



September 7, 1978

INAUGURAL

Jonathan Rhoads, John Whitehead, Members of the Corporation and Board, fellow Presidents, fellow members of the faculty, fellow members of the administration and staff, students, alumni, and friends.

Scholars being the creatures they are, have not hesitated to analyze the presidential inaugural. One study suggests that every inaugural contains at least three themes. The first is allegedly a request for financial support. Let me hasten to add that is a tradition which I'm more than happy to abandon on this occasion - not out of complacency, but out of courtesy. The second theme which is said to exist in every inaugural is a statement of the lack of worthiness of the incoming president for the job which has been thrust upon him or her. This being an institution in the Quaker tradition, I will, in the lawyer's terminology, take that as a case of res ipsa loquitur.

The third reputed theme in every inaugural is the praise of predecessors. If this in some way is thought to be inappropriate - as the study hints - let me say at once I intend to follow the tradition, not out of courtesy but out of a tremendous sense of debt to earlier presidents. I'm especially flattered that Archibald MacIntosh, Gilbert White and Hugh Borton have all done the College the honor of attending this inaugural.

It is my particular pleasure, however, today, to thank my two immediate predecessors for all they have achieved.

Jack Coleman brought this College from an institution of 575 students to an institution of 900. I know this in some areas caused concern, and doubt. As an outsider coming in and looking at that achievement, it is a truly remarkable one, for it was done without sacrificing Haverford's basic traditions. For that alone Jack deserves enormous praise and thanks.

Anyone, however, who led a college during the late sixties and early seventies also deserves praise and gratitude from all constituencies merely for surviving. Yet Jack not only presided over the College with distinction and enthusiasm, but he presided in a way which enabled Haverford to surmount the trauma and drama of that period, while setting a national standard of commitment and concern for affairs of State, a concern which I suspect none of his successors will be able to emulate. For these and other reasons we all owe Jack Coleman a great debt of thanks.

Steve Cary, taking on the presidency as he did at a time when the crisis on campus was of a different variety, equally deserves all our thanks.

Already as Vice-President he had made tremendous progress in re-organizing the day-to-day financing as well as long-term fund-raising of the College. It was as president, however, that he perhaps made his most lasting contribution. His restatement of Haverford's traditions, principles and purposes, his concern for education in the broadest sense, his concern with caring, his sense of the value of both dissent and decorum, have earned him our lasting affection. His continued presence as an integral part of the administration, is an assurance that these strengths will prosper in what I trust will be a period of excitement for Haverford.

I think that confidence in the period ahead is justified for many reasons. Haverford has been a superbly fortunate and successful institution - in the

excellence of its faculty, the quality of its student body, the loyalty of its staff, the devotion of its alumni, and the stewardship of its Board of Managers. Yet none of us dare be complacent. The world in which we shall operate over the next decades - both internationally and nationally - will be very different than the one we have known.

The war in Vietnam showed that the United States was neither omnipotent nor omniscient. The power of OPEC and our inability to develop an energy policy, our apparent inability to curb inflation, the increasing imbalance in our balance of payments, the fact that the growth of GNP is now below the level of many other industrialized nations - all reflected in the current weakness of the dollar - will mean that in decades ahead we shall live in a very different national and international society. Internationally we shall be less able to make unilateral judgments and decisions as we move into a more interdependent world; while nationally we shall have to live with a more static economy and make decisions - whether through the market-place or through a regulated economy - with a careful concern about the finite nature of our resources which has been alien to the American character for the last two hundred years.

All this I admit sounds gloomy, yet it should be regarded much more as a challenge - a challenge both to the persons going out into this new environment and, more immediately, a challenge for those of us concerned with higher education to equip the next generations of students with the skills and knowledge, and an ability to make decisions, to enable those students to face a society which will be dramatically different from the one we or our ancestors have known.

Faced with those pressures, there is a strong temptation to say that the answer should be pre-professional training for all at the undergraduate level. We do not need massive empirical studies to show that over the last few years the pressure toward professionalism has become increasingly strong in higher education.

There are moments when it seems that every student is typed as pre-law, pre-med or pre-something.

Nor does one have to look far for the economic pressures stimulating these developments. Not only is our society facing very different challenges, but the market into which our students emerge is increasingly competitive. Nationally, we graduated three times as many liberal arts students last summer as we did in the summer of 1953. In a certain sense one could say we graduated five times as many liberal arts students as we did twenty-five years earlier, because in 1953 it was assumed that the majority of women degree holders would not enter the work force at least in any meaningful full-time way. Today, the presumption has been reversed. Having five times as many liberal arts graduates today, the kind of neat implicit assumptions that existed in the mid '50's that for every liberal arts graduate there would be, in some way, in our society, a niche, has evaporated. With this change, it is little wonder that the pressure to develop much more professionalized courses is enormous. With the other social and economic changes in society, that pressure is irrationally aggravated.

To some extent, higher education and the liberal arts in general have brought the problems on themselves. Studies showing that graduates earn more than non-graduates have been answered by popular studies questioning the economic advantage of attending college. I would urge that the battle is misconceived. To put it mildly, we have slipped much too far from the position of John Adams who saw a liberal education as providing "a hereditary ardor for liberty and thirst for knowledge"; or Thomas Jefferson who saw liberal education as the essential basis for a society whose laws were "wisely formed" and "best administered." Indeed to argue in economic terms about what should be externalities seems as distasteful as it is irrelevant; at least if we truly believe that we have it in our power to produce someone who justifies the title of an educated person.

The liberal arts college ought to represent the core of the culture in which we live. It ought not to revolve around pre-law, pre-meds, and pre-business, unless we believe that our modern society is no more than a collection of professions

I would certainly not argue that the pre-professional concepts should not be examined nor careers seriously planned. While the definitions and nuances of a liberal education are clearly almost as infinite as the meaning of a "liberal," few would deny that, as one unpacks the concept of a liberal education, we have moved from the vision of the liberal arts as the study of these subjects which "every gentleman ought to know" to include subjects and skills which enable us to be more humane and effective in this age of professionalism.

Certainly a commitment to liberal education does not mean that an institution should not evolve. The vision of liberal arts has indeed changed dramatically. The Day Report at Yale in the 1820's saw liberal arts in America essentially as based on the trivium and quadrivium that had been the basis of classical education in Europe since the Middle Ages. The elective coming from Amherst, and more importantly from Eliot's Harvard, and later the major from Lowell's Harvard transformed the structure of the liberal arts curriculum. Developments in society, developments in the vision of liberal arts institutions, but most importantly developments of new disciplines, have had a profound effect on what we think of as liberal arts education.

If one looks at Oxford in the 1850's it was wrestling with an attempt to introduce new subjects such as history. The move was not greeted with enthusiasm by many. The broadsheets of the 1850's make wonderful reading. History, it was said, is something a gentleman might well keep by his nightstand. It was scarcely suitable material for an intellectual discipline. "Is the matter suitable for Education? Is it an exercise of the mind? Is it not better left till education is completed? Is it not sufficiently attractive to assure a voluntary attention

to it? Is it a convenient subject for examination? Where is the standard author like Thucydides? If there is no standard author, how are comparative merits of the candidates to be judged? Will it not supercede those subjects where a severer discipline is required?"

Similar battles have been fought throughout the past century. The highlight of the Inaugural address of Isaac Sharpless, in 1887, was an announcement that the Board of Managers had agreed to the establishment of an English department - a step well ahead of its time. For many years, Harvard and Yale hid the natural scientists in special schools away from the liberal arts - The Lawrence Scientific School and The Sheffield Scientific School. When I was at Oxford sociology appeared nowhere in the curriculum; and even the new degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics was regarded as risqué. Yet that intellectual revolution, characterized by Freud, that begot the behavioral sciences, had already added another dimension to the American concept of the liberal arts: bringing the understanding of what society is and what it is not into the humane tradition.

I give these examples to attempt to explain what I mean by retaining the liberal arts and sciences as the core education in our society, whatever emphasis we put on that tradition. I do not mean to belittle the professional schools in our universities, nor the vital work of the State and Community colleges. The liberal arts colleges, however, have a peculiar responsibility in our society. We should resist vigorously the effort to pre-law, pre-medicine, pre-business, pre-anything, if it means ceasing to educate. Even if we smile on that vision of the liberal arts which emphasizes the development of inner potential through some specific subject, we should not move too far from our cultural tradition. In the Haverfords of this world, we should resist Robert Hutchins' most famous example of the attack on the liberal arts - the major in mobile homes.

What we should not resist is organic growth; and what we must at all times be willing to do is to be articulate about the liberal arts. We must be increasingly willing to re-state the philosophy underlying our commitment to education. In the late '60's there was a danger - nationwide - of our losing any sense of educational philosophy, any sense of coherence in the undergraduate educational pattern. We have already resiled somewhat from that position; but we are going to need to be more articulate yet, and as we look to the future, and as we consider the problems that our students will be facing, we must be prepared to envisage what organic growth we can expect and what growth we should attempt to stimulate within the liberal arts.

While I am sure we should resist the pre-professional assaults, we ought not to be afraid of teaching those aspects of professional disciplines that come out of the intellectual traditions of the liberal arts. We ought to be thinking of ways we can best group our existing offerings, and nurture inter-disciplinary and inter-departmental programs. As we move to a society where culture is transmitted in a way that may be somewhat different from our traditional ways, we should be much more willing to consider the role of the performing and the visual arts in our liberal arts curriculum.

We need to examine what kind of substance and what kind of skills, will equip our students to face an interdependent international society and a transformed domestic society. As we reach a stage where we can no longer think we are omnipotent or omniscient, we have to learn the ability to analyze policy. Whether there are certain ways of thinking, whether there are certain ways of communicating, whether there are some new skills like the use of the computer, which we ought to see as an increasingly integral part of the liberal arts education, are questions which we should not be afraid to ask.

We have also, I think, lost much by packaging the life of the mind in the way we do. In the 18th century, when the American college had what we would now call a mandatory four-year curriculum, I am alarmed to note that it was the task of a president, with some perceptive lectures in the senior year, to synthesize the whole of knowledge for the undergraduate body. The last thing I'm suggesting is that we revert to that frightening model, but I would argue that we have lost something by intervening developments. It was the utilitarian education reformers in England who substituted the examination, with its connotations of educational competence, for an extended period of study and exposure to the classics and to literature. The examination made it feasible to package; and the packaged course made feasible a great egalitarian revolution in tertiary education in this country.

Yet we have lost by emphasizing packaging over synthesis. What the literature now calls the "module" is a far cry from a vigorous training in the classics. I recollect at the time the so-called free universities flourished in the 60's when some of my colleagues were worried that the end of the world was at hand, feeling comforted by reading the advertisement for one west coast free university offering courses in Revolution I and Revolution II, Guerilla Tactics I and Guerilla Tactics II. It seemed that the packaging mentality of the American university already was strangling what the radical movement thought of as its intellectual voice. Yet it would be equally tragic if we allowed packaging to stifle the liberal arts, by assuming it was not our constant responsibility to offer an education which bore some resemblance to a well-planned gastronomical repast rather than some pre-packaged smorgasbord.

It is obviously not realistic to pretend that we don't have to do some packaging. I suspect that even in an intimate setting like Haverford, the idea of a comprehensive education leading to only one set of examinations at the end of the three or four-term period - still the dominant tradition at Oxford - is totally unrealistic.

But even the hint that we can learn all we need to know in a certain number of weeks and a certain number of hours undermines the concept of the liberal education. Indeed, it undermines to some extent, the concept of education altogether. Haverford already has more flexibility than most with its programs of individual study; yet we may need to do more to break the intellectual formalism of a four-year undergraduate program made up of apparently self-contained units.

It is with these kinds of issues, with the flexibility and freedom we have at this institution, that Haverford needs at all times to be concerned. If we can refine and strengthen what is good, stimulate organic growth and avoid the gimmick; if we make an honest effort to distinguish between innovation and improvement, we shall have made a major contribution to liberal arts education.

Many of the gurus of higher education have chosen to voice skepticism about the survival of the liberal arts college. I, however, would argue that a liberal arts education is best developed within the context of the liberal arts college. The liberal arts colleges after all, are one of the major contributions of American higher education - perhaps on this occasion you will allow me to claim them as the major American contribution to higher education. There are undoubtedly, in the university context many interesting experiments to be conducted by linking the professional schools and the undergraduate schools. The State and Community Colleges of this country have responded to state and local needs in a remarkable way. Yet only in the liberal arts college can the value of a liberal arts education be effectively tested; and I am arrogant enough to believe that what we achieve at Haverford may offer a model not only for other liberal arts colleges but also for larger institutions where the liberal arts have to compete for resources and attention with graduate and professional schools.

All this becomes more relevant because we are in the midst of an academic recession, or perhaps the word should be depression. Higher education today resembles the situation of the coal mines in the 1930's or 1950's. This year

our high schools graduated some 3 million, 100 thousand students. Five years hence they'll graduate 2 million, 600 thousand. By 1985 we shall need 15% fewer places in higher education. A few years later, we may need 20-25% fewer places in higher education than we have today. When Hugh Borton gave his inaugural in the 1950's, one of his concerns was where the professors of the 1960's and 1970's would come from? In the 1980's a vital question is how shall we re-train our unemployed Ph.D.'s and our redundant professors? It's a sad reflection on our society, but if all our graduate schools closed for five years, at least in the arts, humanities and social sciences, we should still have no shortage of teachers in higher education. If the majority of our graduate schools never reopened, we would still have no shortage of professors until the 1990's and even then, that demand would be dependent on a significant shift in the birth rate.

Certainly since Hugh Borton's inaugural, dramatic things have happened in the world of higher education. Much of what is written about the maintenance of the private colleges and universities may be dismissed as self-serving publicity, yet there is an important truth in the need to retain independent higher education in a highly centralized society. Yet its survival is far less certain than it once was.

Twenty-five years ago, the majority of university and college students were in private institutions. Today, it is a distinct minority. Twenty-five years ago we were not in the situation we are today, where many of our leading private universities receive between one-third and one-half of their income from the Federal government. Twenty-five years ago, it would have been unthinkable that the Congress would have made the demands of private higher education it made in the recent medical manpower legislation. A Congress which provides more than three-quarters of the budget of some medical schools, however, is inevitably going to be callous about what it perceives as the abstruse points of academic freedom like the admission of students.

I'm not for one moment suggesting that it is inappropriate for the Federal government to support some aspects of research. Federal scholarship aid has become an integral part of all our existences. Yet one of the greatest assets that independent institutions, and particularly colleges like Haverford, have, is that we can afford to reap the limited federal benefits without becoming dependent on Washington. In this sense, liberal art colleges have a great advantage even over our great private universities. In this context we are the best example of the truly independent sector in higher education. If one is concerned about private higher education, the fate of Haverford and Bryn Mawr will be significant.

That is why I see as exciting and stimulating the prospect of studying and re-thinking the evolving liberal arts education. It is clear that the changes which will emerge will occur in a context very different from those which higher education has experienced during the last 25 years. Not all liberal arts colleges will survive. Indeed many may fall by the wayside. The determining factor may well be the issue of what will be regarded as archaic, taking the college out of the mainstream of higher education and as ultimately out of the real future of American society, and what will be regarded as distinguished and distinctive.

What is clearly distinctive and not archaic is the Quaker tradition of intellectual integrity at Haverford College. The University of Vermont uses on the cover of its catalog the AAUP statement on academic freedom. We use the equally powerful statement from Isaac Sharpless, where he called upon the College to "preach truth and do righteousness. For your consciences and your judgments we have not sought to bind; and see you to it that no other institution, no political party, no social circle, no religious organization, no pet ambitions put such chains on you as would tempt you to sacrifice one iota of the moral freedom of your consciences or the intellectual freedom of your judgments."

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that intellectual integrity in the searching out of truth wherever it may lead, coupled with the realization that the only way to defeat an idea is to produce a better one, represents the core of the western liberal intellectual tradition. It was this tradition of intellectualism which so impressed Voltaire in his analysis of the Quakers in his "Letters Concerning the English Nation." Moreover, if I may be irreverent for a moment, and contrast this tradition with the Congregational tradition of Connecticut colony, may I remind you that it was the leaders of Yale College who forced the Connecticut legislature to pass legislation in the eighteenth century banning the works by Quakers and Adamites. Intellectual censorship of any form, is something totally alien to the Quaker tradition.

There is, of course, another aspect to the Quaker tradition which not only cements it in the center of liberal tradition but puts it in the forefront of the concerns of higher education today. There was an arrogant period in the sixties when at least in some of the social sciences, to a limited extent even in the humanities, and in a rather different kind of way in the natural sciences, there was a vogue of what might be called value-free empirical research. Theoretical model-building claimed to be unrelated to pre-existing values. These are positions from which most sophisticated scholars have rapidly retreated. The concern with values, the concern with ethics, the concern with the implications of scientific development have now once more taken their rightful preeminence. That too is in the Quaker tradition.

It is true that intellectuals have never felt entirely happy about the articulation of values, at least in the Anglo-American tradition. Intellectuals were as horrified by John Stuart Mill's posthumous essay "Theism", as they were by Pascal's belief in the miracle of the holy thorn. I think, however, sophisticate

intellectuals today would share the reasoning of Cyril Radcliffe, who may in retrospect, come to be regarded as the most sophisticated jurist of the Twentieth Century: "There was a time... when I believe that a man possessed a separate intellectual or logical power, his reasoning faculty, independent of his powers or disciplines, and that it was his highest duty as a man to accord predominance to that power... That belief has not persisted with me. It seems to me that thinking is a function of the whole of one's personality, with all the interplay of emotion and experiences that in time claim and receive recognition from one's reason, so that reason either becomes a term so comprehensive that it embraces everything that conditions one's thoughts or else remains an isolated analytic and deductive faculty - which does not in practice determine by any means all one's opinions or views." It is encouraging to note that even a lawyer can learn.

I have already learned, although not yet completely by any means fully grasped, what strength the tradition of Quaker values has imparted to this college. The dead weight of tradition at other colleges may slow their response to the challenges and opportunities the last years of the century will bring. Haverford's distinction will be assured if we are able to link academic excellence with our historical tradition: what Rufus Jones called the "Invisible College" - "that viewless structure of solid ideals, aims, aspirations, standards of scholarship and passion for sincerity, truth and honesty which have always characterized this college."

The concern for individuals, for academic excellence, for moral growth that are the aims of the invisible college will not, however, be nurtured by mere talk. Platitudes - though they may provide a balanced diet for lawyers and educators - will not suffice. As Quakers have continually borne witness to what ought to be, so must this college. As the same tradition has led its exponents to express their beliefs in action; so must this College. The "Invisible College" will be

nurtured only by our efforts to make it visible in the way that we as individuals act and the way we as a college act. Haverford must transmit values by exemplification, not only in the classroom, but in the decisions that, as a college, we will make about our future course of action.

Speaking now as an official member of this community, I hope you will grant me the liberty of speaking frankly to you on this occasion - as I know you will not hesitate to speak to me on many others.

I do not believe that Haverford has been true to its "structure of solid ideals" in the matter of diversity - a word which in the Haverford context can mean many things but which seems to signify a desire to create a college which in its composition and curriculum both reflects and prepares our students for the disparate yet increasingly interdependent world outside. We have sought, and still seek to achieve, diversity through attracting more members of minorities to the community, through the admission of women as transfer students directly to Haverford College, and through our expanding cooperation with Bryn Mawr College.

In the area of increasing the number of minority members on our campus, all of us - students, faculty, administration and staff as well as the Board of Managers - have agreed on what ought to be, and indeed some progress has been made. Our resources may well not permit us to do everything we would like, but have we achieved all we should? Have we acted with the speed and resolution which the tradition of expressing our beliefs in action would seem to require? Haverford does not have a worse record than many other colleges, but the standard of comparison must be within our own college -- the visible with the invisible. By that stern standard I fear we have some distance to go before we can be comfortable with our own traditions.

In the last two years, Haverford has become more diverse by creating a more fully coeducational environment through the admission of women to the college.

This is in keeping both with national trends and with the realization that single sex schools are historically a manifestation of sexism in our society. While Haverford does not yet admit women to the freshman class, such a course of action may be logical development. Indeed, the Board of Managers last spring stated that "the present status of coeducation at Haverford is not an appropriate solution."

The discussion of the appropriate solution, too, must be consonant with our "solid ideals." As I have become more acquainted with the discussion of the past, it has been encouraging to see that much of the debate has been on solid educational and ethical bases, but I was disappointed to find so much recent attention has been devoted to the "is" of economic necessity, and applicant pools, rather than the "ought" of how this college should conduct itself toward women as individuals and their role in today's society. In 1848, non-Quakers were admitted to Haverford - as the current college catalog baldly admits - for financial reasons. What would be the lessons to be drawn from such an example today? Would they truly nurture the invisible college? When the discussion of admitting freshmen women resumes, we should again consider first the moral and educational concerns involved. Only then will we be true to our traditions.

Much of the progress in diversity of curriculum and environment in recent years has been achieved through our cooperation with Bryn Mawr College. I believe we have established an appropriate institutional framework to shape our relationship as we proceed to build a strong two-college relationship. There have been a few unquakerly moments in our past history, but I believe the two-college agreement of 1977 has already put us on a better footing. Today each college is free to pursue its distinctive mission with due regard for the other institution's needs and differences.

I would hope that our cooperation will become closer. Our programs are already coordinated, we cooperate on appointments, and we may well have a need for further cooperation in academic planning, with respect to facilities, administration and even raising of resources. Can we find ways to draw closer together, yet preserve

the differences which make the two-college relationship so stimulating? Can we both be free to act as we each see our specific missions yet remain committed to our common future? The maintenance of that creative tension between individual freedom and concern for the community would exemplify much that is the best in our traditions.

In our continuing search for diversity we will, of course, depend on Bryn Mawr College, but I would hope that we could look, too, to our relationship with Swarthmore College and the University of Pennsylvania. Swarthmore shares much in outlook and educational philosophy with Bryn Mawr and Haverford; the University of Pennsylvania offers a richness of disciplines and experience that the three colleges cannot match. We may well, as a group, develop an academic enterprise which is stronger and more effective than the Claremont Colleges or the five college and university group in the Connecticut Valley.

If we are able to achieve that I have no doubt about the profound effects on American higher education.

That is what might be. I will try to move toward the future - whatever it holds - with a firm commitment to examine what ought to be for Haverford. If, in the next few years, I can play some role in shaping the liberal arts at Haverford to include the changing patterns of human knowledge and needs without sacrificing academic excellence, if I can play some role in assuring that the invisible college stands more firmly than ever behind our decisions in all areas of campus life, than I hope you feel that you made an appropriate choice.

I should like to thank the Board of Managers and the College community for the honor it has done me, and I should like to thank each one of you for attending today.

Robert Stevens