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INVESTITURE SPEECH: RESPONSE TO CHARGES

My colleagues, members of the Legislature, Evergreeners all, my family, and many friends who have taken a Sunday afternoon to come here to visit Evergreen and to take part in what is one of the most traditional ceremonies of higher education.

The history of investitures goes back many centuries. Sitting here this afternoon listening to the charges from the many representatives of this College, I felt more and more burdened with each passing set of remarks. They were eloquent and difficult charges. They speak to the uniqueness of this institution, and they speak to the challenges of higher education in a difficult time in this nation. I was struck with the difference between an inauguration and an investiture, and had to do a little bit of research to distinguish the difference. I finally threw it all away when I realized that there was an easy distinction between the inaugurals I have become accustomed to in political office, and the investiture now taking place. In political office, an inaugural occurs on the first day of office, immediately on taking office. In higher education, an investiture comes much later, after a probationary period of six to eight months. The difference now appears quite obvious. In education, they want to look you over first, during that period of probation; in political office, you don't dare give them the chance.

I am grateful for the charges today, and as interested as I suspect those in the audience are in the common thread which went through so many of the remarks -- the common threads of education by cooperation and collaboration rather than just by competition; the common thread of daring to be different and the invitation to attack which being different always presents. It will be difficult in a few minutes to respond precisely to each of the charges, and in fact the best way to respond isn't by speaking today to them, but by action in the months to come. It is worthwhile, however, to remark to each of my colleagues on the platform about some things they might take back to their colleagues who hold similar responsibilities.

To Congressman Pritchard, I hope you and your colleagues in the Congress of the United States will help build a good national framework for higher education, but at the same time don't smother us with the rules and regulations which end up choking the vitality of American education.

Bruce Chapman spoke of the necessity for Evergreen to become a real neighbor as part of the Olympia community. I would perhaps take it one step further, and hope that Evergreen really becomes part of the family of the community. The difference between neighbors and family are that we can drop to some extent the polite facade which distinguishes neighborly contacts and go beyond it to the prickly, sometimes wart-filled relationships which distinguish any good family. We ought to recognize problems, and the warts, and the prickly nature of relationships and at the same time have the love and respect for each other which distinguishes good families.

Senator Sandison was one of a pair of distinguished educational leaders in the middle 1960's. He and the late Marjorie Lynch, as chairmen of the respective Senate and House committees on higher education, perhaps more than any other individuals, gave guidance and direction to The Evergreen State College and all

of the long, involved, and difficult labor pains which accompanied our birth. I hope that both Bruce Chapman representing the State, and Gordon Sandison representing the founding Legislature, will take back to their colleagues the message to be proud of what you have been instrumental in creating, and my assurance that we will continue to strive to make you proud of what we have built.

Mary Ellen Lewis, an early alum of Evergreen, represents in a growing way the first measurement of Evergreen's success. The early years of a business are usually not distinguished by a profit, and the early years of a college are not distinguished by success stories. In fact, the very first product of a brand new college is likely to be its initial failures -- those who come with high expectations, and either through their own inadequacies or the College's, leave dissatisfied and hurt by their experience. There are no alumni, there are no people who have had experience to counteract those feelings when they return home. Those who were here at the beginning felt strongly that what they were doing was right and would work, but there was no proof, even though Evergreen was certain of its course. Now in increasing numbers, alums are proving the success of the Evergreen story.

Just recently the first Ph.D. was awarded to a former Evergreen graduate -- a Ph.D. in Microbiology from Stanford University, who will be coming back to Evergreen next year as a faculty member.

A friendly warning to my legislative friends, Evergreen is succeeding in that area also, and our first member of the House of Representatives, and now our first member of the State Senate represent Evergreen as graduates. Evergreeners are now studying in 82 graduate schools across this nation, and are achieving a fine placement in the work life which follows their college careers. So to Mary Ellen, and to all other alums of Evergreen, keep active, and take an active interest in this school. You are some of our most important ambassadors to the larger community outside Evergreen.

I am sure those of you who are visiting Evergreen for the first time are as impressed as I was by the beauty of this campus, its upkeep and the skills, which are not quite as physically apparent, of those who serve this College as its staff. National recognition has been achieved in a number of areas by the staff here at Evergreen. We are recognized as one of the fine educational institutions in the nation in the use of our computers, national awards have been recently received by our graphics section, and in a host of other ways have proven the skills of the staff here. Help me by continuing to provide the kind of two-way information flow which is so essential to any good management system, for from good information comes wise decisions.

And students -- the reason for our existence. We wouldn't be here today if it weren't for the students we are attempting to serve. I hope you and students who follow you at Evergreen will continue to challenge, to probe, to seek, and to do it in a unique Evergreen style. I had the benefit of reading Karen's words before she presented them today, and I couldn't help but paraphrase that final poem which I'll keep with me when times are not so good, but I thought in a somewhat more positive sense I would paraphrase it:

"When things go right, as they sometimes might,

And the road you're traveling is level and bright,
When funds are high and when debts are low,
And you're viewed by all with a happy glow,

When no cares are visible from where you sit,
Get out of town fast, it's time to quit.

(...applause...laughter...)

The faculty, represents an important heart beat of an educational institution. I come, unusually, from outside of the academic field, to the presidency of this institution. I'm still learning about you and still learning about faculty methods, still learning about the structure of higher education. I hope I will continue to learn from you. I've already discovered the striking devotion to teaching which characterizes the Evergreen faculty. Herb Hadley has already mentioned the fact that Evergreen faculty members have greater contact with their students than is the case with any of the other four-year institutions in the State, and probably almost any other institution in the nation. That is a drain on faculty, but not only do you have a devotion to teaching, but you are helping to maintain the integrity of Evergreen by the team approach to teaching, the team approach to faculty development, and to the development of scholarship.

To the trustees, past and present, you have built exceptionally well. Your perception and early decisions, the resulting physical plant here, have given all of us a campus of unusual size, beauty, and educational opportunity. You supported the concepts of alternative education, even though at times under fire. I hope you will continue to provide me wise leadership and good help during this, our second decade.

There is a phantom who was not on the program today, no seat on the platform, and no speech given, who seldom asks directly for advice, and is represented by virtually everyone in this room: the Washington tax payer. Each of us, in our separate capacities, must respond well to the sixty million dollar capital investment and the continuing operating investments which are being made through the sacrifices and the taxes paid by our fellow citizens. That is a collective charge to all Evergreeners.

Evergreen, in a short decade, has drawn national and even international attention. We also occasionally draw local and legislative attention, sometimes to our consternation, and frequently it seems excessive. But I did some historical work to really try to find out whether we were unique or whether other institutions in their early days had similar problems. I chose a distinguished university of this State, the University of Washington.

It opened its doors in 1861, and almost immediately closed them again. The University went bankrupt at least once, perhaps more times in its early dealings, and it engaged in what were described in by one historian as "questionable land transactions to build the new university." The Seattle Gazette furiously reported on the "swindle fund" at the University. And I only note in passing that after 120 years the University is a distinguished leader of higher education and the Seattle Gazette has disappeared.

Mention has been made today of the problems of site selection. Those, too, are

not unique. Again, in researching the early days of the University of Washington, I read of a session of the territorial legislature of 1860. Leaders from three parts of the State met together in a secret session. They had many things in mind, not the least of which was to see what evil they could work on Olympia, which was then the temporary capitol. Legislative leaders of Port Townsend, Vancouver, and Seattle, joined together in a three-way swap. Port Townsend would get the penitentiary, Vancouver would get the state capitol, and Seattle would get the university, leaving Olympia with nothing. Three bills were prepared and the votes were counted. The bills were passed by the legislature and were duly signed. I haven't concluded my research, but all of us know that the penitentiary is in Walla Walla, the capitol is still in Olympia, and only the Seattle legislators got what they wanted.

From a muddy beginning, some seven years ago, when first students arrived before this building was finished, and under the excellent leadership of the first president, Charles McCann and the planning faculty, Evergreen has grown. It's important to remember, however, that we are a part of an integrated system of higher education in the State of Washington, quite a remarkable system. We're more blessed than we know with good higher educational opportunities. Two fine universities: the University of Washington, one of the top research institutions in the nation, recognized as such by the millions of dollars of research grants which come to that institution, with the resulting successes in research as well as teaching; Washington State University, an outstanding land grant institution of our nation. The regional universities, who are rapidly growing in the breadth of their opportunities and in the education they provide. A community college system which is one of the largest in the nation, and recognized as an outstanding one. Many private schools, a number of them represented here today, of fine national reputation. And, as an integral part of an educational whole, The Evergreen State College, filling a unique role, and filling a gap not filled in many other states. We have a good management system. The Council on Post-Secondary Education and the State Board on Community College Education are bodies of coordination, not coercion. We have built educational teamwork, and not an unnecessary bureaucracy, at the State level. A recent survey of the fifty states of the nation showed Washington in the Fall of 1977 tenth in the number of its citizens then registered in the public and private two-year and four-year institutions of higher education. Tenth in spite of the fact that our population is twentieth or twenty-first. We are very near the top in per-capita use of higher education in this nation. Some ask, "How much is enough?" Some question whether we have been too liberal in the expansion of the higher education system. I say in response, "What's wrong with being number one? Especially, what's wrong with being number one in education? What's wrong with having a better educated citizenry than almost any other state in the nation? What's wrong with the high literacy of the citizens of this state? Education, and resulting skills of Washingtonians, are responsible for much of the good now occurring in our state. The growing diversification and strength of our economy can be laid almost directly to the high productivity and the skills of Washington's work force. The unique support of arts, culture, music, and of major sports organizations, all are representative of an educated citizenry. Our concern over preservation of our historic past, and the preservation of our environment, are also measurements of a devoted and caring population.

We've all basked in the reflected glory of repeated stories declaring

Washington, or Seattle, or Olympia, or other communities, as the most liveable in the United States. I've done some examining of the scoring elements. They've ranged the whole gamut of elements that make up a civilized community, and there is no secret why Washington and its constituent communities rank so high. Our educational attainment and educational opportunity, the openness of educational institutions, which are among the best in the nation, help make this a most liveable and civilized place.

Evergreen was a child of the sixties. Many are concerned that we not become irrelevant in the seventies. I firmly believe that Evergreen in reality is a precursor of the 1980's. Population is changing rapidly. Yesterday's black panthers have changed into today's grey panthers. A nation which just a decade ago was growing younger is now growing older. Yesterday's World War II babies are today's college students and tomorrow's young adults, who will be creating new families themselves and their own baby boom of unprecedented proportions. We have a different economy, and new needs in higher education. The technological, post-industrial society will make new demands on education, but interestingly, I believe those new demands will be for generalists and not specialists. Listen to Stephen Muller, the president of Johns Hopkins University. He says, "A university education that fails to transmit the values of civilization is a devalued education, and mass democracy needs educated participation and comprehending commitment to social values, not from an elite, but from the majority of citizens. The fate of contemporary democracy depends largely on the degree to which citizens are highly civilized. To the degree most of them are not, their lives will indeed become so nasty, brutish, and short, as to call forth a new Leviathan. A democracy of the ignorant becomes a tyranny of stupidity. A democracy of greed restrained only by competition is no more than the tyranny of corruption. A democracy of unlimited self-indulgence will collapse because of its sheer and paralyzing inability to face and solve real problems." And he goes on to say that "the graduate who leaves the university today, at the very narrow but finely-honed cutting edge of highly specialized, pre-professional training, faces the prospect that within a decade most of what he or she knows best will already be obsolescent. Very likely, the terms of his or her employment will undergo radical change. New knowledge will have to be rapidly absorbed so as to adapt. The graduate, and his or her employer, will then judge the earlier experience of university education less by the skills commanded at graduation and more by the foundation laid for a continuing life-long process of further learning and professional adaptation. Already some employers are giving evidence of new interest in recruiting persons fundamentally educated in a general sense, who can then continue to acquire specialized knowledge on the job, in preference to hiring highly trained specialists whose specific knowledge dates too quickly and who may have subsequent difficulty in making professional transitions."

I believe, then, Evergreen's time is still ahead in the 1980's, and not as an archaeological artifact of the 1960's. Today, however, is not without danger. Parents, legislatures, and taxpayers are calling for greater accountability in education, and it's good that they do so. There is deep peril, however, in the penchant for standardized tests which may blind us to the important values in education and give us some comfortable, quantifiable answers to the wrong questions.

Carll Tucker wrote an article for the Saturday Review, on the joys of receiving

the annual "Information Please" almanac. He said, "One of my favorite annual activities is opening a new information almanac. The legend on the cover promises comprehensive lists and tables, all or most of the information I am likely to need in the forthcoming year. There is a gratifying orderliness in this almanac world. Every facet of existence seems so knowable and so measureable. We prefer to measure everything. And what we cannot measure, we prefer to believe does not exist. The quality of an education is judged on the basis of performance on standardized tests. If what you've learned is not what's being measured, you are presumed not to have learned anything. Statistics and lists are obviously useful tools. They shed light, and they raise questions. But they can blind the user to the unquantifiable aspects of existence. While reveling in the revelation vouchsafed by my information almanac, I cannot help thinking how few significant answers all these lists afford. They tell in their own way what happened, but never why it mattered, and that in the long run is the only question worth answering."

Unless we are vigilant, we could create in this nation a cultural and intellectual desert -- peopled by vocationally trained robots who have lost the capacity to grow and the ability to respond to change. We stand in some danger of losing the heritage of generations of great art, literature, music, and wisdom in a wild frenzy of comparative basic test scores. Financial and regulatory strangulation of higher education will be as deadly for civilization's future as the hemlock of Socrates.

At Evergreen's birth, three charges were given: to serve Southwest Washington, to create a closer relationship with state government, and to be an innovative school. As we start our second decade, I will ask all Evergreeners to join in developing a modern response to those charges. Some of the elements which I believe are important, which I will work with all elements of the Evergreen community to finalize, are the establishment of a graduate program which is a necessary adjunct to a full institution of higher education; to extend the serious off-campus degree granting program opportunities begun so well in the city of Vancouver; to bring to people who cannot come to a residential campus the opportunity to complete a college education, and in doing so to provide in Evergreen's own unique way a full response to the educational needs of Southwest Washington; to have a unique responsibility for affirmative action, not just in the hiring of staff and faculty, but in opening the opportunities of education to many for whom the doors have long been closed. People at Evergreen have made some remarkable accomplishments in offering those kinds of opportunities, and I hope we can expand in future years. I think it's important to build a strong public administration program, or at least a kind of program which will put us in closer partnership with state government, so that we can use the great strengths of the State of Washington, and they in turn can use the unique strengths of The Evergreen State College. I believe we can encourage the return of older students to college, either for completion of their baccalaureate degrees, for a change in their life occupation, or just to come back for the pure joy of gaining additional knowledge. I have already learned of the uniqueness, the importance, and the worth of the core of Evergreen's style of teaching, the coordinated study program. It was planned and built well by our initial planning faculty. I am confident we can strengthen and maintain it as the major element of Evergreen's future. I'm proud, finally, of the inter-relationships with other educational institutions which have been built in recent years. Currently, Evergreen is working closely with the Cornish

Institute in the City of Seattle. We have had interchanges of faculty in recent years with St. Martins and with the University of Puget Sound. We have offered housing on campus for a graduate program of Seattle University. Centralia Community College and Evergreen are joining together in some joint efforts in education. These and other elements will represent a unique opportunity for Evergreen to work closely with our colleagues in the many other educational institutions in this State.

Even though the charges were many and difficult, I do accept those you have given to me today, and now as a fully-ordained Evergreener, I pledge to respond to them fully. I'm grateful for the unique opportunity to be the second president of The Evergreen State College, and to lead a proud institution, which is truly growing into a national asset.