

Call number: 00-00-107

Commencement Ceremonies, 5/14/72

Summary created by: Summer Dougherty

Date(s) of creation of summary: 10/22/12

Notes: Originals on 7 inch reels. Master and circulation copies on CD.

Organ music and quiet conversations for about 13 minutes.

The Provost of the University of Alaska acknowledges Governor Egan, Ernest Gruening, Regent O'Neill, President Wood, guests, parents, relatives, faculty, friends of the University and the class of 1972 and welcomes everyone to the 50th commencement of the university. A color guard of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps presents the colors. The organist plays the Star Spangled Banner.

Reverend David K. Faison(?) gives a prayer asking for guidance and inspiration and that the talents gathered here make the world a better place and serve their fellow man.

President Wood welcomes everyone to the 50th commencement. It has occurred to him that the university is coming of age. The size of the graduating class is one quantitative indication of this. He is pleased to see so many distinguished guests and family members. He notes in the audience Mrs. Boucher and former Alaska State Senator, Howard Bradshaw of Sitka.

There are many messages congratulating the graduating class including one from the president of the University of California, San Diego, from Oklahoma State University President, Robert Kamm, from Richard Nixon, from the President of the University of Arizona and from Dr. Laurence Gould, and from Chancellor Bowker of the University of California, Berkeley.

President Wood says that recently he had occasion to review the career story of William Egan. Just reading this chronicle of courage, dedication, hard work and selfless loyalty to native land completely restores one's faith in democracy in America. The essence of democracy is an ordinary person accomplishing the extraordinary. The speaker for the 50th commencement quite fits this description. As chairman of the Alaska State Constitutional Convention, he led the drafting of what is considered one of the best state constitutions in only 75 days. President Wood presents the Governor of Alaska, William A. Egan.

Governor Egan says that he could not help but think, as he saw the large number of graduates coming in this morning, of another occasion forty years ago, when the graduating class of Valdez High School marched in for their commencement. The graduating class was only two people, and William Egan was the salutatorian! Seeing the size of the graduating class makes him think of the great changes that have taken place at the University of Alaska and across the state. He says that it is a true pleasure for him to be here and an honor for him to speak. He said that his suggested topic be the future of Alaska and its university which are

rather hazardous topics, to unleash him on a captive audience. He becomes rather wound up when talking about Alaska, its future and the need to continually improve educational and other programs which enable people to improve their lives. Educational opportunity for all who inspire to it is a vital ingredient for realizing Alaska's future. In Alaska, we have the opportunity to build a truly great society that is free from social injustice. It is Mr. Egan's hope that the vast majority of Alaska's high school graduates, college graduates, and university graduates choose to stay in Alaska to help build that sort of society. He can think of no other state which offers more exciting challenges and opportunities to those just graduating or who have returned to complete their formal education.

Alaska has America's greatest oil profits, comprises the great bulk of this nation's unspoiled outdoors and undeveloped natural resources. Alaska holds great promise for the future. At the beginning of the last decade, Alaska had barely taken its first steps into statehood, was struggling financially, suffered from the perception of being the land of perpetual ice and snow and written about mostly for its days gone by. Alaska's new stature has emerged in a very short time. Such progress in only a single decade makes the future exciting to image. He hopes that the last frontier will be first in public prosperity and progress, individual fulfillment, and human achievement and first in setting an example for all the world to see regarding environmental safeguards as Alaska moves forward wisely in its development. It is important realize that setbacks are setbacks only in over expectation in the given circumstances but not in Alaska's promise and potential. Alaska's destined greatness does not hinge upon the events of any single brief period in time. It is grounded in steady progress toward the high aspirations which spurred us to achieve statehood and in a richness of spirit of a determined people. Always high among those aspirations has been the quest for learning. Alaskans have been willing to pay for education to the very best of their abilities so the next generation would have more access to the rich opportunities that Alaska affords. We have not had significantly in Alaska, as has happened elsewhere, the blunt refusal for taxpayer to vote more money for education. The tape cuts off.