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ADDRESS BY SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL AT THE CONVOCATION OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
MAY 4th, 1964

ART AND THE CONCEPT OF LEISURE

Distinguished guests, faculty, students, and participants in this University of Rhode Island convocation:

It is indeed an honor for me to speak to you on this occasion which helps to celebrate the spring flowering of arts festivals across the Nation and which emphasizes the position Rhode Island has achieved in the arts world -- an emphasis centered now, most fittingly, on this university campus.

"Ars Antiqua - Ars Nova" -- the old and the new -- is an extremely appropriate festival theme, and I would like to address my remarks to it in terms of a concept which has recently assumed deepening significance.

Throughout our history America has been known as the land of the free. Traditionally, these words have described our national heritage of independence. Today, however, we are a free people in yet another way: we have more free or leisure time than any people have ever had at any time or any place on earth -- and we are rapidly entering a new period when the whole concept of leisure will become increasingly important. Particularly will it become important to young people; for you will reap the benefits as well as the challenges of this new leisure time.

It has been said that there are repeating cycles of history which past civilizations have followed. These can be classified in seven stages in which mankind moves from bondage to faith, from faith to courage, from courage to freedom, from freedom to abundance -- then from abundance to selfishness, from selfishness to apathy, and finally from apathy back to bondage once more.

In the United States, we have reached the stage which combines freedom with the highest standard of living of any nation in the world. But our goals are still before us. We can do much more for the cause of freedom, at home and abroad. Abundance has by no means reached the whole of our country.

As we continue toward the goals we seek, we must make certain that we do not slide backward into stages of selfishness and apathy, into

self-satisfied indifference. We must ensure that no future historian can write that, in the latter part of the 20th century, the United States added to the old standbys of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic -- those standard "3-R" cornerstones of education -- a fourth "R": namely that of resting on our laurels.

You may well remark, however, that leisure is rest. So it is in part. We all need holidays. But they must last for a prescribed time only; they cannot be indefinite. If we wake up on too many consecutive mornings with nothing to do, we disintegrate as human beings. We lose the whole aim and purpose of life.

Leisure must invigorate our physical well-being and the intangible attributes and values of the human spirit. It is a time for exercise, for enjoyment of the out-of-doors -- a summer day on one of our beaches, a lazy day in the sun and surf. Leisure is often a time for contemplation, for gaining perspective. Leisure is intertwined with memories of the past, and the storing up of memories for the future. Leisure is, above all, a time of opportunity. It means a temporary halt before we proceed anew.

The American spirit of enterprise has always been associated with hard work. As students, as faculty members, you all know that leisure is particularly hard to come by when you are nearing the close of a college year. But let us take a look at some of our national working averages, as contrasted between today and the past. The national average is now approximately 40 hours per week. Contrast this with the 84-hour week once customary to the oldtime steelworker, or to the 56-hour working week common in the early decades of this century. These figures disclose that we have virtually cut in half the number of hours worked each week by our grandfathers.

Our grandmothers were similarly industrious. The chief labor-saving devices our grandmothers had at their disposal were -- our grandfathers! The ingenious appliances we take for granted had not yet appeared in the American household.

Many things have changed, but the number of hours in a week has not. The total is still 168. Our high-speed transportation systems get us

to and from work more quickly than did the horse and carriage -- although there are times in rush hours in Washington traffic, when I could gladly give up my automobile for the faster conveyance of a horse! No horse, however, with the possible exception of Pegasus, could compete with a jet airplane -- and figured out on an annual basis, we have a whole month more of leisure time than we had 50 years ago.

To project this hourly gain in leisure forward, it is estimated that by the year 2000 Americans will have a total of 660 billion more hours of leisure than they did in 1950. One recently published estimate forecasts that before another 25 years have passed, 2 per cent of our population will be able to produce all the goods and food which the remaining 98 per cent can possibly consume. If that should happen, leisure time would grow to truly astronomic proportions.

Automation and enormous industrial technological improvements are, of course, responsible for the increase in hours which can be used for leisure. But automation is far from an unmixed blessing. Its geometric progressions of acceleration must be intelligently harnessed. Certainly we must not allow an efficient but dehumanized society to emerge by default. And certainly we need to know how best to utilize the 660 billion additional hours of leisure time projected for the year 2000.

Throughout our land -- because of the benefits our society has produced -- we are witnessing a great burgeoning desire on the part of our people to participate in activities related to cultural growth. This desire is wholly new in the breadth of its appeal; and it is of the utmost importance that we respond to it in the most enlightened way possible.

Just as we are on the verge of new scientific accomplishments, so are we on the threshold of a cultural renaissance, or in the words of Robert Frost, "a new Augustan age." Today exemplifies this concept. Yet there is a growing financial crisis throughout the whole fabric of our cultural undertakings. Private philanthropy, on which we have traditionally depended to enhance cultural progress, simply is no longer adequate to meet the new demands.

Before the Senate Special Subcommittee on the Arts, at hearings conducted last autumn under my chairmanship, distinguished representa-

tives from virtually every art form we possess repeatedly stressed this crisis. As a result, the Senate passed, just before Christmas, legislation which would establish a National Council on the Arts and a National Arts Foundation. This legislation, modest in its appropriation but the most comprehensive in scope which a Body of the Congress has ever passed, is now before the House of Representatives -- which has been reluctant to support such legislation in the past.

To my mind the Council and Foundation would combine the finest artistic talents we have, to meet the new desires and demands already mentioned. The members or trustees would be private citizens, without other governmental function. In assuring against Federal interference in the arts, the bill would enable each state, and qualified nonprofit professional groups, to set up their own programs for the development of our cultural resources. Here in Rhode Island this legislation could mean greater opportunities to enjoy and expand the theater, opera, ballet, literary creativity, the excellence of our Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, the activities of the 18 member organizations of the Rhode Island Fine Arts Council; and to assist your own projected and developing programs in the Fine Arts. In a word, it would enable the arts to spread throughout the whole of our country. So remember H. R. 9587. It could open entire new avenues for future cultural appreciation and growth -- provided the House of Representatives changes its previous reluctance to enthusiasm.

The appropriation for this legislation is \$10 million annually. At the Senate Subcommittee hearings, the Commissioner of Education estimated our unmet needs in the arts now total \$320 million. But it can be demonstrated that an initial governmental appropriation can engender as much as 8 times its sum in private support over a three-year span. This is the kind of cultural impetus we urgently need. The formula is based on matching grants, partial assistance, mutual cooperation. Artists from all over the United States stressed that this is the kind of help they would welcome. Basically, the appropriation would mean 5 cents per person, per year.

In Canada, in Great Britain, in the countries of Free Europe, such an amount would seem modest indeed. Discounting the fact that our standard of living is higher than theirs, the governments of Canada and Great Britain spend double this amount for the arts on a per capita basis... Italy spends over three times as much... France and West Germany four times as much... Greece over five times as much... and comparatively tiny Austria almost 30 times as much on the same per person basis.

Putting it another way, a recent study reveals that with a national budget approximately 1/50th the size of our own, the Austrian government has been supporting its five major theaters, its museums, music programs, art academies and literary undertakings with a sum of \$10 million annually--roughly comparable to a \$500 million expenditure in the United States.

The study shows that in Greece, in Athens alone 25 theaters, aided by the Greek government, have been producing over 100 plays a year, with a top price per ticket of \$1.00. Scarcely a scalper's paradise!

The French government has supported the celebrated Comedie Francaise since 1804. In West Germany \$60 million goes to the support of the arts from local state governments, in addition to the federal allocation. Governmental assistance helps Italy to have 5 times the number of theaters producing opera as we have in the United States -- on a per capita basis.

Throughout Free Europe governmental support for the arts is considered synonymous with cultural vitality. And this relates importantly to the concept of leisure. We are ahead of the Europeans in the amount of leisure time we have; but we are definitely behind them in the facilities to take maximum advantage of it. Walk through even a small European town and you will hear, if you listen, the sound of a piano: Chopin or Schubert, Mozart or Verdi, Palestrina or Debussy -- the 16th century, the 20th, "Ars Antiqua. Ars Nova"...the musical instrument, or the voice, the sounds of a rich cultural past, projected into the present and continuing. We have seen this same awareness of the arts in some sectors of our own Providence that were primarily settled and developed by our citizens from Italy.

We need to increase the values of the mind. We need more days like this one, and composers as illustrious as Mr. Aaron Copland. We need to pause and think, to compose and write, to read. Of course, the arts are a demanding pursuit. You cannot easily become a writer or a composer, sculptor, painter or musician -- but you can learn to appreciate, to assimilate, to expose yourself to creative thought and expression. In so doing you contribute not only to your own maturity, but to your fellow human beings.

In conclusion, let me say a few words on the subject of the sound body, with its often concomitant quality of determination, to go along with the sound mind. Of intense interest to me is the development of the Outward Bound program which combines physical fitness with inner resourcefulness.

The program began in England during World War II, when the stark discovery was made that numbers of young British seamen from ships torpedoed by the Germans were perishing in open lifeboats, because of their apparent lack of the will to survive. Granted that the hardships were extreme and terrifying, but those who succumbed were often lacking in survival techniques; and most important, they did not recognize their full potentials.

The first Outward Bound school was founded to remedy this situation, to provide the inner fiber to withstand needless and weakening defeatism.

Today there are six Outward Bound schools in Great Britain training youth not for war but for positions of responsibility in peacetime. The program has spread to other countries -- and there are now two schools in our own country: in the mountains of Colorado, in the forested wilds of Minnesota, with another school taking shape along the coast of Maine. I would like to see one established in the Narragansett Bay region, perhaps on one of our uninhabited islands, and am making inquiries in this direction.

The philosophy governing Outward Bound is that each individual has within himself abilities of which he is not fully aware. A unique experience, expertly supervised, can bring out these abilities: some

sort of test or task which at first seems insurmountable. Outward Bound applies this concept to youth.

Each course lasts 26 days. Each day a little more difficult task is carefully planned; and the youth who begins at the foot of the mountain, so to speak, ends up on top. He goes through the experience with others, equally uncertain at first. But something of immense significance is proved in those 26 days. What initially seemed impossible can be accomplished. The goal can be achieved -- and then one just beyond it. As one young graduate remarked: "I will never again be afraid to try."

We urgently need this attitude as we come to grips with the problems and challenges of our times. You who are educators, you who are the young and intelligent personifications of education, can immeasurably assist in formulating the new and fresh viewpoints we need to solve the growing complexities we confront.

The University of Rhode Island has played a vital role in the intern program established in my office to furnish young people with some knowledge of our governmental processes, to enkindle among them an interest in political life. And this idea has led to its expansion into the concept of a "Dialogue with Youth," so that a forum can be provided for new ideas. I would welcome your own, and I would like to leave this final thought with you.

Hard work is essential; but of equal importance, both to our own development and the performance of this hard work, is how we use our free hours, and the attitude we bring to them.

"Nature herself requires that we should be able not only to work well, but to use our leisure well." Those are the words of Aristotle.

Let us be sure that we use our leisure well -- and that as we develop and grow, we see clearly our immediate goals, but also the ones beyond, and those which pertain to the creative, the imaginative spirit. And this is one of the very real purposes of a great university like your own -- not just to help you with your livelihood, but to develop to greater heights your talents and awareness, your powers for the development of your leisure time.
