

KENNETH CHARLES MORTON SILLS, for sixteen years President of Bowdoin College:

Called to succeed a great President, in a day of questioning, when Christianity was challenged, and civilization threatened, and when all for which the College has stood seemed imperiled, you have justified the faith that called and the hope that welcomed you.

Known to be a scholar, an advocate and example of sound learning, you have maintained and defended a great tradition, developed in the old universities of Europe, and notably in those of England, from seeds ripened in Athens and in Palestine, and accepted by the new colleges of New England on this side of the sea.

You have held that tradition not as dead, unchanging, and obstructive, but as a quickening spirit that changes its form and expression to meet changing conditions, opening men's minds to truth and their eyes to beauty; rejoicing alike in the heritage of the past and the discoveries of the present; but forever denying the crass materialism that would have men live by bread alone.

While retaining and strengthening the confidence that called and that welcomed, you have won and kept that of those later groups who, coming as boys, have gone, and are going, from campus and halls and athletic fields, to prove themselves worthy to bear the name of a college that has been "from birth the nurturer of men."

From the first, you have recognized the practicable as well as the ideal and have exhibited ability to deal with material more or less refractory, not expecting perfection in either students, or alumni, or Faculty, or Trustees, or even Overseers; and, withal, you have exhibited a comprehending spirit of sympathy with the fears and the hopes, the sorrows and the joys of men, the friendliness that makes and keeps friends.

Sixteen years ago, when your administration was an unproved adventure, your inaugural address emphasized the permanence, even the eternity, of the things of the spirit, and declared the real object of education to be to make men intellectually and spiritually free; and that address was ended with the pledge that Bowdoin would continue to give a liberal education.

That pledge has been kept, and that purpose holds. Today, as we recall the history of the college and the experience of the years since we have known it, we face the unfolding future with faith and without fear – for

“All experience is an arch where-thro’
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever....”

And now in this place of many memories, the scene of the inauguration of four Bowdoin presidents, and of the graduation of seventy-eight Bowdoin classes, as one who exercises a high and unearned privilege in the presence of a cloud of witnesses, the living and “those other living whom we call the dead,” by the authority given me by the Governing Boards of the College, and as for the moment a herald whose voice is their voice, in the name of the College I declare you

Pro causa honoris et pro merito, DOCTOR OF LAWS