CLASS OF 1934 - FINAL WORD

For the past two years the graduating classes have listened to addresses which I gave, and I wish confidentially to tell the members of this year's class that for your escape from that final ordeal, you are indebted chiefly to me personally.

With that credit staring me in the face on the ledger covering the account of the past four years, I have resolved to balance the books by means of one closing word to you, to which you will be given no opportunity to reply.

After four years of it, you ought to know a lot about the depression. When it comes to that, many of you have been places and seen things without a doubt, but it isn't necessary for you to tell the world about it when you leave this campus. You ought to know also something of history, literature, philosophy, science, music, art, and other achievements of the human spirit past and present, and you should tell the world into which you go about these things, because they constitute the message which humanity today desperately needs to hear and to ponder.

Unless you have the firm belief that the golden age of achievement for the human spirit lies in the future you are, in my judgment, poorly qualified, no matter what degree has just been conferred upon you, for effective citizenship and service in the coming years.

Whatever the difficulties you have faced, I trust the total joys will far outweigh the total sorrows in all your future
memories of your stay here. May I inform you, in strictest confidence that the past four years have not been for me, exactly what one would call a joy ride, and that the faculty under whom you have received your instruction, have had their full share and more of the effects of governmental economy as it has been applied in New Mexico.

As a class you enjoy the distinction of being the first to graduate following the recognition of the University by the Association of American Universities. This fact in itself gives to this commencement day and to this graduating class a significant and honorable place in the history of this institution. In the minds of Regents, Faculty, students and citizens of the state in general, the achievement of this academic recognition, after years of effort, not only constitutes a most important event in the life of the University, but marks the beginning of a new era in higher education in New Mexico.

This educational standard was not achieved suddenly on a specified date in the year 1933. A decade and more has passed since this institution became a member of the North Central Association under the administration of former President Hill. Upon this sound academic foundation the faculty has built slowly and patiently through the years, and now at last rejoice to see, as the result of their own untiring labors, an educational structure having upon it the stamp of approval of the leading architects of American higher education.
I would not discount the important contributions of governors, legislators, Regents and presidents in supplying the tools, but I want to emphasize, at a time when it surely needs emphasis in this state, that higher educational standards are not achieved nor maintained without the leadership and intellectual guidance of a well-trained faculty. Neither New Mexico nor any other state can ever achieve a sound and respectable higher educational program through any other type of leadership.

Inasmuch as our task here is that of higher education, I personally would regard it a failure to have left this institution without having awarded to at least one graduating class, degrees which bring to their possessors, an absolute guarantee of their academic recognition no matter where they go.

It is certain that there are no short cuts, no social or political pulls, no easy roads which lead to higher educational standards. They are achieved by honesty, intelligence, and hard work. Without these qualities, young ladies and young gentlemen, you will not succeed in any true sense of the work, but with them you will surely find a place of usefulness and achievement in the fields of labor which you may enter.

I know of nothing better to wish everyone of you than joy and happiness abundant in intelligent and honest living, and may I remind you, as my last word to you, that the poet's call to "plain living and high thinking", issued long ago, and just as long unheeded in this country, comes in loud, clear tones to American young people today. It is my
earnest hope that you, the graduates of this University will heed that call, and exemplify in your personal lives the principles of plain living and high thinking.