

**CONVOCATION SPEECH**  
**AUGUST 21, 2006**  
**J. CHADWICK DAVIS**  
**CLASS OF 1956**

Mr. President, and platform guests:

It is an honor to be with you and a high honor to extend a welcome to the incoming Class of 2006 at the College of Charleston from the Class of 1956.

There were only 37 of us who walked the Cistern that day, and now you number in the thousands. The numbers are different, but the motivation is the same — that being to attend one of the premier colleges of America. I am glad you got in!

For me today, it is all about then and now. I know that you are excited about moving into the dormitories and finally being out from under the watchful eye of your parents. Not so for us, except for a couple of fellows who lived in the old gym, the rest of us lived at home. It was hard for our mothers to let us go when we were still so near.

The nearest thing we had to a food service was a little café on George Street called Freidas. But we didn't have a parking problem. Except for the gym and the tennis courts, the whole college was contained in one block that included only three buildings: Randolph Hall, the old library and Porter's Lodge.

We had some quaint old traditions. The freshmen had to wear beanies until the pep supper in November. We didn't have Christmas for four years, because we started later and the first semester didn't end until January, so we spent all of our holidays finishing papers and projects. We had compulsory chapel twice each week, and when we stood to hear the old college prayers by the president, we turned around and faced the south. It wasn't until I attended seminary at Emory University that I found you could pray facing other directions! Thank goodness that war is over now.

We didn't have a nationally ranked baseball team. The nearest thing we had to it was a pickup softball game at the annual college picnic. Can you imagine having a picnic for the big group today? We did have a basketball team, but all the

players were walk-ons. There were no scholarships. I scored 18 points in an intramural game, and the coach asked me to come out for the team. I couldn't, because like most of us, I had to work. We were called Maroons back then, but we are all Cougars now. By the way, tell the new coach I have some eligibility left, if he needs me.

There was that little thing called tuition. Mine was \$120 first semester and \$90 the second, plus books. Books were really expensive back then, and sometimes they would cost up to \$10 each. My senior year, a young aspiring actor picked our beauty queen. His name was Marlon Brando.

There are a lot of things that are different, but some things remain the same. The Citadel cadets will still wander across town looking for the prettiest women in the south. Another thing that has not changed is time. There are still 60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day. This city of Charleston is a tempter. There are so many things to see and do. The beaches were there 50 years ago, and I have skin cancers to prove it. Learn to manage your time. You are all intelligent people, or you wouldn't be here. The key is "How will you use your time?" If you study and use what's left for fun, you will be alright. But if you have fun first and use what's left for study, you will waste your parent's money and take up a spot in the student body that someone else deserves.

My generation made great advances in technology and medicine. By the way, I have Elvis on my iPod. We had our war against communism, and you have your war against the terrorists. Somehow I feel that we failed you. We leave you a messed up world. My hope is that you will develop the methods, techniques, and insights that will bring peace to a troubled world. Our generation didn't.

I wish you well.

One final word: Start your term papers tomorrow, and you will have them ready on time.