Justice to the woodshed. She labeled the speech as "tasteless and meaningless . . . private banquet piggy-backing on the first amendment." Then she also took her fellow editors to task as she said:

The assembled power of the fourth estate was in that room. Embarrassing, even ungentlemanly as it may sound, I wish some of them had spoken out. The present crisis of integrity demands the sacrifice of good manners to good leadership. In a time of crisis low pay is of less concern than low ideals, low sights and low brows.

What a journalist she proved to be that day. Ms. Alexander said the time had come for the Chief Justice to talk of lines that should be drawn for the country's, and for the free press's future. But he did not do so.

As we think and plan for our nation's future, we should accept from the past the lesson that no civilization has ever flourished anywhere except through the work of people, disciplined people. Excellence has been achieved in civilizations that at the same time tolerated slavery. Societies, comprised of the very rich and the very poor and few between, have made great achievements.

But we in America are striving to achieve our hopes for excellence in a new and different kind of environment. We are trying to prove in this country--but all the answers are not in yet--that people can excel where there is no suffocating poverty to blight out hope, and where the doors of opportunity are open to all.

The rich of our land would make a mistake if they should try to live out their lives by lines drawn without due regard for the needs of the poor, the disadvantaged.

The poor would make a mistake if they should assume that they are exempt from work responsibility, and that the government will just bring them what they need.

Neither the rich, nor the poor, nor those in between, can evade the responsibility of discipline which is essential to good order, and to the opportunity of all citizens to be free and to find and pursue gainful work and the full fruiting out of their talents.

To achieve excellence in any field, there must not only be the goal, but the often painful preparation and striving for it. The would be athlete may have great talent but he cannot get far if he doesn't first master the fundamentals of conditioning. The would be architect may have in his vision a great bridge or building that he wants to design, but he must first master the fundamentals of stress and support.

Now I believe that a society that adheres to this work ethic whether here, in Latin America, Africa, or Asia, has the best chance to lift itself to greatness.

For this discipline is the hard core center around which we improve our minds, sharpen our talents, enrich our unselfishness, and weave the fabric of our dreams.

I once heard an Indian legend.

In the spring of a new year tribal tradition called for a testing of the new braves. After many feats of leaping, riding, wrestling, shooting, etc., the last and most difficult test was a long distance run up the mountain.

From the valley below each brave would be charged to go as far up as his strength would permit, and to bring back from the point he reached something to prove his accomplishment.

One day the first brave came back exhausted from his struggle and clutching a tiny seedling tree that he reported finding on the highest fringe of the tree line. He was cheered for this difficult feat. Another came back with a rock which had been smoothed by the lashing of the cold wind and ice well up beyond the tree



line. He was applauded even more for this greater accomplishment. Then a good long time later a third came staggering back exhausted and empty-handed, but with wonder and excitement blazing in his dark eyes. The crowd seemed disappointed and gave little applause. "How far did you go and what did you bring back," the Chief asked the brave. "I got to the top," he gasped in little more than a whisper. There was dismay and disbelief on the faces of all those present. "And what did you bring back to prove this incredible feat," the Chief asked. There was silence then the youth brightened and said: "I brought back nothing in my hands--but I saw the sea."

Graduates, as scholars you have struggled up the mountain and you can see the sea.

Don't lose sight of the world and its international problems. A university education at its very best should prepare one to acknowledge and accept personal responsibility for sharing in the solution of universal problems.

As some one put it, if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.

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