Luncheon

in honor

of

RECIPIENTS OF HONORARY DEGREES

from

BRYANT COLLEGE

August 10, 1945

Providence-Biltmore Hotel

Providence, Rhode Island.

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A luncheon honoring those who received honorary degrees at Bryant College was held on Friday afternoon, August 10, 1945, at one o'clock, President Henry L. Jacobs presiding.

PRESIDENT JACOBS: Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen: I want you to know, both old and new friends, that we deeply appreciate having you with us here this morning. Year after year such tenders of loyalty and respect have done much to foster the spirit of accomplishment and improvement which Bryant College has as its aim. I voice the thanks also of all of our graduates today, who were impressed and inspired by seeing leaders in business and professions take time and interest in their commencement affairs. We shall always remember your cordial good will.

Before we close I am going to call on a few of our friends here at the table to say a few words to you. The first man needs no introduction. He graced our chair as chairman this morning, graced our exercises. He has been three times Governor of Rhode Island, and has been Governor all during the trying war years, and done, I believe everybody agrees, a fine job. His Excellency, Governor McGrath!

[The audience rose and applauded.]

GOVERNOR J. HOWARD McGrATH: Dr. Jacobs, Reverend Members of the Clergy, Mrs. Bond, Mr. Watson, Mrs. Watson, Faculty and Friends of Bryant College: I think at this stage
of the game I have about said my two pennies' worth. Mr. Watson has to take an early train this afternoon to New York. He tells me quietly he is going down to celebrate VJ-Day on Times Square. [Applause] God, how we hope he is right! [Laughter]

Three or four times now I have tried to convey to him the deep feeling and sentiment of the people of Rhode Island, those of us especially who have come to know him, how grateful we are for his presence among us. Last year he came here in a very humble capacity to witness the conferring of an honor by this College upon one of his very faithful, and I might say lovable, employees. Today he is here in his own right. What he has done in the last year has in our opinion warranted our conferring a doctorate upon him. [Laughter]

After the luncheon last year we had a very pleasant trip together. Mrs. Watson and the new doctor, our old Dr. Jacobs and Mrs. Jacobs, and a few more of us, down to Davisville, and then on through Quonset Point. I might say that those institutions have expanded and developed in the year that has passed. As a matter of fact, Mr. Watson, I want you to know that they have contributed a great deal to the success of our war effort off the coast of Japan. It is only within the last few months that we have been told by military authorities that there is no weather so abominable as that which exists off the coast of Japan, and the only place in the world comparable with it
where flyers can be trained is off the coast of Rhode Island.

[Laughter]

So at the great air base that you visited a year ago, and its auxiliary field stretched along our Narragansett Bay, there has been a constant flow of young men flying day and night through the murk and fog of our Narragansett Bay and Atlantic waters, training themselves for the task which now seems to be so successfully coming to conclusion. That has been part of Rhode Island's contribution to the war effort, and it will be, I am sure, a gorgeous page in our national history, more gorgeous to those who trace any association with Rhode Island, whether by birth, or residence or adoption.

You are, therefore, both you and Mrs. Watson, citizens of this State from now on by adoption. [Laughter] You will never be able to get away from it! I do not know that we will be able, I firmly hope we will use a great many more International Business Machines, but we would give that all up if only you would take your adopted state to heart, come here more often to see us. Don't think that you have to wait for an invitation from Dr. Jacobs or Bryant College. The old associations of Dayton have now gone by; they are out of date. You can come up and see all of us any time. [Applause]

Nothing could be finer than to see a nice Watson home in Newport, or Watch Hill, unless it were to see a Watson home in Narragansett Pier.
Well, I believe, sir, that you know full well the respect that we have for you, our deep appreciation for your coming here. By attaching your name to this little college—I call it little only because we in Rhode Island like to refer to everything as little—you have established an association that I am sure will be beneficial to you and will bring renown not only to your own name, but something which truly will be worth inheriting by your distinguished sons, and in that too we are rather proud and happy.

I hope now that we are entering a new era of business and social and political intercourse, the great principles that you have so long advocated and done so much to advance you will see come even to greater fruition. It is a period that is hard for us to see in all of its possibilities, but I am sure that if there are eyes through which one would look, the glasses that you described this morning of the great general, you have them, and you have it in abundance. I hope that as you travel throughout the countries where your work goes on and your Corporation exists, you will bring back to America the best ideas and the best cultures that you find, and that once a year you will find a little opportunity—not a few hours, nor a day, but perhaps two weeks—to come back to Alma Mater and give the benefit of your experience to her and through her to all our citizens. Good luck to you!
Congratulations, Mrs. Bond! We are glad to welcome you as adopted son and daughter of Rhode Island. [Applause]

PRESIDENT JACOBS: On the great Bok Tower at Lake Wales, which was built by the late Edward Bok, whom, as you remember, was editor of the Ladies Home Journal, there is an inscription engraved which has always impressed me. When he left Holland, the last thing his mother said to him was this, "Make you the world a little better for your having lived in it." Our new honorary alumnus upon whom I am about to call is one whose expansive interests have a worldwide effect upon the world's economy, but whose personal sympathies reach out to improve the life of every individual worker in his employ.

There are so many fine things I could tell you that I know about what he has done, not only educating the workers in his employ, but the handicapped and the blind, and a hundred things that he has done that would take a whole afternoon to tell you. It is remarkable; he is a leader who is a thinker in harmony with his times, a truth-seeking executive who has made his company the greatest of its kind in the world, and more; he has found time to give generously of his means and talents to the promotion of charitable, cultural and patriotic enterprises. I believe of him it can truly be said that he has made two blades of grass grow where one grew before. I have the honor to introduce to you Mr. Thomas J.
Watson! (Applause)

MR. THOMAS J. WATSON: Officers, Dr. Jacobs, and Friends:

First, I want to again express my appreciation to you, Dr. Jacobs, for
the invitation to come here, and to our good friend, the Governor, for
his magnificent address today and for his very kind remarks at this
luncheon table.

Our minds today have been centered on one thing, that is the end
of the war in the Pacific. We hope that that end is very near. We have
the satisfaction of being able to say we are winning the war. We hope it
will be won. When that day comes, whether it is today, tomorrow or when­
ever it comes, that will be a great Thanksgiving Day for all of us to
celebrate. We shall all be so thankful that this war, which has gone
beyond anything ever conceived in the way of destruction, suffering and
cruelty, is over that we will take at least one full day to offer up our
personal thanks.

I am sure the next thing to come into the minds of all the people
of vision of all ages, will be that now we are entering a new era of
greater opportunity for spreading prosperity, happiness, comfort and peace
throughout the world. As we stand here today and look back into the past
we realize that only a small percentage of the people are able to enjoy
the mere necessities of life, and that a great number do not get the nec­
essities of life. As we follow down through the ages, we note that follow­
ing every great catastrophe our visions have been broadened and prosperity
has been broadened to cover more people.

Let us hope that after this terrible catastrophe there will be
equal number of enlightened minds throughout the world to decide that God Almighty
expected everyone on this earth to start out with the necessities of life
and to be given an opportunity to build up to the comforts and to the
In closing, I want to quote a few words from the last speech of the great Elihu Root at the twenty-fifth annual meeting of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. That organization was founded in the Carnegie Library by Mr. Carnegie and Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler. Mr. Carnegie asked Dr. Butler to help him figure out a plan to give away $140,000,000. Dr. Butler called in Mr. Root and they formulated the plans. Mrs. Carnegie asked them to have lunch, and twenty-five years later, at the twenty-fifth annual meeting, Mrs. Carnegie asked us to have the meeting in the library and have lunch with her. When the meeting opened, Dr. Butler said, "We are going to have a great treat this morning. Elihu Root is coming in for just a few minutes, but don't suggest that he speak, because he is just out of bed after having a very bad cold, and he is ninety-one years old."

In a few minutes that grand old man walked in, sat down, participated in the meeting for an hour, and then turned to Dr. Butler and said, "I would like to say a few words." Then he delivered a marvelous address in that very slow, impressive way of his, and he ended up with words, which I shall never forget. I have quoted them time and time again to young people.

"I have had a lot of time to study and think and reflect for several years," he said, "and I want to give you some advice this morning. Keep looking right out in front. Things look better out there than they have ever looked before in the history of the world. We are making lots of mistakes. We have always made mistakes. Gentlemen, your job is to correct the mistakes, but you cannot do it by sitting around and talking about it. My conclusions are based on the experience of a very long life."
Those words have been an inspiration to me, and that is the way I feel today. Let us all keep looking out in front and realize that things look better for the future than ever before. But we must put action in it. We must make things happen. I have so much confidence in my fellow men to be sure that we are going to make the right things happen so that this great destructive atomic power which has brought the war near to its close will be a great force for peace. Intelligent minds and people interested in peace will find a way to make of it a great instrument for peace. I believe we are standing on the threshold of plans that will lead ultimately to perpetual peace so far as great world wars are concerned.

Again I want to thank all of you for your very kind consideration, and I want to assure you, Governor McGrath, that Mrs. Watson and I will return. We enjoy coming here and we will come back because we feel that we are in the midst of friends. We felt that friendship last year, and we feel it much stronger again this year, and we will be back before the next year rolls around.
PRESIDENT JACOBS: I think you will all agree with me that it was wonderful to hear a note of optimism in a world so full of gloom. It was well worthwhile to come here, if not for any purpose but to hear what Mr. Watson just said. I shall try to remember it, and I know you will.

There are some women who can play many parts and play them with distinction. Wife, mother, author, speaker, club leader, literary editor, this forms a composite picture of our next speaker, who has done such a fine job on the Boston papers, Mrs. Alice Dixon Bond, the Literary Editor of the Boston Herald and the Boston Traveler. [Applause]

MRS. ALICE DIXON BOND: I thank you, Governor, for your invitation to be a member of Rhode Island, and the bonds are very silken that will draw us back. Dr. Jacobs, and all of you distinguished people, when Dr. Jacobs said just a little while ago that he wanted me to say something at this luncheon, all I could think of was the chairman who introduced Colonel Romulo at the meeting, and for fifteen minutes he used every expression of eulogy he could think of, and went on and on and on, and finally he said, "Here is our distinguished speaker," and then he looked at Colonel Romulo and said, "What is your name?" [Laughter] That is something of the way I felt when he said that.

I may forget my own name, but you don't forget your job, and my job is words, as you know--words which can
lead us into such disasters as we have known, words that can lead us out of it again, such words as Mr. Watson used, quoting Elihu Root, quoting things he and the Governor and other people said this morning, words like the woman who said to her maid, "We have a guest coming for dinner tonight and she is a vegetarian." "Oh," said the maid, "I know, that is a horse doctor." [Laughter] The mistress said, "Oh, no, a horse doctor is a veterinarian." The maid said, "I have a brother who is a veterinarian; he was in one of the wars." [Laughter]

The edges of it get blurred. You just know their potentialities, what they can do. Two words, "Heil Hitler", brought us almost to the verge of destruction.

Words encompass great pages of history. Little words, "I have just begun to fight," and you think of John Paul Jones and what was back of it.

A phrase, "Give me liberty or give me death," and the whole of our fight for independence comes before us.

A word such as used by our commander on a submarine, who, hurrying when the ship was about to give, hurrying for the coming tower had been wounded and he couldn't make it. His leg was broken. He knew it, but he wasn't going to risk the lives of others. "Take her down", and those words "take her down" and you see all the bravery that has gone into this war, the individual courage, the meaning of life itself,
which you get in a little word.

Some people say—Emily Dickinson, you know said this—"A word is dead when it is said." I say it just begins to live that day. Words are the one thing that man has that need no external aids. It is the one creative thing man has that needs no external aids. You have architecture, science, painting, sculpture; you have the creation, but you have to have some other means in order to complete it. With words you don't; the words are in you.

I remember Roland Hayes told me once that when he was in Berlin in 1924, and many African troops were occupying the Ruhr, there was a great deal of feeling running very high against color, and he received a number of anonymous letters saying, "Don't you sing." He went to the American Council and he said, "I don't want to precipitate anything that might be of a catastrophic nature. I want to be very particular here, and the Council said, "Well, I don't know, perhaps you had better not." Roland Hayes' friends said, "Of course you're going to sing. Go ahead."

That night came, and that great theater in Berlin was filled, and he went on the platform. The place was jammed. The catcalls began. Oh, the most unpleasant noise purred out from that great audience. His accompanist took his seat. Roland Hayes stood there, as he always does, at the curve of the grand piano, and he said, "I just folded my hands and threw back my head." If you ever heard him sing,
you know that is what he does. He said, 'I threw back my
head and prayed that I could be forgotten, that I could be-
come just the instrument of God in that place, that through
me could flow His voice,' and at the end of ten minutes they
were still catcalling, still throwing things, still making the
most terrible noise, and the accompanist said, 'We have to
get out of here. We can't stay. There will be trouble.
You will be hurt. They will throw things. Please, come on,
let's go.'

Roland Hayes said, 'I whispered, 'Have you got
Shubert's "This Is My Piece"?' He said yes. He said, 'Play
it,' and the notes came from that great piano and the people
in the front row heard them and they stopped, and second row,
and the third, and the fourth, and the fifth, until that hall
was absolutely silent, and out over that audience went those
silver notes of Roland Hayes singing the song that they knew,
Shubert's, their own composer, "This Is My Piece".

We can take words and we can use them, as you can
your atomic bomb, for disaster. And you can take them and
out of them, through the creative thought of man, you can
make a new earth, which knows peace. [Applause]

PRESIDENT JACOBS: Now you can see why the Boston
Herald has Mrs. Bond as their Literary Editor.

We welcome today one who has recently been elevated
to the presidency of one of our fine colleges, Providence
College, and we wish him many years of good health and success in his new position, Father Foley! [Applause]

FATHER FOLEY: Dr. Jacobs, Your Excellency, the Governor, Fellow Educators, Friends of Bryant College: That wonderful incident Mrs. Bond just related sort of reminded me of a theatrical story. Following Mr. Watson and Mrs. Bond and the illustrious speakers this morning, I have tough billing on this one.

Dr. Jacobs, I would like to express on behalf of the faculty, student body, the Alumni members of Providence College, my thanks and appreciation for your kindness towards us and for allowing us to participate in these wonderful activities. I would like to congratulate you on your choice of recipients of honorary degrees.

There has been a lot said about Mr. Watson. I am particularly interested in Mr. Watson because in this day and age, when people are groping for the dollar, that is all they think about, and to see a man who is keenly and conscientiously interested in education, Mr. Watson, we in education appreciate that very much.

And your second recipient, Mrs. Bond, well deserved the degree. She is a very, very charming lady, and a woman who is well gifted and blessed with the talents that only the Almighty God can provide.

I would like to pay a little respect and a little--I know he won't like it, but I am going to say it anyway--
tribute to the Governor for his speech this morning. It was one of the finest things I think that I ever heard in my life. Governor, I congratulate you on it.

In closing, I would like to put into words what Mr. Watson said about V-Day, peace day, and probably I would go back, if I would be pardoned, for quoting something from what we call our "Divine Office Book," which we read every day. Mr. Watson had it in so many words; "Behold how good and how joyful it would be if all the brethren"—brethren meaning people—"live in unison." Thank you very much!

[Applause]

PRESIDENT JACOBS: Now I am going to call upon an old friend of mine and a good friend of the College. I have known him for many years. I think you all not only know him, but have the same regard for him that I do. Judge Ferney A. McConnell, Presiding Justice of the Superior Court of Rhode Island.

JUDGE McCONNELL: President Jackson, Dr. Watson, Dr. Bond, Members of the Clergy, Distinguished Guests and Friends: It is perhaps unfortunate for me, but very fortunate for you that I had but a few minutes advance notice of the fact that I was going to be called upon to say a few words at this gathering. But I have always tried to have a keen perception and appreciation, and so I realize that after a program of speaking which began at ten o'clock this morning,
with the exception of the principals in this affair today, there is very little reason for anyone else to speak at any length.

First, I want to agree with Dr. Bond's statement as to the potentialities, the power and the importance of words. There have been some words and some expressions which have resounded through the centuries, and which probably will resound down through the endless corridors of time. But I don't want to destroy any illusion that you may have as to the words that were quoted by Dr. Bond when she said, with reference to Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death." As I recall it, the young boy in school when asked if he knew anything about Patrick Henry, responded, "yes," he did know something about him. He said he understood that he was an early patriot, and when he was a young boy he was full of pranks and fun, and when he grew up, he married a widow who was much older than himself, and then he said, "Give me liberty or give me death." [Laughter]

Now, Dr. Jacobs has given you my excuse or reason for being here, my friendship with him, which happily has extended over a great many years, but I haven't, other than lasting friendship, any particular right or reason to be here in this very distinguished gathering. In fact, I perhaps haven't as much reason to be here as the young man thought he had who went to the Ration Board and was asking for something they found rather difficult to give him. He thought he
was entitled to it, and he pressed his request, and finally he said to them that he thought he was entitled to what he was asking for because he had served for some time on an island in the Pacific, and they were almost ready to reconsider their decision when they discovered that island was Alcatraz. [Laughter]

Let me agree with what my very good friend, Father Foley, President of Providence College said, with regard to the recipients of degrees from Bryant College—not only this year, but in the years past. I think Dr. Jacobs and the faculty have exercised a very splendid judgment. Now, it isn’t anyone who can get a degree from Bryant College; they have to be distinguished and outstanding, just as Dr. Watson and Dr. Bond are distinguished in their particular fields.

Now, I have had the pleasure of sitting beside Mrs. Bond and holding a very pleasant conversation with her during dinnertime, and I want to say to you, frankly, that if my judgment was to be considered, I wouldn’t limit her to Doctor of Humane Letters, but I would give her all the letters in the alphabet.

In conclusion, I want to express my appreciation of the honor that you have conferred upon me in inviting me to come here. Bryant College has filled a very important place in this community; it has done a great job, under the leadership of Dr. Jacobs. It has sent splendid men and women out into this community, who have entered into the business and the
social and the political life of this community, and by sending out such qualified citizens, it has made a great contribution to Rhode Island, and I hope and know you all agree with me and have the same hope that Dr. Jacobs and his associates may be spared for many years to come, to carry on the splendid work that they have been carrying on in the past and to send out into the community the same kind of well-trained, disciplined and qualified students that they have sent out into the community in the past. [Applause]

PRESIDENT JACOBS: Thank you, Judge McConnell. I hope with God's will that I may be able to live up to the fine things you said.

Before I call on the next speaker I think it is only fair that we--we have with us, and I am not going to call upon her to speak, because I don't believe she wishes to do so, a very lovely woman who has been a great helpmate to a very wonderful man all through life. She is almost self-effacing, and accompanies him everywhere, administering to him, giving him the wonderful comfort that only a good woman can give to a man, and I mention Mrs. Watson. [Applause] I know a good deal about her background, her father and her mother, and her brother, with whom I went to school, and I can tell you that they are one of the old pioneer families, the backbone of the great Dayton, Ohio. I say great because I still have a love for my old town.
Time has grown short, but I would like to have Dr. Rockett say a few words to us. Dr. Rockett is the very efficient Director of Education in the State of Rhode Island. He supervised one of our four-year courses and has been of great help to us. Dr. Rockett!

DR. ROCKETT: Dr. Jacobs, Your Excellency, Governor McGrath, Honored Guests of Today, Reverend Father, Distinguished Guests, and you, my good friends sitting out in front of me: I don't know why such a perfectly splendid program should be in the throes of being spoiled by calling on the Director of Education, but I consider it a great honor to have been called on, if for no other reason than to extend my personal congratulations to the two distinguished guests of this morning's program.

When I think of Dr. Watson, I hope he will forgive me for thinking of Sherlock Holmes and the days when I used to read those stories. A new bond of love has come into my life this morning, and I want both Dr. Watson and Dr. Bond to realize that in Rhode Island we have places more beautiful than the seashore, and if you ever come back to Rhode Island, as I hope you will, I hope you will come to the northern part of the State, to enjoy the mountains that we have there, and up to the town of Cumberland, in Cumberland Hills, and there you will see Rhode Island as you never could see it at the seashore. [Laughter]
One of the most important things that has come into the Department of Education in the past few months and will be coming ever more increasingly important during the months to come is the surveying and approving of educational, industrial establishments for the training and the education of the returned veteran, the returned soldier. We are going out into those institutions and we are surveying them to make sure that they are offering a course that will give the young man the very thing that he wants, the very thing that he desires. Only the future days will prove whether or not those institutions are giving those young men the promised food that they so much look forward to, and as the days go on, I feel that those institutions are going to measure up in their offerings commensurate with the integrity and the trust and the honor of the heads of those institutions.

I like to think of Bryant College, as I have always thought of it, as an institution that is the length and the shadow of one man. It is the length and the shadow of the honesty and the integrity and the justice of none other than Dr. Jacobs, [applause] and that is reflected in his good helpmate, his good wife, and another modest individual, sitting over here under the shadows, his son Edgar. As long as those three individuals continue at the head of Bryant College, the boys and girls that go there are going to get something that is measured by the words integrity and honesty.

And so it is that in all these institutions throughout
the State, that are making offerings to the returned veterans, they will get just as good an opportunity as the intellectual honesty of the heads of the institutions that make the offerings, and my only hope and prayer and trust is that they will measure up in no small way to that integrity and honesty that has always been forthcoming from Bryant College, due to the great personal leadership that has always been shown at that institution.

May I thank you, Dr. Jacobs, for this opportunity and the honor of saying these few words. [Applause]

PRESIDENT JACOBS: Thank you, Dr. Rockett, for all your kind words. I think it is only fair that I personally wish to include our good Executive Secretary, Mr. John L. Allen, who equally shares responsibility with us in the administration of the college. [Applause]

And now, before we close, I am going to call upon our hostess and my better half, literally, to say a few words before we say good-bye. [Applause]

MRS. JACOBS: Your Excellency, Mr. Watson, Mrs. Bond, Ladies and Gentlemen: For a great many years ringing down, the curtain on commencement day has been my pleasant duty. There have been some pleasant years, others of anxiety and grief, but today seemed to be a joyous day, and in the first place our Governor started off with joyous news of coming peace. He sort of galvanized us into life for the day. Then the voice of Mr. Watson and Mrs. Bond have lent such
cheerful notes to our program, and both are in a position to know, because Dr. Watson hears the voice of business, and his broad contacts with people and places keep him in the know of trends. Mrs. Bond hears the voices of our creative writers, and she is in a position to see and feel the way they do, and our fiction writers bring us so close to truth sometimes that it is well worthwhile listening to a voice like Mrs. Bond's.

We are deeply appreciative of both of them coming here today, and of your coming too. We hope that you found the interest and the pleasure and the satisfaction that we wanted you to feel on this day.

Saying "how-do" and "good-bye" taxes the vocabulary when you say it as many times as I have, but perhaps I can put it this way: If I am still on this mundane's sphere, I hope to greet you another year. [Applause]

PRESIDENT JACOBS: Now I am ready to say good-bye and hope you will be with us another year. Mr. and Mrs. Watson are going to catch the three o'clock train, so we won't detain them.

[The luncheon adjourned at two-fifty o'clock.]