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Gap and Gown Day Remarks

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CAP AND GOWN DAY REMARKS
June 3, 1964

A telephone call on October 31, 1959, marked the start of the University of Minnesota, Morris. This telephone call heralded the action by the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota in inaugurating an experimental program of collegiate instruction to begin in the fall of 1960 at the University's facilities at Morris. The action by the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota was in response to the resolution passed by the 1959 Minnesota Legislature asking that the University of Minnesota further explore the possibility of using the facilities at the West Central School of Agriculture for collegiate instruction.

The University of Minnesota facilities at Morris have been in operation for 54 years, having been given by a Land Grant from the Federal Government to the State of Minnesota in 1908 the title to lands and buildings occupied by the Federal Indian School. During the ensuing years a series of educational programs have been offered and each change in program and curriculum was accompanied by a comparable change in educational needs of western Minnesota. From 1950 to 1960 the West Central School of Agriculture operated a four-year secondary school which graduated its last class in 1963.

The experimental first year was conducted without legislative funds, with the operational costs being absorbed by local contributions and monies made available by the phase-out of the School of Agriculture. The initial books in the library, the chemistry laboratory, microscopes for biology and desks for faculty were out-right gifts from the citizens of western Minnesota. The 1961 Minnesota Legislature implemented the establishment of the University of Minnesota, Morris as a four-year collegiate program by appropriating the necessary funds for the second and third years of operation. The 1963 Minnesota Legislature provided appropriations which reflected the significant growth of both the student body from 238 in 1960 to 690 last fall and the completion of a modest, yet complete, four-year liberal arts curriculum.

The University of Minnesota, Morris in the tradition of the American liberal arts college offers its students both the broad general education program and the opportunities to acquire specialized knowledge leading toward professional and vocational objectives. It is a liberal arts college with the community of colleges which make up the University of Minnesota. It maintains a selective admission policy and the same high standards of academic instruction and faculty

preparation which have always characterized the University of Minnesota. In addition to its role in the broad general educational areas of liberal arts it has within its framework a distinguished teacher education program and strong preprofessional course offerings.

Today, faculty and seniors alike should feel a particular pride to the unique contribution that each has made in the launching of a new college -- the development of academic philosophy, the establishment of organizations, publications, campus events and traditions. The two events -- Cap and Gown Day today and Commencement in less than two weeks -- mark the end of four years of precedent-setting at the University of Minnesota, Morris. It climaxes a particularly difficult task on the part of its students and on the part of the University. It also reflects the enthusiastic support which the citizens of Minnesota have given to the establishment of this newest college of the University.

Each of you seniors today share in this academic ceremony with the faculty with the knowledge that you have now taken a significant step forward toward your own personal goals and objectives.

America has developed an educational system unique in the world as it has made available the opportunity of education to all.

The citizens of our state have provided the major share of the costs of your collegiate education. Inherent with the system of public education is the obligation and responsibility which you assume to your University and to the people and society which have given you the opportunity of education. Responsible citizenship by graduates and faculty becomes an obligation which each must assume to insure the continuance of American education.

Congratulations to each senior for your achievement. Congratulations to each faculty member for your guidance and your devotion. I congratulate you from the University of Minnesota on this significant occasion.

Thank you.