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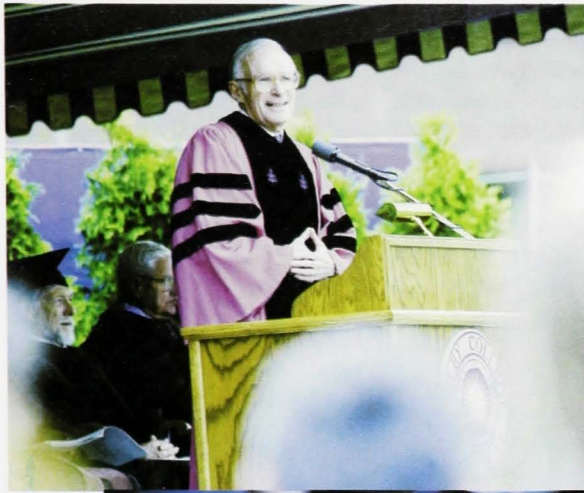
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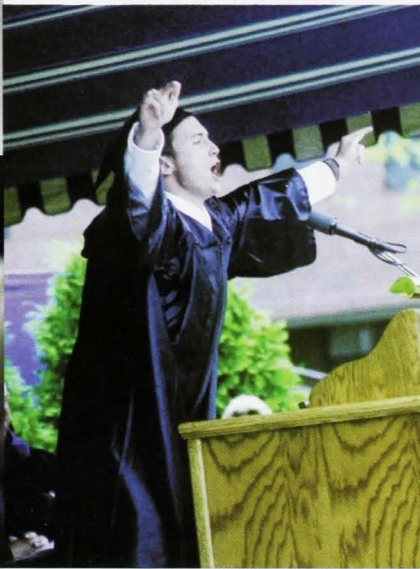
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Smiles Abound at Commencement 2000—Colby's 179th



President Bill Cotter (left) was made an honorary member of the Class of 2000 last September, and he and Linda Cotter received honorary doctor of laws degrees at commencement on May 21. The rest of the class, including Diane Carr of Alton, N.H. (lower left), received bachelors degrees. Erik Bowie (center), of Carbondale, Colo., the senior class speaker, drew on talents honed as a member of Colby Improv. He said he would miss three meals a day, a roof over his head and his extra-long twin bed with sheets that didn't fit. After Father Philip Tracy noted the irony of a Bates graduate (himself) getting the last word at a Colby graduation and offered his benediction, the celebration began (right).



COMMENCEMENT PHOTOS BY DAVID LEEMING



SCOTT DAVIS

Alumni Revel at Reunion

About 1,500 alumni and guests representing classes from the 1920s through the 1990s participated in Reunion 2000, June 2-4. Besides the traditional parade of classes, pictured here headed past Johnson Pond toward the field house, there were class dinners, book signings by Colby authors, swing dance lessons and discussions led by distinguished alumni and faculty members. Professor Emeritus Charles Bassett (English) previewed the July 23-27 Alumni College with a talk, "Sports and Leisure: Mirror of American Culture." Class years ending in one or six should plan ahead—Reunion 2001, next year, will be June 8-10.



The Honorable Margaret Marshall

Apartheid Foe, Pioneering Woman Jurist Counsels Graduates

Margaret H. Marshall, chief justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, gave the commencement address to the Class of 2000 on May 21. After congratulating students on graduating at a time when jobs are plentiful and their skills will be in demand, she spoke of social problems and injustice and about the power of individuals to change the world. Here are excerpts from her speech.

. . . I was born in a small, isolated rural village, Newcastle, in the South African province of Natal. I was part of the privileged white society in that little town, with our separate schools and country club and servants. I knew nothing—nothing—about how black people, the overwhelming majority of my country, lived.

Then I went to the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. There I began to be aware of the cruel realities of my country. I became involved in student politics, which mattered a lot in South Africa. Political opposition parties had been outlawed, political leaders silenced, imprisoned, tortured, and student politics were a point of the most vibrant, albeit dangerous, opposition to apartheid. . . .

I met black students and their families for the first time. One of the things that I did was to drive the wives of black political prisoners to see their husbands in prison. In those days, black South Africans had no cars and prisons for black South Africans were built in isolated places, difficult to reach. It was a small gesture—really a kindness, not a political gesture. . . . What difference, what possible difference, could that small gesture have made to the grinding all-powerful system of apartheid?

Well, it made a difference to me. I was educated about what those families—dedicated, intelligent people who wanted no more than to be treated according to their merits—suffered because of the color of their skin. My education began as I drove those women to see their husbands.

In 1966 our student union invited Senator Robert Kennedy to visit South Africa. What difference could that possibly have made? A white politician from a country, the United States, that was scarcely aware—then—of South Africa and its racial tyranny.

Robert Kennedy accepted our invitation. The apartheid government, furious but feeling unable to keep him from coming, took its vengeance out on Ian Robertson, the student president who had invited him. Robertson was banned. . . . I took Robertson's place. . . .

Kennedy well recognized how I and my fellow students, young people like you today, would feel—overwhelmed by the power of the apartheid state, by the smallness of our insignificant acts, by the futility of our gestures. He spoke to us about that. "The dan-

ger of futility," he said, "is the belief there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills—against misery and ignorance, injustice and violence." . . .

Kennedy spoke words that I have never forgotten: "It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a [person] stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and, crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

Senator Kennedy changed South Africa. Crowds of people packed his meetings and followed his car, seeing in him confirmation of their own sense of the injustice of apartheid. . . .

Senator Kennedy changed me. In 1968, one of the great leaders of South Africa, Chief Albert Luthuli, died. . . . Few whites dared to go to the funeral, which was held in the remote village where Chief Luthuli had been confined by his banning order. I thought it was unconscionable that no young, white person should stand up at that funeral in recognition of his greatness. And so I decided to go, and to speak. . . .

South Africa also changed Robert Kennedy. On his return to the United States, he identified more and more with the despised and rejected, with racial minorities, with the poor and the hungry—and that invigorated his candidacy back in the United States and deepened his appeal as a national hero. . . .

Did those single pebbles make a difference? I think they did. I speak to you of South Africa; last year Senator George Mitchell spoke to Colby's graduates of the struggle of so many individuals in Ireland, unknown people, to secure peace in Northern Ireland. The details vary, but the theme remains the same. What matters is not to be discouraged—to know that a small act, a single gesture, can make a difference. "Never underestimate the power of an individual to change the world," said Margaret Mead. "Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

May each of you find your moment to stand up for an ideal, to improve the lot of others, to strike out against injustice. May you live lives of integrity and goodness. As graduates of Colby College, I am confident that you will.