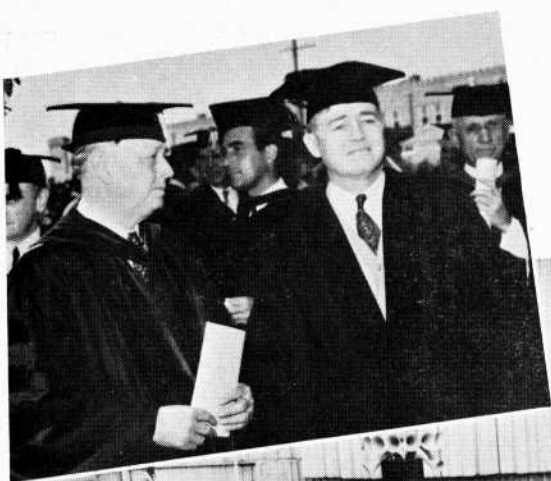


Dr. W. B. Bizzell and Orel Busby, '14, the Commencement speaker, head the Academic Procession. Below, part of the graduating class marches down the aisle of the Fieldhouse to receive degrees



To Be Happy---Be Useful

By Orel Busby, '14

A DIGEST OF THE 1938 COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

TWENTY-FOUR years ago, practically a quarter of a century, I stood in the same position in which the members of this class now stand. Oklahoma was then a lusty young state, only seven years of age. It was only one generation removed from the homesteader, the cattle kings, the lumber barons and the pioneer merchants.

Since then, another generation — your generation — has come of age and you go out from here to face the world during the most depressing economic situation in American history. And the world you face is a swiftly changing one. But the world has always been changing. Every generation has had to adjust itself to face new difficulties which many of you today would consider almost insurmountable. Their difficult problems then were to provide for themselves the bare essentials of life — food, clothing and shelter. Their problems

even of health and safety were tremendous. But their hearts were full of courage and their hopes were high.

They demanded nothing from the government except the constitutional guarantee of freedom. Not for a flitting second in their entire lifetime did they ever dream of asking or receiving any financial aid from any governmental source. They would have been astounded at any suggestion that the government owed them a living. Pioneer life made them self-reliant and unafraid of work. I want to pass on to you our heritage of confidence and ambition.

And what problems do you face as you go out from this institution filled with hopes, confidence and ambition?

There are those who paint a dark picture for you. With them I disagree even though these prophets of doom warn us vociferously. Other generations of Ameri-

cans had than prophets of doom and their prophecies unfulfilled. They muddled through somehow and you too will muddle through, even though the process may be painful.

Dr. R. M. Hutchens, president of Chicago University, in his article on *Why Go to College*, said:

"If the goal of life is happiness you should seek the training of the intellect. A trained intellect may increase your earning capacity. On the other hand, it may not. But this it will do, it will provide you with the joy of understanding. And if you have understanding you will have character, for you cannot be good without being wise; you cannot be right without knowing what is right and what is wrong. . . . If the goal of life is happiness and if you cannot buy happiness, you will seek it in wisdom and goodness. You will willingly surrender the goods outside of you for the goods of the mind and the goods of character. These are the main constituents of any abiding happiness. These alone survive every change of fortune."

So, if you would be truly happy, evolve a philosophy of life which has for its principal aims the desire to promote good morals and intellectual happiness.

But you cannot be happy unless you are useful — useful to yourself, to your fellowman and to your country. In order to do this you should learn to think clearly but not selfishly. After all, the ills of the world today may be laid at the door of the age-old sin of selfishness.

There are still frontiers for you to conquer as did your ancestors. The machine age has suddenly descended upon us and thousands of new factories are turning out unlimited quantities of new products for comfort and luxury. The new payrolls created are multiplying wealth, also dividing it. This is convincing evidence that we are living in an age of progress and the wants of America are far from satisfied. In supplying these wants is opportunity for abundance greater than any nation ever dreamed of before. Who serves this opportunity serves progress, and who serves progress serves America.

Hardships and inequities are inevitable for your generation, however. You will find a few captains of finance and a few anti-social persons who will try to grab more than their share of the wealth of the new frontiers. On the other hand, due to the activities of the political demagogues you may find too many persons anxious to reverse the parable of the ten talents as spoken by the Lowly Nazarene when on earth. You will remember that in this parable He taught the doctrine of work; that a just reward would come to him who used his talents, whether one or more, and made the most of them; and that likewise from him who refused to work and to use his one talent would be taken that which he had.

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THE SOONER MAGAZINE

BE USEFUL

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There are those today who teach in the form of communism and fascism the contrary of this parable. They seek to make of our government an agency by which this parable is reversed and by which it is taken from him who is diligent and uses his talents to reward the slothful and him who uses not the one talent he has. This country is composed of individuals who have varying talents. All are equal before the law. Of course, the individual with ten talents will reap more benefits than he who refuses to use his one talent. And he should. The United States has grown and flourished under this doctrine.

It is not a sin to make money and accumulate property, provided it is honestly made and honestly used. The functions of government are to hold the scales equally between the individuals who have one, five, or ten talents. Our ancestors exemplified the philosophy taught by this parable when they came to this frontier as sturdy, clear-thinking, hard-working, God-fearing citizens who had visions of a great future for us, their offspring.

All of us know that this world is in travail. The nations of the earth are today quarreling like the twelve tribes of Israel and their neighbors over more land. There is the new menace of the "ism" nations or totalitarian state against nations espousing democratic forms of government. At home, strife and discord are found on every hand. The age-old sin recorded thirty-seven hundred years ago—that of selfishness—is still rampant within our land. The fundamental problem is the same old question of the rights of the rich or over-privileged on the one side and the poor and under-privileged on the other, with professional politicians and demagogues continually fanning the flames of hatred. The gravest danger to the principles of our democratic government today and menaces which are of recent and alarming growth are demagoguery of officials and candidates for office and the stark selfishness of the many blocs which influence our law-making bodies. Most of the candidates for office today are not courageous enough to express their honest opinions for fear they will be beaten. They speak platitudes and make impossible promises which will appeal to the largest of these different blocs of voters.

Ours should not be a government by privileged blocs but a government balancing the scales equally for all. As it is today, those *who have* are worried and harassed for fear what they *have* will be taken from them by the very government itself—and those *who have not* fear for their future social security.

We hear on every hand this term "social security." It seems to be held up before the younger generation of America as its goal.

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BE USEFUL

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The term is capable of many and varied definitions, but as applied to government benefits there is much more back of this term than the mere definition of it implies. Of course, each of us wants to be secure from poverty, illness or the mental distress that might come from financial worries, but if we are not careful we will permit these financial worries to make a fundamental change in the American concept of government and the individual's independence. This threatened change in the fundamentals of our system of government is the immediate problem of your generation. For the first time in America it seems that all men are becoming frightened about the future.

We are face to face with the problems of labor, capital, communism, fascism, the constitution, and the questions affecting the needs of organized society, and of human rights. This generation must decide whether America will continue to maintain a democratic form of government, or follow the trend of the old world and become a totalitarian state.

In all the tumult of the present-day world, America stands out like a giant. We are today the most powerful and wealthy nation. This is only because we still follow the fundamental principles of government laid down by our forefathers 160 years ago — freedom of assembly, religious freedom, and the right of free speech. Every American youth may choose his own schools, determine his own philosophy of life, and have freedom of expression. And he stands on equality of opportunity with his fellow man. His accomplishments are limited only by his energy, his ambitions and his abilities. The power of this influence supports this mighty nation. As long as it exists we will have no dictator in America.

So, in going out from this school today I exhort you to analyze the problems of citizenship you will face as young Americans. You may even have to re-examine the purposes of human government. You must realize that you are a part of it. You may have to rally to the defense of its time-honored principles. You may be called upon to unite in stemming a tide which threatens to sweep civilization from its moorings. This is the most serious test your generation faces.

Use the courage and stamina you have inherited from your American forbears. Don't mortgage your tomorrow for today's safety. If you would have real social security, be able to contribute something which is beneficial to society and your fellowman. So develop your talents that society will need you. The social security that endures is that which comes from a resourceful mind possessing unlimited reserves against misfortune. I believe this class before me has that.

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