

Chronological: Mid-Pacific Institute Commencement, Honolulu, 1985-06-01

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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news from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

topic: SPEECH BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE
MID-PACIFIC INSTITUTE COMMENCEMENT

date: Saturday, June 1, 1985 - 4:30 pm
Honolulu, Hawaii

release date: Saturday, June 1, 1985

This is your day--the day you looked forward to; the day your parents dreamed about. You have plowed through your final exams--the tension, anxiety and fear of these finals are images of the past.

During the years preceding this glorious day you have studied this land, and this Earth, and learned of its strengths and its weaknesses.

--You have studied the evil nature of intolerance and racism.

--You have been made to sense the plight of the poor and the hungry.

--You are acquainted with the constant assault on our environment.

--You realize the dangers of drugs.

Yes, you have experienced your dark days so I believe that on this day you deserve to be happy, be optimistic and be able to walk into the future with joy and confidence. You have much to be thankful for, because you enter a society abundantly blessed with prosperity and good will.

Ours is a nation unique among nations. It is a good and great land, a land that permits you to criticize and demonstrate against the government, a freedom unknown to more than 80 percent of the people of our world.

In this good land, you will have the right to choose leaders or if you foolishly prefer, you can sit back and allow others to choose your leaders.

This is a good land that will give you the right to pray as you wish to your chosen god or many gods, or not pray at all.

This is a good land where, for the first time in the history of mankind, more than half of its young people are going on to higher education.

This is a mighty land of immigrants, a land that brought forth people like Helen Keller, Susan B. Anthony, John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and provided a place for giants like Albert Einstein, the great architect I.M. Pei, great conductors Zubin Mehta and Seiji Ozawa, and dozens of Nobel laureates too numerous to mention.

The land you inherit is one that presents opportunity, offers freedom and promises equality. You will inherit a strong land that has been tested by war and human weaknesses for over 200 years.

You will go forth into a land that recognizes, and strives to complete, the unfinished business of democracy, of poverty and hunger, of racial and religious intolerance, of ignorance and illiteracy. You have the chance to take part in this business and to help your fellow men and women eradicate these curses that afflict our land.

You will inherit a land of great mountains, mighty rivers, lovely beaches and awesome glaciers. It will remain a good land if you wish it to be a good land, and actively work towards this end.

There is much good in our land, there is much joy in our land, so on this day of happiness, I wish to share with you the words of an unknown poet:

Count your garden by the flowers
Never by the leaves that fall.
Count your days by the sunny hours
Without remembering clouds at all.
Count your nights by stars, not shadows
Count your life by smiles, not tears
And on this beautiful June afternoon
Count your age by friends, not years.

Congratulations and godspeed.

SPEECH DELIVERED TO: MID-PACIFIC INSTITUTE
Commencement Exercises
Mid-Pacific Institute Football Field
Honolulu, Hawaii
June 1, 1985

THIS IS YOUR DAY--THE DAY YOU LOOKED FORWARD
TO; THE DAY YOUR PARENTS DREAMED ABOUT. YOU HAVE
PLOWED THROUGH YOUR FINAL EXAMS--THE TENSION, ANXIETY
AND FEAR OF THESE FINALS ARE IMAGES OF THE PAST.

DURING THE YEARS PRECEDING THIS GLORIOUS DAY
YOU HAVE STUDIED THIS ^{Nation} ~~LAND~~, AND THIS EARTH, AND
LEARNED OF ITS STRENGTHS AND ITS WEAKNESSES.

--YOU HAVE STUDIED THE EVIL NATURE OF INTOLERANCE AND
RACISM.

--YOU HAVE BEEN MADE TO SENSE THE PLIGHT OF THE POOR
AND THE HUNGRY.

--YOU ARE ACQUAINTED WITH THE CONSTANT ASSAULT ON OUR ENVIRONMENT.

--YOU REALIZE THE DANGERS OF DRUGS.

-- You have received the finest education available .

YES, YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED YOUR DARK DAYS SO

I BELIEVE THAT ON THIS DAY YOU DESERVE TO BE HAPPY, BE OPTIMISTIC AND BE ABLE TO WALK INTO THE FUTURE WITH JOY AND CONFIDENCE. YOU HAVE MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR, BECAUSE YOU ENTER A SOCIETY ABUNDANTLY BLESSED WITH PROSPERITY AND GOOD WILL.

OURS IS A NATION UNIQUE AMONG NATIONS. IT IS A GOOD AND GREAT LAND, A LAND THAT PERMITS YOU TO CRITICIZE AND DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT, A FREEDOM UNKNOWN TO MORE THAN 80 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE OF OUR WORLD.

IN THIS GOOD LAND, YOU WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE LEADERS OR IF YOU FOOLISHLY PREFER, YOU CAN SIT BACK AND ALLOW OTHERS TO CHOOSE YOUR LEADERS.

THIS IS A GOOD LAND THAT WILL GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO PRAY AS YOU WISH TO YOUR CHOSEN GOD OR MANY GODS, OR NOT PRAY AT ALL.

THIS IS A GOOD LAND WHERE, FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND, MORE THAN HALF OF ITS
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GOING ON TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

THIS IS A MIGHTY LAND OF IMMIGRANTS, A LAND
THAT BROUGHT FORTH PEOPLE LIKE HELEN KELLER, SUSAN B.
ANTHONY, JOHN KENNEDY, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., AND
PROVIDED A PLACE FOR GIANTS LIKE ALBERT EINSTEIN, THE
GREAT ARCHITECT I.M. PEI, GREAT CONDUCTORS ZUBIN MEHTA
AND SEIJI OZAWA, AND DOZENS OF NOBEL LAUREATES TOO
NUMEROUS TO MENTION.

THE LAND YOU INHERIT IS ONE THAT PRESENTS
OPPORTUNITY, OFFERS FREEDOM AND PROMISES EQUALITY.

YOU WILL INHERIT A STRONG LAND THAT HAS BEEN TESTED BY
WAR AND HUMAN WEAKNESSES FOR OVER 200 YEARS.

YOU WILL GO FORTH INTO A LAND THAT
RECOGNIZES, AND STRIVES TO COMPLETE, THE UNFINISHED
BUSINESS OF DEMOCRACY, OF POVERTY AND HUNGER, OF
RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE, OF IGNORANCE AND
ILLITERACY. YOU HAVE THE CHANCE TO TAKE PART IN THIS
BUSINESS AND TO HELP YOUR FELLOW MEN AND WOMEN
ERADICATE THESE CURSES THAT AFFLICT OUR LAND.

YOU WILL INHERIT A LAND OF GREAT MOUNTAINS,
MIGHTY RIVERS, LOVELY BEACHES AND AWESOME GLACIERS.
IT WILL REMAIN A GOOD LAND IF YOU WISH IT TO BE A GOOD
LAND, AND ACTIVELY WORK TOWARDS THIS END.

THERE IS MUCH GOOD IN OUR LAND, THERE IS
MUCH JOY IN OUR LAND, SO ON THIS DAY OF HAPPINESS, I
WISH TO SHARE WITH YOU THE WORDS OF AN UNKNOWN POET:

COUNT YOUR GARDEN BY THE FLOWERS

NEVER BY THE LEAVES THAT FALL.

COUNT YOUR DAYS BY THE SUNNY HOURS

WITHOUT REMEMBERING CLOUDS AT ALL.

COUNT YOUR NIGHTS BY STARS, NOT SHADOWS

COUNT YOUR LIFE BY SMILES, NOT TEARS

AND ON THIS BEAUTIFUL ^{JUNE}~~APRIL~~ AFTERNOON

COUNT YOUR AGE BY FRIENDS, NOT YEARS.

CONGRATULATIONS AND GODSPEED.