

-----  
UW OSHKOSH COMMENCEMENT  
MAY 14, 1994  
-----

THANK YOU CHANCELLOR KERRIGAN, FACULTY, BOARD OF REGENTS,  
PARENTS, HONORED GUESTS AND GRADUATES.... IT TRULY IS AN HONOR  
TO BE HERE TODAY FOR THIS VERY SPECIAL OCCASION.

WELL, IT'S OVER. YOU DID IT.

NO MORE PAPERS ... NOT MORE EXAMS ... NO MORE LECTURES.

NO MORE CHUGGING MOUNTAIN DEW BY THE CASE . NO MORE LOOKING  
FOR A PLACE TO PARK ... AN NO MORE PROCRASTINATING AT MOLLY'S OR  
KELLYS 'S.

AND BY THE WAY, I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU GIVE NEW MEANING TO THE  
PHRASE "I'M GOING TO THE LIBRARY."

THIS IS AN EXCITING DAY. YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO FEEL PROUD OF  
YOURSELVES .. AND TO TAKE PRIDE IN GRADUATING FROM ONE OF THE  
FINEST UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS IN THE WORLD -- THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WISCONSIN .. AND YOU SHOULD TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN GRADUATING  
FROM ONE OF THE FINEST UNIVERSITIES IN THAT SYSTEM -- UW OSHKOSH.

WHAT A GREAT UNIVERSITY YOU HAVE HERE. AS IA LOOK AROUND  
YOUR CAMPUS TODAY, AND WHENEVER I VISIT HERE, I AM JUST TOTALLY  
IMPRESSES.

AND I KNOW YOUR CAMPUS QUITE WELL ... AS SOME OF YOU MIGHT  
REMEMBER I BROUGHT STATE GOVERNMENT TO OSHKOSH IN THE  
SUMMER OF 1992. AND I STAYED IN STUART HALL.

MY ADMINISTRATION HAS ALSO HELPED BUILD AND EXPAND YOUR  
CAMPUS, PUMPING NEARLY 27 MILLION DOLLARS INTO YOUR CAMPUS  
SINCE I HAVE BEEN GOVERNOR.

AND WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CAMPUS IT IS. SHAPIRO PARK AND THE  
"OSHKOSH ON THE RIVER PROJECT: ARE JUST TWO EXAMPLES OF THE  
PRIDE YOU TAKE IN YOUR CAMPUS.

UW-OSHKOSH IS A SCHOOL OF CHAMPIONS -- IN THE CLASSROOM AND ON  
THE PLAYING FIELD ... JUST LOOK AT ALL THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP  
BANNERS HANGING IN HERE. THERE ARE 21 IN TOTAL.

AND YOU'RE NOT FINISHED YET ... TWO MONTHS AGO TO THIS VERY  
WEEKEND, YOUR WOMEN'S TRACK TEAM WON THE NCAA DIVISION III

NATIONAL INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIP - IN THIS VERY BUILDING.

I HAVE TO TAKE SOME CREDIT FOR THAT CHAMPIONSHIP, YOU KNOW ... IT WAS MONEY FROM MY ADMINISTRATION THAT HELPED REPLACE THE FLOORS AND PLAYING SURFACES IN KOLF. AND WE HELPED BUILD THE ALBEE HALL PHYSICAL EDUCATION ADDITION, TOO.

AND AS WE SPEAK, YOUR BASEBALL TEAM IS PLAYING IN EAU CLAIRE FOR YET ANOTHER CONFERENCE TITLE IN BASEBALL. ONCE AGAIN UW-OSHKOSH'S BASEBALL TEAM IS PUTTING WISCONSIN IN THE NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT, RANKED NO. 2 IN THE NATION AND ON ITS WAY TO ANOTHER COLLEGE WORLD SERIES.

ACADEMICALLY, UW-OSHKOSH IS ONE OF THE BEST GENERAL EDUCATION UNIVERSITIES IN OUR SYSTEM .. OSHKOSH DOESN'T JUST EXCEL IN ONE FIELD OF STUDY -- IT EXCELS IN ALL ITS FIELDS OF STUDY, FROM BUSINESS TO EDUCATION TO NURSING.

I KNOW WE HAVE MANY GRADUATES HERE THIS AFTERNOON FROM THE EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT. I'M EXCITED THAT YOUR UNIVERSITY IS PRODUCING HIGH QUALITY NEW TEACHERS BECAUSE THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR STATE'S FUTURE.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING .. NOT TO PUT ANY PRESSURE ON YOU OR ANYTHING.

THEY SAY A DOCTOR CAN BURY HIS MISTAKES ... AN ARCHITECT CAN COVER HIS UP .. A FRAMER CAN PLOW HIS UNDER ... BUT A TEACHER'S MISTAKES GROW UP AND BECOME REPORTERS ....

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU SERIOUSLY ABOUT THE FUTURE .. I HAVE A CHALLENGE FOR YOU.

TODAY YOU GRADUATE AND HEAD OUT INTO THE REAL WORLD, AS THEY SAY. BUT BEFORE YOU CAN EVEN TAKE A STEP OUT THE DOOR, YOU'VE BEEN LABELED.

THE MEDIA AND SOME PUNDITS HAVE TATTOOED YOU WITH THEIR IMAGE OF WHAT YOU ARE, WHAT YOU SHOULD BE, AND WORSE, WHAT YOU WILL BECOME.

THE MEDIA HAS LABELED YOU ... GENERATION X ... THE LOST TWENTY-SOMETHING GENERATION.

THE PESSIMISTS SAY YOU'RE DESTINED TO WORK IN WHAT THEY CALL "MCJOBS" -- WHICH ARE DEFINED AS LOW-PAY, LOW-PRESTIGE, NO-FUTURE JOBS.

THEY SAY YOU'RE LISTLESS AND UNINSPIRED WITH NO STRONG VISION  
FOR THE FUTURE.

THEY SAY THE SUICIDE OF KURT COBAIN REFLECTS THE PAIN OF A LOST  
AND DISTRAUGHT TWENTY-SOMETHING GENERATION.

THEY SAY YOU ARE SPOILED ... A GENERATION HANDED EVERYTHING BY  
THEIR BABY-BOOMER PARENTS AND UNWILLING TO MAKE THE SAME  
SACRIFICES AND WORK JUST AS HARD TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS.

THEY SAY YOU WILL BE THE FIRST GENERATION NOT TO DO BETTER  
THAN YOUR PARENTS.

BOY, THE MEDIA AND SOME OF THESE PURVEYORS OF PESSIMISM DON'T  
HAVE A LOT OF CONFIDENCE IN YOU, DO THEY?

WELL, I THINK ALL THIS TALK ABOUT GENERATION X AND THE LOST  
GENERATION IS JUST A BUNCH OF MISDIRECTED ANGER --- A BUNCH OF  
BULL--- DON'T YOU?

YOUR PARENTS, YOUR PROFESSORS AND YOUR FRIENDS AND I HAVE TOO  
MUCH CONFIDENCE IN YOU.

I SEE YOU AS A GENERATION WITH THE VISION, THE INNOVATION AND  
THE INTELLECT TO LEAD US INTO A NEW CENTURY -- A CENTURY OF THE  
INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY .. A CENTURY OF BOLD NEW  
TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL ALLOW ALL OF US TO LIVE OUT OUR WILDEST  
DREAMS .. A CENTURY WHERE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN AMERICA HAS  
NEVER BEEN BETTER.

AS I LOOK INTO THE CROWD, I SEE A FUTURE GOVERNOR AMONG YOU.  
HOPEFULLY, THE FIRST WOMAN GOVERNOR.

I ALSO SEE A NEUROSURGEON .. SOME OUTSTANDING AND INSPIRING  
EDUCATORS .. AND IS EE SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY  
LEADER OF THE FUTURE.

I SEE A GENERATION THAT NOT ONLY OUTDOES ITS PARENTS, BUT  
INSPIRES A WHOLE NEW GENERATION TO REACH FOR THE STARS AND DO  
THE UNTHINKABLE.

AND WHY DO I SEE THIS? ... YES, I BELIEVE IN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF  
YOU. BUT I ALSO KNOW YOU'RE EQUIPPED TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

GRADUATING FROM UW-OSHKOSH SHOULD GIVE YOU EVERY  
CONFIDENCE THAT YOU HAVE THE TRAINING, THE EDUCATION, THE  
SKILLS TO SUCCEED AND ACHIEVE YOUR EVERY DREAM.

OSHKOSH GRADUATES DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES ..  
GERALD WHITBURN, BY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
WHO OVERSEES MY WELFARE REFORM INITIATIVES AMONG OTHER  
PROGRAMS, GRADUATED FROM THIS UNIVERSITY. AND HE BELIEVES SO  
MUCH IN THE EDUCATION HE RECEIVED HERE, THAT HE IS PUTTING HIS  
SON THROUGH UW-OSHKOSH RIGHT NOW.

I KNOW THAT THE GOOD-PAYING, HIGH TECH JOBS OF TODAY AND  
TOMORROW ARE -- AND WILL BE -- RIGHT HERE IN WISCONSIN. AND I  
HOPE THE MAJORITY OF YOU WILL STAY RIGHT HERE IN WISCONSIN TO  
USE YOUR EDUCATION AND TALENTS TO MAKE TOMORROW EVEN  
BETTER.

I ALSO HAVE GREAT FAITH THAT THE FIRE THAT BURNS INSIDE EACH AND  
EVERY YOUNG PERSON CAN'T BE EXTINGUISHED SO EASILY BE THE NAY-  
SAYERS. IN THE MASS MEDIA OR BY A FEW DISILLUSIONED MUSICIANS.

PERHAPS THE BEST ADVICE I CAN GIVE YOU AS YOU GRADUATE TODAY IS  
NEVER LISTEN TO THE NAYSAYERS...DON'T LET THE PESSIMISTS SOUR  
YOUR DREAMS ... DON'T LET TEMPORARY SETBACKS KEEP YOU DOWN.

YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, BE AMBITIOUS, TAKE RISKS AND  
MEET YOUR CHALLENGES HEAD ON. YOU NEED TO ALWAYS HAVE A CAN-  
DO AND OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE.

AUTHOR JAMES BRANCH CABELL ONCE MADE AN ASTUTE DISTINCTION  
BETWEEN AN OPTIMIST AND A PESSIMIST. HE WROTE:

“ THE OPTIMIST PROCLAIMS THAT WE LIVE IN THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE  
WORLDS ... AND THE PESSIMIST FEARS THAT THIS IS TRUE.”

SO YOU HAVE A CHOICE AS YOU ENTER THE REAL WORLD TODAY.

YOU CAN PROVE THE MEDIA RIGHT ABOUT GENERATION X .. FELL SORRY  
FOR YOURSELF ... MUDDLE THROUGH LIFE ... AND LIVE IN FEAR THAT YOU  
MAY ACTUALLY SUCCEED AND BE HAPPY IF YOU WORK HARD TOWARD  
YOUR GOALS.

OR YOU CAN MAKE THE MASS MEDIA AND THE NAYSAYERS LOOK LIKE  
THE CYNICAL FOOLS I BELIEVE THEY ARE WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR  
GENERATION.. YOU CAN BE THE ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS OF A  
GREAT NEW FUTURE FOR ALL OF US IN THE NEXT CENTURY.

TODAY, I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A NEW LABEL. I'M GOING TO CALL YOU  
GENERATION W -- THE GENERATION OF WINNERS ... OF WISE MEN AND  
WOMEN WHO WORK HARD TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL OF US IN  
WISCONSIN.

AND I'D LIKE TO SEND YOU ON YOUR WAY WITH AN IRISH BLESSING,  
WHICH I HAVE SELECTED FROM A BOOK GIVEN TO ME BY YOUR  
CHANCELLOR AND A FINE IRISHMAN, JOHN KERRIGAN ... AND THE IRISH  
KNOW ALL WHEN IT COME TO OPTIMISM AND A CAN-DO SPIRIT.

MAY GOOD LUCK BEFRIEND YOU,  
AND KIND FORTUNE SEND YOU  
WHATEVER YOUR HEART MAY BE WISHIN'  
MAY GOOD FRIENDS BE NEAR YOU  
TO GLADDEN AND CHEER YOU,  
AND HELP YOU ATTAIN EACH AMBITION.

YOU ARE TRAINED TO BE THE BEST, SO BE THE BEST ... NOW GO OUT AND  
REACH FOR YOUR BRASS RING ... I PROMISE YOU, IT'S THERE FOR THE  
TAKING.