INDUCTION OF SENIORS INTO ALUMNI SOCIETY

For the second time, I am experiencing the pleasure of welcoming new members of the Georgia Alumni Society. I now have been President of the Alumni Society long enough to know that one of the most satisfying moments is to stand here and congratulate a graduation class upon the attainment of degrees from the University of Georgia and to say: "Welcome, Fellow Alumni."

As a link in the continuity that has existed since 1834, when the Society was organized, you have benefited from the financial and moral support given this University by its alumni. Now, it is your turn to help promote its continuing improvement.

Anthropologist Margaret Mead in a speech last April in Atlanta emphasized the critical position you occupy. To the older members of her audience she said: "Today's youth is meeting a new world unlike anything ever seen before. It's frightening to know they will never be like us."
It is clear, we are faced with a desperate need for each of us to be willing to listen to one another, and to have a genuine desire to understand one another, a desire that will not be diverted by false prophets or by expediency.

In my lifetime, surging changes have left little time for readjustment and have spotlighted the growing dependence man has on his fellow man.

... A world-wide conflict was decided,

... A depression blighted the land,

... A president and other leaders were assassinated,

... Life was created in a laboratory,

... Vital organs were transplanted from one person to another,

... Man traveled to the moon and back,

... (Most momentous of all) Man attained the power of life and death over the human species.
These events have been buttressed by racing developments in communications and transportation and by the progress made in racial understanding.

Education itself has undergone enormous changes in the past fifty years, and demands for further readjustments are far-reaching and insistent. One challenge thrown at our educational system is that it must become more relevant to the overriding issues of modern life.

To effect these changes, the more extreme, in their desire for instant solutions, are eager to destroy the good along with the not-so-good. But the more perceptive and thoughtful, acting on the knowledge that there are certain "basics" in education that must not be cast away, are willing to follow the advice: Start where you are; keep the good and recast the rest to meet current needs and practices.
Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote:

All creatures to survive,
Adapt themselves to the changing conditions under which they live;
If they can grow new faculties to meet the new necessity, they thrive;
Otherwise not; the inflexible organism however much alive
Today, is tomorrow extinct.

As new members of the Alumni Society, your support is welcomed
by the remaining undergraduates, the faculty, the administration of this
great University as they endeavor to continue its effectiveness. Our
combined gifts, industry, enthusiasm, knowledge, and ability, can, in
this time of uncertainty, modify yesterday's actions in the light of
today's knowledge so this University can move confidently into the
future.

The help you give now will strengthen the University's aim to
provide an opportunity for superior education to the young people who
will be coming to your aid in a few more years, when your generation
will be running our world and attempting to cope with the inevitable
crises of that time.

Again, my congratulations upon your success and abundant good
wishes for your future.