

Remarks by

**Cathy E. Minehan, President
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston**

**at Holy Cross Commencement
May 26, 1995**

**Remarks by
Cathy E. Minehan, President
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
at Holy Cross Commencement
May 26, 1995**

Father Reedy, members of the Board of Trustees, Honorary Degree recipients, faculty, distinguished guests, graduates of 1995, friends and families of the graduating class.

Thirty years ago, at the commencement exercises of the College of the Holy Cross, here in Fitton Field, the President of the United States announced to the world during the course of his address that the United States Senate had voted ten minutes earlier to end a filibuster, clearing the way for passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. That statement brought hearty applause from the crowd of 20,000; a crowd which consisted most importantly of the Holy Cross graduating class of 417 white males.

Today, it is my privilege to join a distinguished list of men and women who have followed President Johnson to this podium. As those 30 speakers have come to this field each May, profound changes have taken place--in the composition of the graduating class, in the college itself, and in the institutions that shape our society. Yet even in the midst of rapid change, certain fundamentals remain constant. And it is on those fundamentals that your success and our collective success will rest.

The 417 white males of the 1964 graduating class have been replaced by a 1995 graduating class of 340 men and 310 women, of which 55 are racial minorities. In the same vein, the institution over which I now preside as its first woman president and chief executive officer, in 1964 had no women or minorities as executives of the Bank. Today, over half are women; and Asians, African-Americans, and Hispanics are included in those ranks.

Just as the diversity within the halls of Holy Cross and the Federal Reserve Bank expanded dramatically over the past generation, so too has the diversity of the marketplace of the United States and the world. Appreciation of the contribution of different genders, cultures and lifestyles has become an integral element in forging a competitive team in today's markets. But even more important than this, the value of diversity extends well beyond simply providing the means to compete.

In his inaugural address last September, Father Reedy tapped the essence of the challenge presented by diversity. In his view, "One of the great benefits diversity can bring to a community is to drive us to reflect on our own meaning.... Diversity stimulates continuous, salutary self-analysis as we decide again and again what is the kernel of our effort and what is not." In short, diversity challenges us to define who we are as individuals in the midst of a galaxy of competing intellectual and cultural frameworks.

For some, diversity increases choice. For others it increases

competition. For a few diversity is a scapegoat in that it allows some to blame adversity on the environment rather than one's ability to function within it. Diversity requires tolerance, tolerance for a wide range of ideas and approaches each of which can bring powerful new insights to the work we do every day and to the way we live our lives. As you have seen in your four years at Holy Cross, the Jesuit tradition embraces tolerance and values a wide ranging intellectual discourse. Yet no Jesuit College can be truly faithful to the traditions that gave it birth without also emphasizing the duty, the obligation, to reject hateful extremism even in the context of celebrating diversity and tolerance.

Extremes of thought and action are fundamentally in conflict with those very moral values that create the best that is in each of us and the best of our society. Tolerance cannot mean indifference to these extremes, to ignorance, injustice, or racial hatred. It must mean that we maintain those fundamental standards of human interaction that define a just society.

You, the graduates of 1995, will embark on careers that

carry different expectations, risks, and rewards than those of your parents whose labors helped bring you to this memorable day.

The traditional structures of the corporate, civic and even artistic worlds have been transformed by new management concepts and by breakthroughs in technology. Rigid management structures have given way to customer-focused teams organized with fewer layers of authority and greater delegation of responsibility.

Communications and processing technology now link those teams together within the organization, within the region, nationally and internationally and increase our capabilities both for productive endeavor, and speculative excess.

As you embark on your working careers, the success you achieve in this new environment will not follow traditional patterns, and perhaps will not be measured in traditional ways. But, at the same time, the personal qualities you need to achieve this success have not changed. No matter how technical society becomes, how complex our work is, or how integrated our organizations, it is the individual qualities of dedication to

principle, integrity, and breadth of perspective that are fundamental to the ability to lead. And it is the individual leader more often than not who makes the difference, particularly in times of stress or crisis.

Leadership is easy to recognize but hard to define. Its essence lies in the manner in which leaders inspire others. I have had the good fortune to witness leadership on many fronts, large and small, upclose and in person.

Who are these leaders? It's impossible to name them all, but let me focus on a few. I think of the leadership of Paul Volcker in the early 80's--a time when he lectured on this campus--when the long-term economic stability of the country was threatened by double-digit inflation. In no small way, Paul's personal dedication to creating a more healthy economic climate enabled the Fed to set the very difficult course for monetary policy that ultimately curbed inflation. I think of Kip Tiernan, the founder of Rosie's Place in Boston, who in 1989 was awarded an honorary degree at Holy Cross, who almost singlehandedly created an environment

which not only shelters homeless and abused women and children, but also provides them with the tools to begin a new life. I think of John Hamill, one of Holy Cross' trustees, and a shining example of a corporate leader making a difference in the local community. I think of Margaret Henning and Anne Jardim, the deans of Simmons College, who together have forged new paths in making a business education accessible, meaningful and supportive to aspiring women.

I think of all the parents I have served with on PTA groups who work tirelessly to create a better school environment for their children. And I also think of Heriberto Flores from Springfield and all the other community development leaders I have met in the many cities around New England who through their dedication to helping desperate families, to aiding the fortunes of small businesses, to renovating apartment houses and single family homes for low income tenants, or to providing community-based health care are gradually changing the bleak face of inner-city

landscapes. On a grand scale, or a small one, the individual leader creates the vision, and inspires us to emulate or to follow.

The Holy Cross liberal arts education has equipped all of you with the core values so fundamental to the individual leader. You have been trained to understand the most complicated issues of our times, and to bring a well-grounded philosophical perspective to the resolution of them. But these qualities of the mind do not translate into those qualities of the soul that create a leader. The test of the soul lies in the intense desire to make a difference; to see things not as they are but as they should be; to right the wrong; and, yes, to dream the impossible dream.

We are moving into a new century, a century that I truly believe holds greater promise for mankind than history has known. That promise--with all that it implies for the just society of which I spoke earlier--will become a reality only to the extent that the period ahead is characterized by the triumph of individual dedication and contribution--individuals whose firm sense of direction and underlying rock-solid values inspire others.

As you leave behind your days at Holy Cross, remember the fundamentals. Keep with you the traditions of diversity and tolerance in which your college is so deeply steeped. Constantly renew the essence of your college education-- or in the words of Father Brooks--be teachers and patterns of truth. And most of all in whatever you do, large or small, strive to be the individual leaders--the leaders of mind and soul--we all need so much.

Thank you.