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UA3/2/4 Founder's Day Address

Paul Garrett
Western Kentucky University

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We meet today to celebrate the founding and service of this college. On January 15, 1829, a charter was issued to the Trustees of the Kentucky Baptist Education Society, organized to found a college primarily to give the Baptist denomination a better trained ministry. This was the first Baptist college to be chartered south and west of the Alleghanies and the fifth to be established in the United States. Instruction began January 11, 1830. Financial resources consisted of Mr. Pawling's contribution of $20,000 and some $6,000 raised by the citizens of Georgetown who have always been generous in their support. The sole instructional space was the small building which had housed Rittenhouse Academy. The first president died on his way to take charge, the next two choices declined and the first president, Joel Bacon was so harrassed by suits, injunctions and controversies that he held out only two years. A period of no accomplishment followed until /October 1839 when Rockwood Ciddings became president and worked with excellent results in securing harmony and financial support but unfortunately died at the end of his first year. I have not time to discuss the labors of those distinguished leaders who succeeded him and guided the college in good times and bad thru a career of rare service in the field of Christian liberal education. The story of the founding of the college you can find well told in Prof. Meyers book. We prize the copy which he gave our Kentucky library at Western. Further information concerning the founding of the college and its presidents you can find in J.H. Spencer's History of Kentucky Baptists and in Lewis' History of Higher Education in Kentucky. From our Kentucky library I have brought a copy of the latter volume in case it might not be in Georgetown's collection so sadly depleted by the fire.

I am unable to refrain from calling to the attention of the present student body some of the rules which governed the students in the good old days.

1- Students must have the approval of the faculty in selection of a boarding place.

2- No student permitted to be absent from room after 7 o'clock at night without leave except to attend church or the voluntary societies connected with the college.
3- No student shall attend any exhibition of immoral tendency or frequent any bar room or tippling house.

4- No student will be permitted to enter upon the grounds or premises of other persons so as to molest or injure property or to associate with idle or vicious company or to engage in a frolic of a noisy disorderly or immoral nature.

5- No student shall carry about him deadly weapons or take part in a duel on pain of immediate expulsion.

6- No young minister should think of leaving home for college until he has received a fair common school education (a piece of excellent advice too often unheeded)

I entered the college in September 1910, not that that was an important date so far as the college was concerned, but it was vastly important for me. Arthur Yager was president. I am not sure that I have ever known a man of greater brain power. An efficiency expert probably would have given him a low grade because he was not at all concerned with the modern gadgets and details of college administration but he extended friendliness and sympathy to green freshmen like me and the classes which he occasionally taught worthwhile experiences because of his personal learning and interesting observations. I recall our delight in his "he that tooteth not his own horn, the same shall not be tooted." An indication of his genuine lack of front was his comment on a visit while he was governor of Porto Rico when some woman was ching and ching about how nice it must be to live in a marble palace, to the effect that she wouldn't think it was so nice if she had to get out on those cold floors in her bare feet.

He was succeeded by M.B. Adams, a gentleman of distinction and charm who with his lovely wife made the presidents home an irresistible and charming stopping place for students.

Since I had rushed thru high school a bit I had only two years of Latin so was obliged to make up two years in order to qualify for a A.B. degree. This caused me to take Cicero's Orations well supplemented by Bennetts Latin Grammar under Jack P'lliam, who so far as I could tell knew them both by heart. No one who had the experience I am sure would be willing to give it up. My chief marvel was the instructor, my second the ability of one of ministerial students in the class to take a chew of long green on entering and to survive the period without benefit of expectoration.

I would pay my tribute to Prof. Poten who excelled in the ability to make the difficult plain in mathematics and whose description of that field for education always seemed to me a major tragedy especially for freshmen. His personal interest in the individual student was his other contribution.

John Will so fascinated me in history, sociology, and political science that in spite of my natural inclination toward evil I attended his Sunday School class with considerable regularity and I always give him credit for whatever success I may have as a Sunday School teacher. I rejoice in his nearness in Nashville which means I see him once or twice a year at Western or elsewhere and I am delighted that the planned chapel is to bear his name.
Thru all the years till his recent death I have prized the friendship and faith of Prof. Fogle. I believe he did on occasion at faculty meetings express some worry concerning the amount of time I spent with a very lovely young high school student of the town but in the main we got along beautifully in class, partly due to the fact that registrars in those days were not so heartless as now and I was taking German after two years of the same in high school. I can remember yet the approval mixed with astonishment which he made manifest when I being called upon recited Die Lorelei with ease and fluency. I never did get around to telling him that I had memorized it in high school and not the night before as expected. When he permitted me as an advanced student to take the class on several occasions I was practically overcome by the honor. Fine gentleman that he was he will be greatly missed by all who knew him and especially by his former students.

The lasting pleasure and benefit of knowing something of the philosophy of Cicero and the delightful fancies of Horace and of Martial I owe to George Rayland, as great a teacher of Latin I think as ever set in a class room. I shall always be grateful to him for his insistence on a thorou knowledge of grammar. When we began Livy his assignments for translation were brief, but he required that we know everything about each word. No debates could be more interesting than those in his class over an involved construction and we searched the grammars with eagerness to sustain our point. After we knew construction then we read for literary appreciation.

It was my privilege to have Physics and Chemistry under Garnett Ryland who has been for many years at the University of Richmond. He was an excellent scientist and exacting in his demands that the student use the scientific method whether he liked it or not. I was one of those literary minded folk to take ill to such demands but I have always thought he was good for me; he was quite genial outside of the class room and after he married delighted in having students out at the house. I can see him now walking, a cast time in which he delighted, down the street seeing more that went on thru his thick glasses than most saw with natural vision. I can see too the look of keen interest and speculation that was his when one of our students who was accustomed to carry a few biscuits in his pockets to ward off the pangs of hunger chanced to accidentally pull one out in class with his handkerchief and it rolled down the aisle juming from each elevation as tho propelled by a spring. Such recollections as that and of the time when John Hill fell in a ditch one dark night when chasing some upper classmen engaged in the heinous occupation of hazing freshmen or the faculty baseball game when John was playing one of the bases and Bob Hinton as pitcher without warning threw a fast one at John to catch a runner off base and hit him on the end of the finger with Johns heated insistence there was no sense in throwing the ball in such a sudden and unexpected manner I have long since blotted out any dark memories in connection with my education if such there were.

Each Christmas and sometimes between I exchange greetings with A.J. Armstrong the great Browning scholar who has made Baylor the mecca of Browning lovers everywhere. I was so fortunate to have freshman English American and English literature, Shakespeare and Browning with him. I made guard duty light in France in the last war by running over poetry which he made me learn in freshman English — His rule was, each Monday one poem. Browning is still a constant source of courage and strength. One who never turned his back but marched breast forward—never doubted clouds would break—never doubted the right were worsted wrong would triumph held we fall to rise are baffled to fight better asleep to wake.
Perhaps you wonder why I neglect Bob Hinton—Well I am obliged to admit that I didn't have enough to take biology under Bob and I have and now state that this omission has always been a source of regret. While I confess Bob and I did have something of a contest as to how little I should attend gym classes I think it was on both sides a friendly contest and I yield to none of his students in admiration and affection for the Dean who has been for so many years a constant and dependable source of strength in all its changing fortunes.

Literary societies
For me the education I received here I am persuaded was good; I have never been ashamed of it in any company; it has provided the basis for an intensely happy life and has I am sure greatly increased my usefulness. It has always seemed to me that those are the two chief ends of education— to enable one to get more satisfaction and enjoyment out of life and to prepare one for more effective and worthwhile service. You are probably familiar with a comment of President Hutchins to the effect that "education must be tested by what it does for the intellect and spirit of mankind—an educated man who can't find work would be worse off if he were uneducated and if the work he does find does not demand the education he has, he will still be able to use it for the enrichment of his leisure and the tranquility of his soul". I like too the statement of the late beloved teacher Billy Phelps when he said," The best insurance against old age and disability is an interesting mind. In my life of professional teaching I have never endeavored to make young men more efficient; I have tried to make them more interesting. I like to hang pictures on the walls of the mind; I like to make it possible for a man to live with himself without being bored with himself." I think even Scattergood Baines was closer to the truth than some of our too practical folks when he said, "Mebbe this here dedication never does have no practical earnin value to a body but jest kind of widens out his view and shows him how to git more enjoyment out of life ".

The world has always a tendency to become more practical. I could forgive it this but not the tendency to glory in it. I lament the cry from the market place that the test of education must be increased earning power and greater efficiency. I am quite willing to agree that these are likely to be the result of education but that they are its chief end I cannot deny with sufficient emphasis. The passing years but increase my long-time faith that the value which are most likely to be held impractical in common judgment are in reality the most practical of all.
The chief end of education must always be that it enables man created in the image of God to develop more fully his spiritual possibilities and to enjoy more of the heritage which is rightfully his.

There is too much reliance at present on the fallacious assumption that if we can provide mankind with an abundance of food and clothing and shelter, plus the gadgets of modern civilization, plus adequate health care plus social security, the millennium will be at hand. No assumption could be more ridiculous. These things are good and desirable but happiness for man the spiritual creation can never be bought with physical comfort.

Thru the years Georgetown College has been in the main a college of liberal arts pushing back horizons and introducing those who came to its halls to a greater freedom of the mind. The popular song, "Don't Fence Me In" has the right title but the wrong application. Fenced in minds are what we need to be concerned about and barriers of intolerance and ignorance are the ones to be feared.

Some years back our ears grew weary of the reiteration by some of our educators who had evidently just discovered the fact that we live in a changing world. I hope this was not news to any graduate of Georgetown College. Now we have an ever greater reverberation concerning the post war world. There seem to be a considerable number of our leaders who are persuaded that all things must be made new when war is done. Recently one of my agriculture men reported to me that he had returned from a conference.

In response to my inquiry as to what was the subject of discussion, he told me it was post war agriculture. With natural curiosity I asked if they enumerated the ways in which post war agriculture was going to be different from present agriculture. He replied that they never did quite get around to that.

Now I hope I have not reached the advanced age when my eyes are turned so wistfully toward the past that I want to preserve everything including our errors but I do maintain that all change is not progress. I have lived thru the horrors of extreme progressive education. By the hardest I survived the shibboleth, integration of personality. One of the best teachers I ever had came to me practically in tears convinced that
she must be a failure because all the talk in her class in education had been about the importance of the integration of personality and she feared she did not know how to achieve that end. I comforted her some with the assurance that she had always done a fine job in that regard even tho she didn't know it. The results of past experience cause me to regard with considerable suspicion the present educational gospel that the indispensable element in the training of a teacher is the provision in her training of the opportunity for her to have all the social and community experiences which she will face on the job. Now I want teachers to have thorough training in the methods and procedures which pertain to their profession just as I want lawyers and doctors and engineers and preachers to have thorough training in for their professions but I want all these to have the satisfying and beneficial blessing of a liberal arts education.

To know the story of man's aspirations and dreams and toilsome progress thru the ages is to have a basis for appreciative and intelligent citizenship in a democracy. Training in mathematics and science gives one an understanding of the universe in which he lives and a habit of thought which is the very mark of the educated person as contrasted with the vast throng of muddled thinkers who are so vociferous about him.

In a world in which so many jump to conclusions with no sound platform from which to jump our salvation must be a leavening group who are equipped to understand themselves and the world of which they are a part, with an informed outlook on life and its problems, with strength of character, a wholesome philosophy and a willingness to serve as followers of him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. Men so trained are essential for the preservation of democracy and the ideals which are the bulwarks of civilization. To increase the capacity of enjoyment thru all possible avenues, to increase understanding; to create a zeal for life-long study, to broaden tolerance and sympathy, to afford a basis for accurate judgement, to equip one to live and work intelligently and effectively and sympathetically toward the building
of a better world for all men. These are tasks in which there can be no substitute for the liberal arts college, permeated with Christian philosophy.

Such training has been the contribution in the past of this college. Such training as I see it must be its chief contribution in the future. The greatness of Georgetown I think must always rest not on the size of its student body but rather on the fine quality of its program. The united support of Baptists promises a continuation of the present program of renovation and improvement, it promises further an adequate building program, it promises the increased provision of library and laboratory facilities so essential to the type of service which I have discussed. The most important factors I have left to be the last. A college can be great only as great teachers staff its classrooms. Georgetown has been fortunate in the past in this regard. I have faith that it will be equally fortunate in the future. No teachers can work happily and effectively without a scholarly, hardworking, conscientious and sympathetic leader. Such I am convinced Georgetown has in Sam Hill. To you Mr. President, to those who work with you and to the members of the student body I bring greetings and good wishes from Western and my personal for your future happiness and success as you go forward.