

Remarks by Robert F. Goheen

It's a great pleasure to be back in Princeton this afternoon on this occasion when we are gathered to hail the magnificent benefaction of the Robertsons to the Woodrow Wilson School and when we can finally pay due public recognition to the donors of that gift.

I and I'm sure all others close to the situation have always respected Marie Robertson's passion for anonymity, her shyness about public attention, her concern for the safety of her children and their balance. It is really quite remarkable that we were successful so long in protecting her desire for anonymity. Any alert reporter -- even a Princetonian reporter -- could quite easily have pierced that veil of anonymity if he had tried. So could have the SDS, if it had really wanted to.

But on all counts it is good now that the origin of the gift can be known publicly. While there never has been any impropriety about the Robertsons' gift to support the Woodrow Wilson School, the iniquitous network of intrigue and irresponsibility that bears the name of "Watergate" is today a strong reminder that, all in all, openness is a better thing than secrecy in public affairs when large sums of money are available. So, it is especially gratifying that all shadows of suspicion about the origins of the "X Foundation" can now be dissipated; that we can now publicly praise the generous, self-denying character of the Robertsons' act in setting up that foundation; and that we can today express in the presence of all of you the admiration, affection, and gratitude which we were previously only able to express privately to Marie and Charlie.

As those of you who have worked with me will know, my memory for past events and especially for the chronological detail of past events has never been strong. I wish I could recall precisely the first time I met Marie and Charlie together. I cannot. But I do remember well an excursion from Princeton to Long Island in late April or early May of 1960, when after golf at the National, in which we were joined by Brian Leeb, Charlie took me to Huntington to visit Marie in their home there.

Earlier in that same year, the Robertsons had made a fine \$500,000 gift to Princeton's \$53 Million Campaign. That gift established "The Dwight D. Eisenhower Fund" designated for "the education of young men toward careers in international fields of endeavor and for improved understanding of foreign nations and peoples". Therefore by the time of my visit to Huntington Charlie's and Marie's interest in world affairs, and in education to strengthen and improve America's participation in them, was not new to me. These were concerns I shared, and as we had talked and communicated about them over the previous months, they had brought us together.

It was, however, during that visit to the National and to Huntington, to which I have referred, that Charlie first indicated to me that Marie and he wanted to consider some further and much more substantial way of advancing their interest in education for the public service, especially in its international dimensions. Perhaps to put me on my mettle Charlie indicated that some of his Harvard friends thought that the Littauer School would be a fine place to do that sort of thing. At the same time, he invited us to consider areas of the Woodrow Wilson School's Graduate Program that it might be "desirable to enlarge or revise provided the financial support could be provided".

You will have guessed that on getting back to Princeton I did not lose a minute getting in touch with Gardner Patterson, then Director of the School, to share this challenge with him. There followed an exciting several months. Les Chandler and Marver Bernstein were sworn to secrecy and brought in to help in the study and planning. As the development of a new, much more professionalized approach to graduate education for the public service began to take on definition in our minds, Charlie kept raising our sights. -- At least, I shall confess that we did not at first come near to estimating how very substantial was the "substantial support" that Marie and he had had in mind.

When the Robertsons made the decision to invest \$35 million to bring about the development of a whole new level of post-graduate, professional education in the Woodrow Wilson School, this country was of course still very much in the thick of the Cold War. At that time, too, the need for American technical assistance to the less developed countries also looked as though it would grow and continue for years and years to come.

Hence, career education for international service had heavy emphasis in the thinking and in the aspirations of all of us at that time. Subsequently, the changing requirements of a shifting world -- both overseas and domestically -- have forced a broader and more balanced approach as the School's graduate program has evolved.

In these same years, in my view, not only has the basic conception of advanced, professional education aimed at public service careers proved its validity; but also the implementation of that conception by successive directors, deans, and faculty members has carried the idea markedly forward,

and it is today good cause for satisfaction. Moreover, the restructuring and elevation of the graduate program of the Woodrow Wilson School, made possible by the Robertson Foundation, has helped significantly to raise the level and quality of public affairs programs in other American universities. Not the least, let me add, has this been the case at Harvard, where an especially high degree of competitive zeal was aroused by the opportunities opened up here by the Robertsons.

Of course today what Marie and Charlie Robertson have brought about in the nation's service -- through their foresight, their generosity, and their confidence in Princeton -- all this still only can be seen and assessed in very incomplete terms, on a very short time-frame. What we can be sure of is that for years and years to come the nation's service and Princeton's ability to advance it will be immeasurably the better because of the Robertson Foundation.

I believe that entirely, but what I want to close on is a more personal note.

Early in our association, I think it was during the fall of 1959, Charlie and his son Bill came and spent part of a weekend with the Goheen family at Prospect. That is when I remember Charlie ceasing to be an important alumnus with means and becoming instead a personal friend. That relationship of affection and mutual respect has grown over the subsequent years. On this occasion, therefore, I rejoice not only for Princeton and not only for the nation's service, as each has been strengthened and improved by the foresight and generosity of Marie and Charlie Robertson. I rejoice also in the personal recognition that can now properly be extended to both of them -- to Marie in warm memory and to Charlie in lively and warm presence here with us today.

For me, then, it is a singular and very great pleasure to have a hand not only in the unveiling of the "X Foundation" as the Robertson Foundation but even more in the unveiling of the two persons -- the two so warm, concerned, unassuming, yet forward looking persons -- who have brightened the lives of many of their friends even as they have enabled this School to reach toward new heights of service.

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