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ADDRESS BY

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GOVERNOR RICHARD J. HUGHES

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"NEW JERSEY PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION -- OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE"

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CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY

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I come before you today in what is almost my first formal public address since the electoral decision of November 2. That victory was the outcome of a debate not between two men or even between two parties. It was the outcome of a debate between two opposing ideas of what this State could become and what, in my firm judgment, it must become to fulfill the promise born with it more than three centuries ago. The victory was, in short, a direction sign for progress and for the public courage that must accompany progress.

There is a political adage that party platforms are for candidates to stand on, and then to run away from after the election is over.

Gentlemen, I have come here today to reaffirm that I mean to implement my platform of 1965 as fast as reason and resources permit.

Just as I tried to, and -- where the Legislature permitted -- did implement our platform of 1961, I mean to hold my Party to its commitments and those commitments deal very importantly with education. I hope to persuade all reasonable men to go as far as logic can determine and as far as the human heart and the State's pocketbook can reasonably extend, in fulfilling our educational needs. At the same time, I of course will be obligated by duty to maintain a sense of balance and a broad view of all the other pressing needs of New Jersey.

I believe that we are going to win our fight for excellence in higher education in New Jersey. But if we fall short -- and I do not believe we will -- it will not be because I as Governor will not strive to the full limits of his heart, mind and resources to meet the problems which confront us. That has been my pledge to the people. I reaffirm it but I will certainly need your help, the counsel of your wisdom and your energies to do it. For the commitment to excellence in New Jersey higher education cannot be made real by one man or one party or one group. It must be made real by all responsible men, by the leaders and members of both parties, by independents, by the academician and the administrator, by the businessman and the working man. For the people and their sons and daughters look to us for leadership.

It is no accident that I should use the word "leadership" as I speak before this distinguished group dedicated to the essence of leadership -- education.

I did not come late to the problems of higher education in New Jersey; and I do not propose to leave early. In fact, the people have willed that I shall not leave for another four years, and I have welcomed their judgment with a sobering sense of the difficulties that lie before us.

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In January, 1963, in my first Annual Message to the New Jersey Legislature, I said:

"Main attention is now shifting to the State's role in the field of higher education...As we review the estimates of the numbers of our youth who will be seeking higher education in the years ahead, we know that our present facilities, public and private, are inadequate to meet the demand. We cannot but wonder whether the present pattern of distribution of our resources is efficient...We must ask whether our facilities can measure up to the demands of excellence in education which are so essential to growth and leadership in a complex society..."

I then proposed a broad study of the future of higher education in this State, and I appointed a Governor's Committee on New Jersey Higher Education for that critical evaluation. The people of New Jersey were fortunate in the fact that a group of distinguished Americans agreed to conduct that study. It was their report which opened the continuing discussion on the future of higher education in New Jersey and it was their report which will serve as the basis of the decisions which we will make concerning the structure of higher education in New Jersey. I want to take this opportunity to thank publicly Dr. Carroll V. Newsom, Dr. James B. Fisk, Dr. James Hillier, Dr. Millicent C. McIntosh, and Dr. James A. Perkins for their selfless contribution to education in New Jersey and thereby to education in America.

In 1964 the Committee's report was published, as you all know. In accepting that report I publicly called upon all segments of New Jersey society to engage in the broadest and most pervasive dialogue on its recommendations. I have heard from some groups; others are still considering the report. Gentlemen, time is running out; we are coming to the end of that great dialogue even now as we await new opinions. But, I need not remind you that we are here considering changes which will affect this State, not for a Summer or a Spring, but for generations to come. We are about to determine whether we are going to save a generation of college students or waste them, and when we save them how well we save them.

The promise of higher education is not reached merely by the addition or subtraction of numbers, however important that is, but rather how wisely or badly we educate, and the structure we establish to make certain that the bright dreams and plans of yesterday become the full-fledged realities of tomorrow.

Surely, the efforts of the members of this group, today and in succeeding days, on the report -- "A Call to Action" -- which you are discussing, deserve the plaudits of every forward-thinking person in this State. You have worked hard and long to bring us an accurate picture of the overwhelming needs in dollars and numbers faced by this State in refueling, retooling and redirecting its higher education system. You again have underscored the aggravating fact that some 54% of our high school graduates still must go out of State for higher educational opportunities. You have rightfully recommended, among other things, that a crash program in capital construction for higher education must be launched.

If you will forgive a political reference, in the Democratic Party Platform of 1965 we pledged that we would more than double enrollment in our public higher

educational institutions in the next decade. New figures show that such a doubling will only be a beginning. Nevertheless, even that figure implies the necessary availability of additional millions of dollars for construction, operations and planning. In addition, I need not remind you that those millions for higher education are predicted on the passage of a broad-based tax -- not in some distant future -- but early in 1966. Because from a real and political standpoint, equivocating on this obligation in the early months of '66, means that later we'll be in the legislative year of '67, right under the guns, you might say, of a new election state wide for legislators. Realistically this has a certain impact on legislators, as everyone knows -- and if we lose this opportunity, it may be many years before we have another chance.

It is a matter of public record that I was one of the few governors in New Jersey history to propose a broad-based tax even while many counseled that it was politically dangerous. And you also know that I have said repeatedly that I would seek a graduated income tax of moderate proportions as the most equitable method to yield those revenues. In my Budget Message of 1964 I said that at least \$125 million should be spent in the next five years for capital construction in higher education. And even though there was a subsequent \$40 million higher education Bond Issue; even though additional funds will be funneled into the State from the federal Higher Education Facilities Acts of 1963 and 1965; still, we will have to go beyond that \$125 million figure, especially in meeting the greater needs of the 1970s.

During the past few days I have met with leaders and representatives of many segments of New Jersey society. I find what I believe is a consensus on program needs of the State and also a consensus of courage, you might say, or reconciliation to the inevitability of and broad-based tax to pay for those programs. But let us remember that much as we would like to dedicate all new revenues from a broad-based tax to the expansion and improvement of higher education, we must necessarily apportion those funds among other pressing needs such as State aid to local school districts, institutions, water and air pollution control programs and highway construction. I assure you of one thing, however, that higher education will remain the first order of public business of my administration, and it will receive top priority attention, financially and otherwise.

There remain other crucial questions in addition to money. There remains the central question of the structure of public higher education in New Jersey. That a change must be made in our present structure is almost universally agreed upon. But the specific nature of that structural change still remains open for determination. This administration will not shrink from making that determination. But our thinking and the public's thinking could benefit much from a more productive dialogue on the question of structure. We have to bring about that productive discussion that will firm up and crystallize the public's will and the rightness of the decisions that we have to make, as a government. I think that an organization such as yours can make significant contributions to that public discussion. I urge you to continue your work in that direction.

The Newsom Report made a very serious set of recommendations on structure. The revision of the older Strayer Report, now being made by the State Department of Education, updates numbers and needed funds and, to a degree, discusses structure such as the future diversification of the State Colleges and their transformation

into multi-purpose Liberal Arts institutions. The latter is something we know must come and is coming. At the same time, we must consider the effects of such changes on the supply of badly needed primary and secondary school teachers, of which there is a deficit even today. Those considerations are not irreconcilable.

There is the entire range of questions involved in how Rutgers, the State University shall grow.

There are also some very fundamental questions we must ask ourselves about the direction of our rapidly growing County Community College network. Those colleges hold great potential not only for thousands of young men and women who will enroll in two-year terminal courses, or later transfer to four-year institutions, but for the future growth of New Jersey business, industry and commerce.

Although New Jersey is one of the last states in the union to develop a public community college network, that does not mean that we must dive in, looking neither left nor right. I am not at all sure, for example, that the State is doing enough to live up to its obligations to the counties or the people to insure quality low-cost education at the community colleges. I hope -- and will certainly expect -- that since this is a new program there will be the closest possible academic and financial relationship between the State and the counties as these colleges move forward. This in no way denigrates what has been done up to now. It means, simply, that the county community college adventure will need, and should have, all the resources and expertise necessary to make those colleges work, and to make our children justly proud of our innovation.

The working paper which you will discuss recommends that the State develop a Master Plan for Higher Education. Unfortunately, at the present time we do not have such a plan, and that is a glaring lack in our educational planning. But, gentlemen, a Master Plan is not a magic wand, and nothing will come of the most brilliant master plan if we are not assured of the highest professional competence and direction of the master planners themselves.

I would urge you to take back to your constituents, as it were, the considered results of your discussions. I would ask you to do this because your report -- whatever it may finally become -- is just a beginning and not the end of the job. I would like you to publicize your conclusions to your communities and your friends and colleagues. I want you, again, to bring the message of our higher education needs forcefully to the people. I have been doing that for four years as I travelled this State from corner to corner. I have studied your preliminary report. I shall await the final document with anticipation, and I want you to know that it will receive the highest consideration because I am sure it will merit that. Other groups such as the League of Women Voters some time ago indicated a strong interest in the educational structure of New Jersey, and I am awaiting their comments. I know that organized labor has a large stake in our educational progress, and they also indicated strong interest in the direction, for example, of the community college idea.

Finally, I want to express my sincere appreciation for what you have done and what you are about to do. I am not saying that casually. I know what many of you have sacrificed in time, energy and in money to become part of this endeavor. I can only say so that there is no misunderstanding, that whatever we decide, we

are going to decide it soon. I hope that this decision will reflect a public consensus. I trust that it will be right and proper and directed against no personality or group, but will be in the best long-range interests of the proud State we all love.

I did not run for a second term as Governor to preside over a second-rate State. I did not come here today to tell you that I would temporize with long-standing problems which demand action. I came here to reaffirm my belief that together we can make New Jersey number one in the quality of our higher education. As John F. Kennedy recalled, the journey of a thousand miles starts with one step. The dialogue that we're having, and that we can promote and encourage all over the State should very soon -- we can't wait much longer -- lead to that first step. For I believe there is no more noble, important legacy that one generation may leave to the next than the tools, the means, the impetus and drive for the broadening of the mind, the enrichment of the spirit; in short, the promise and fulfillment of education.

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