Mr. President, Dr. Clark, distinguished guests, friends, and colleagues, it my esteem pleasure this morning to welcome you to what is sure to be one of the most significant conferences in the history of Rhode Island College. This conference is to commemorate the 30th anniversary of one of the most profound events in the history of the civil rights movement, the 1954 Supreme Court Decision, Brown vs. the Topeka Board of Education Decision. This conference culminates two activities which have been taken place since last semester. One of those is a college course titled, "Social Justice," which enrolled over 150 students and focused on the differences in the social, economical and political order of the United States since the Brown Decision. In conjunction with the course, the college has run a series of public lectures which are focused on some of the issues raised by the Brown Decision. All of the events during this semester and last semester were planned by a committee formed last spring out of the Office of the Provost and chaired by Professor Katherine Murray of the College, who will speak in more detail about the significance of the conference later in the morning but because of some recent developments which you will hear about momentarily we must adjust the program slightly and move on as quickly as possible. On behalf of the College I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you for taking time out of your very busy schedules to join us this morning. And now without further ado, I would like to introduce our Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Willard Enteman.

DR. ENTEMAN SPEAKS

DR. KENNETH CLARK:

You can tell by that introduction that your Provost is a friend of mine and I
relish and appreciate that venture. Traditionally, the speaker says how honored and privileged he is to have been invited ( ). I would like to make that comment but make it very clear that it is not at all ( ). It is a pleasure, it is an honor, to have been invited to participate in Rhode Island College's celebration of Brown and I'd like not to be misunderstood if I were to say that I would hope that your planning and your implementation of this celebration of the Brown Decision would be a model for other institutions of higher education, a model for the Harvard's, the Yale's, the Columbia's, the Brown's universities would seem somewhat oblivious of the ideas that Bill Enteman just stated about the importance of the significance of the Brown Decision as an important part of education in America and social change. I repeat, I personally am fascinated in seeing that in the 30 years since Brown there have been only two institutions of higher education to my knowledge that have been involved in the college wide celebration of Brown. One of them was a traditionally white college in the center of Mississippi that five years ago invited a number of us, white and black educators, to celebrate Brown and at the time I pointed out that I was happy to go into Mississippi to talk about Brown because no one in New York or Massachusetts or any of the traditionally liberal areas of the United States had thought about it. Fortunately, Rhode Island College has balanced it sectionally. Rhode Island is in New England, and it is the second institution of higher education.

Thirty years after Brown progress and unfinished business. May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court handed down major historic decision which has been, and I think will remain, a major document in the ( ), the articulation of the moral foundations of American democracy. Another direct, simple and eloquent language, Chief Justice Earl Warren stated for unanimous ( ) a
decision which in my mind ranks with, as Bill Enteman said earlier, such major
democratic arguments as the ( ) Carter, the Declaration of
Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and I was very glad to hear Bill Enteman
say that because every time I make that statement I have a feeling that maybe its
a slight ( ) or exaggeration but if Bill believes that it must be true
then I will say this in the future without any apologies that I personally
believe that this is a truly historic document that maybe we are close to to
understand it's significance. The Brown Decision is generally discussed in terms
of its critical importance as a legal, political, and to some extend, social
document. It did in fact repeal the Plessey vs. Furgerson Decision, a ( )
of separate but equal which in 1896 provided the legal basis whereby the power of
federal and state governments could be used to perpetuate racial segregation in
all aspects of American life. The myth of separate but equal, the proliferation
of racial segregation became the cornerstone in fact the very foundation for the
extension ( ) of American racism and what is not generally believed by
those who criticize Brown as not trying to do the impossible was that ( )
did in fact establish the basis for the institutionalization of American racism
by making it possible for power of government to support if not reinforce
segregation. Indeed the ( ) doctrine of separate but equal denied
the fact that separate was not then nor was ever intended to be equal. Rather
one can view this decision as merely a slightly, and by that decision I mean the
Plessey decision, as being a merely slightly more sophisticated formulation of
the ( ) Decision which stated that a black man had no rights which a
white man was required to respect. Those decisions ( ) and Plessey
and their social, political, racial consequences were flagrant symptoms of the
moral schizophrenia inherent in the coexistence of American democratic ideals as
articulated by Thomas Jefferson and the founding fathers in the Declaration of
Independence existing with human slavery and racial segregation. The disease of racism supported and reinforced by the power the democratic government was so deep seeded that not even the blood letting of the Civil War seemed able to remedy it. But the Brown Decision revealed another aspect of power, profound power, strength and resilience of the American democratic ideals. It was an expression of the fundamental belief in faith in the promises of democracy which even the victims of democracy and maybe particularly the victims of the violation of the democratic principles still maintain. In this regard it is significant that American blacks sought to make the promises of American democracy real for them even if they had to suffer its violations and by the way in doing so strengthen the structure and practices of democracy for all Americans. Through decades and decades of struggle they sought to use the instruments of the courts, the legislative branches of federal and state government to amelioration racial injustices and cruelty. Brown to me is an indication that the racial revolution in America and its consequences and ramifications was always a fundamentally conservative revolution. It was, and succeeded in Brown, an appealing to the moral, the ethical, and the rational ideals and assumptions of American democracy. In examining and analyzing the Brown Decision concerning the specific issue before the courts, mainly the issue of the constitutionality of racially segregated schools whether they were or were not equal, the court addressed this issue in that decision not in a restricted legalistic way but in a broader, social, psychological educational and human context. In dealing with the Constitutional issue, the court was rather clear, definite and simple. It said quoting from the decision itself, "We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of separate but equal has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. It's difficult to confuse and misunderstand those two sentences. Let me repeat them. Whether it be elementary and secondary
or higher and professional education, let me repeat, the court was very specific, precise, direct in dealing with the Constitutional issue before it. We conclude that in the field of public education—the doctrine of separate but equal has no place, separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. How did the court arrive at the judicial decision and this has been the basis of a great deal of controversy I found myself in the unenviable position of having to debate with lawyers and please those of you who are not lawyers take my advice, don't try to debate with them, and particularly don't try to write articles for law journals arguing with people like the late Edmund Kahn, professor of juris ( ), because they argued that the court diluted the decision by the fact that it did not arrive at it in pure legalistic legal precedent terms but contaminated it by dealing with soft headed social scientists. The court arrived at its ( ) but purely in terms of legal arguments and precedents. As a matter of fact, it might have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to repeal Plessey by purely legal precedents because Plessey was the precedent on which all legal or litigation in the area of racial segregation in higher education was ( ). The court probably in an unprecedented way and probably will be using that by the fact that it was unprecedented being the basis of controversy did in fact refer to social and psychological findings in arriving at its conclusions. For example, the court said to separate them meaning black children or minority children from other of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race, generates the feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may effect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely to be undone. And then, a particular point that I had to defend not only with lawyers but with some real conservative social scientists, the court went on as said, "Whatever may have been the extend of psychological knowledge at the time of Plessey vs. Fergerson, this finding namely the damage with the lawyers of the NAACP would have had to
demonstrate in order to increase their chances of reversing Plessey the court said this damage, this finding, is amply supported by modern authority." Any language in Plessey vs. Fergerson contrary to this finding is rejected. This was extending the legal constitutional conclusion for putting that within the context both social, psychological, moral, human concern. The basis of controversy, I understand from some of my former students who instead of going on to do graduate work in psychology as I would want them to do insisted on going to law school, that one of the first things that they had to face in their constitutional law classes is the controversy is to the extend to which the court did in fact contaminate the constitutional issue by social, psychological, moral, human concerns. Whenever my students came back and told me this I said, "Well I suppose you are going to the next seminar to tell your professors that you accepted their prospective that the law should not be contaminated by human concerns." No student has taken me up on that. The Brown decision can another component that is often ignored in discussions such as these and others mainly that if one reads and rereads that decision one sees that it is also a very important, in fact a major, educational document. It states quite succinctly and directly a philosophy of education and democracy which I have not seen the volumes of educational treaties that I subjected my students to read. Let me give you an example. The court said, "Education is perhaps the most important function of state and local government. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditure for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even services in the arm forces, that ought to make Mr. Regan feel good. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is the principle instrument in the waking ( ) to cultural values. In preparing him for later professional training and in
helping him to adjust normally to his environment, in these days it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. The Decision concludes that paragraph by saying, "Such an opportunity where the state has undertaken to provided is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms." I'd like to suggest that in subsequent discussions of Brown and anniversaries that maybe educational institution should start with that aspect of Brown an evaluate themselves in terms of the extent to which they understand and adhere to what Chief Justice Warren and his associates were saying. My personal opinion is that the court was presenting a challenge to educational institutions. Beyond race, the court was saying that in a democracy educational institutions had the responsibility of seeing that all American children be equipped to fulfill a constructive role in the society as a whole. What have been some of the consequences of the Brown Decision. Certainly, one has to see that in thirty years since Brown there have been major changes in the patterns of race relations in the American society. While it is a fact that Brown was concerned with the specific issue of segregated public school even as Plessey was concerned with the specific issue of segregation in transportation, Plessey had widespread influences in spreading segregation in all other aspects of American life and I think that it is equally clear that Brown had ripple effect wide spread positive consequences in helping to reduce segregation in the more flagrant forms of racism in other aspects of American life. One, I certainly would say and I would hope that the other members of the panel would correct me if I am wrong on it, that Brown was the basis upon which it was possible to remove and if fact did result in removing race as a barrier to the enjoyment of American democracy in such areas as public accommodation, public transportation, public recreation. Brown certainly provided the stimulus and the motivational power for the non violence civil
disobedience movement lead so ably by Martin Luther King, Jr. and which you will be one of the chief participants in that ( ) will be visiting with you soon. The Brown Decision seems to be a very important determinant of involving the legislative branch of the Federal Government in passing such legislation as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which certainly sought to, and with some degrees of limited success, to involve Blacks more equitably in the larger economy. Also significantly, the Brown decision seemed to me to have been a stimulus, a factor in having the Congress of the United States pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the significance of which we are seeing probably quite dramatically today—the unexpected dramatic involvement of Jesse Jackson in the campaign for the nomination of President from the Democratic Party. I do not think that it is unreasonable to say that Jesse Jackson’s campaign, the tremendous increase in the number of Blacks in selected political offices, the increase in the number of Blacks who are participating in the political process from which they have previously been excluded in the Southern states, their son relationship to the dynamism, the pride, the psychological change in perspectives of Blacks which would seem to me generated by the simple direct eloquence of the Brown decision.

These indications of racial positive changes I do believe should not be underestimated. American racism is not now the same after Brown as it was earlier. No amount of White backlash, no amount of neo-conservatism, no amount of Black separatists reaction to the slowness of pace, can change the fact that American in regard to the relationship among Blacks and whites, particularly in Southern states, is a quite different nation now than it was 35 or 40 years ago. These changes, it is my considered judgment, cannot be undone. White or Black conservatives cannot send America back to that stage where Blacks were asked to ride in one section of a railroad car or sit in one ( ) and dirty portion of a station or railroad station or denied the right to participate in
tax supported recreational facilities. The Brown decision I see as a sort of letting the genie out of the bottle and that cannot be put back in the bottle in terms of these positive things. Most of the positives are most visible in terms of patterns of race relation changes in Southern states. I wish that it were possible to state equally visible changes in Northern states—but I can't. And I guess maybe because Northern states before Brown did not have the same symptoms and manifestations of racism that Southern states had. So much was this the case, that many Blacks, including myself, looked upon Northern states as being more liberal and democratic in their race relations. As a psychologist, I would like now to spend the latter part of my statements by showing to you a phenomenon that we in Psychology call the contrast effect—mainly, once we brought about changes in Southern states, we were able to see that the Northern states had probably as deep, if not deeper forms of racism, than those that were relatively easy to deal with by the methods of litigation and legislation in the South.

This brings me to the unfinished business of Brown—the disturbing negative residues. The Brown decision was concerned with litigation specifically related to education and segregation in education, and inequality which was inherently a part of segregation in education. It is my considered judgment, and I certainly would like to have data that would refute me, that the key irony about 30 years after Brown is that the positive changes resulting from Brown are found to the least extent in the area of education. Brown has had more positive effect in race relations in other areas of our society than in the area of education. A related irony is that the more positive manifestations of Brown in the area of Education are to be found in Southern public schools. There are more white and Black children, according to the latest data made available to me, attending non-segregated public and elementary schools in the Southern states,
the 17 states and the District of Columbia, which are under the umbrella of Brown, than in such Northern urban centers as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Los Angeles. An even more disturbing component of that irony is that data would seem to indicate that in the Northern urban centers, 30 years after Brown, more in absolute numbers and more proportionately, American children, white and Black, are attending racially segregated schools. Let me see if I can make that point even more clear to you.

Thirty years after Brown, in traditionally liberal Northern urban communities such as New York (and notice that I start with New York—my own base), Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, and I think Los Angeles, the fact of racially segregated schools, the fact of more Black and white children attending racially homogeneous schools, is greater 30 years after, than has the proportion of Blacks increased in a particular school, the quality of the education decreased. (Something is missing in the transcription of that sentence.) What my friends who hand me that argument never say to me is "why." Why must the quality of education decrease and therefore facilitate Black Blacks? When I ask that question, I am generally given an answer that seems as if it is a law that comes directly from God—that God has ordained that standards and quality of education in public schools cannot be maintained if the schools get above a certain proportion of North. I have observed that the resistance to desegregation of public schools, intense and deep in Northern communities—the intellectual leadership for the maintenance and the rationalization of segregation in the public schools is found to be quite effective in the North. A new semantics of racism and for the perpetuation of racism, and the perpetuation of segregation in our public schools, is clear, and articulated and promoted by Northern former liberals, who now generally can call themselves proudly
neo-conservatives. In fact, another irony that is personal—one of my best students, Nathan Glasier, I don't ever feel bad saying publicly saying publicly that Nathan Glasier was one of my students in three courses at City College, because Nathan enjoys telling people that he was a former student of my and, therefore, not prejudice.

As the center of gravity of the Civil Rights Movement moved from the South to the North, a very disturbing reality about American racism became more pronounced, mainly that Northern forms of racism are deep, pernicious, subtle, and supported by intellectual, academic rationalizations which are much more difficult to cope with than the more flagrant forms of Southern racism.

What can be done? I wish that I could tell you that I had a pipeline to God. Most of the people with a pipeline to God happen to be on the other side. The courts certainly have been fairly consistent in trying to deal with remaining pockets of segregation. I must tell you how proud I was of the Burger Supreme Court in its unanimous decision last week on the right of a white mother to have custody of her child in spite of the fact that she married a Negro man and what I felt so proud about was that the Burger Court unanimously was continuing somewhat in the spirit of the Brown decision. I want to get hold of that decision of Jack and Jim, who'd ever give me a copy, because I think there's some quotable quotes from Burger in that. But what can we do? I guess we can continue to go before the court, except that Northern forms of violation of the spirit of letters of Brown do not rest upon law, it rests, it seems to me, on more deeply disturbing determinents of man's unhumanity and condition.

I would like to conclude by a challenge. It may be ( ) the
negatives that still persist in the area of the violation of Brown in two areas of our society: Northern urban public elementary and secondary schools and higher education. As I said before I came in here that there is one area in higher education that seems to be the most successful acceptance of the letter and the spirit of Brown, and that's in the area of varsity athletics, and no rationalization that precludes the coaches recruitment of the best athletes without regard to color. But that's about the only area in which there has been really successful, highly visible acceptance of the letter and spirit of Brown.

Educators have been generally deficient in dealing with the problem of communicating to the public the importance of Brown. And the fact that any violations of Brown impaired the ability of educators to perform their golden responsibility in preparing their students for an effective and constructive role in a world of diverse peoples. We educators have left the responsibility for Brown to lawyers, judges, and interestingly enough, politicians. We have protected our flanks by not assuming the risk of informing the politicians that to violate Brown for political expedient reasons interfer with education in the democracy. As a member of the Board of Regents of the State of New York, I hear from our legislators that we have to be realistic, that we have to be sensitive to the fact that the American public don't like bussing and they don't hear me when I say to them this is a new thing in America not to like bussing. Before Brown there was extensive bussing to send children to segregated schools. They don't listen to me when I say to them that bussing children to parochial schools is something that is sacred in New York State. That tax payers pay 90% of the cost of transporting children by busses to private and parochial schools. They said that's different. What they really come down to is to say to me, you don't understand and I am really not quite accepting because it is said so often of the
fact that I'm an unrealist. Their argument is that I am unrealistic in not understanding that there is a difference between bussing children at tax payers to parochial school and bussing children for purposes of remedying the detriment of segregated schools. I thought I succeeded once in making them understand when before the Board of Regents there was a serious discussion about bussing and against bussing and I said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I think at that time I was the only black Regent, a serious mistake has been made because if you are going to have a token member of a deliberative body you should have one who is appreciative and somehow they made the mistake electing me without testing my greatfullness." I did say, "Ladies and gentlemen, I will vote with you against bussing on the condition that we terminate all bussing, including bussing to parochial schools." There was a gasp and they said, "Oh no you can't do that." I said, "OK, if I can't do that I can't vote to terminate bussing." Politicians need to be educated by educators. The general public needs to be educated by educators. The initiative taken by the courts and lawyers must now be reinforced or taken over by educators who have been eloquently silent in making clear that segregated schools not only damage minority children and one of the things which I think public relations in the next years after Brown starting now with the celebration of Brown must make clear to the general public that segregated schools and segregated education damage white children in our social science brief which was attended to the legal brief of the court we devoted as much time to try to make clear to the court the damage, the moral retardation which is inflicted upon white children in a system of segregated education. As we devoted to the time showing the psychology and the academic damage inflicted upon black children, it is a significant symptom of the nature of American racism that the court did not mention the damage inflicted upon white children.
I would like to conclude my presentation of the unfinished business of Brown that maybe we now on the basis of thirty years of experience after Brown must conclude that American society may not be as disturbed about damage inflicted upon black children, may not be disturbed about to do anything to modify the racial patterns of their schools merely because we tell them that black children are damaged but maybe that in the self interest, maybe as a manifestation of racism, as I think it was ( ) who said that maybe one has to use racism to control racism. We now must find ways of letting American society understand that what we were seeking to remedy in Brown was not only the detriment to blacks but that white children are being morally and psychologically being damaged by being required to be victims of segregation and a disease of racism which we their parents, their guardians, and their educators inflict upon them. Maybe that will cause the American people to give up their rationalization or the perpetuation of remaining racism.