

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is indeed a wonderful occasion, and I am pleased and privileged to be here with you to participate in this dedicating ceremony.

This high moment that we are sharing today is more than a mere recognition of the completion of this splendid Performing Arts Building to serve St. Cloud State College and its constituency. It is far more than that. It is, I think, above anything else, a symbol of the united-- and I emphasize the word "united"--the united efforts of many citizens of Minnesota--namely, former President Budd, the Campus Planning Committee, the building committee, the consulting architect, the project architects, the state architect, the Legislative Building Commission, the State College Board, the Minnesota Legislature, and the Federal Government.

This impressive and beautiful building is the fruition of the plans of farsighted college and state officials who envisioned the value of a Performing Arts Building for this campus.

The world has seen startling technological advances, but while man has orbited the moon, he still has far to go to learn to live on this planet with his fellow man. As a Hindu leader once said: "We can swim under the sea like fish; we can fly in the air like birds; but how to live on the earth like men, we know not." Space-age progress in improved human relations crawls at a snail's pace out of the Dark Ages. One of the most effective instruments for bettering human relations rests with the most fundamental media of education--the arts. Presenting both a common language for communication among diverse people and a means of expression reflecting a people, the arts provide an unequal opportunity to understand our fellowman.

A UNESCO publication states:

"Man does not live by bread alone, nor by technology alone. Man also needs the truth that is found in a line and form and style and music and poetry. It is in his creativity that man reveals the best that is in him. And it is the appreciation of the creative works of others that reveals to him the best that is in his fellow man."

Throughout the diverse races and social groups which make up mankind, exist shared emotions, hopes, fears, joys and sorrows--and a shared hope for a happier tomorrow. In all cultures these common feelings are expressed and understood through music, song, dance, drama, and arts of a people. Possessing a universal language which penetrates to the very heart of human existence, society has this basic gift for transforming alien neighbors into friends.

As in the past, in the present, and also in the future, it is my hope that faculty and students in the arts at St. Cloud State College will heed this philosophy. The arts can and do provide a basis from which to begin. They lead the way toward understanding the real character of a people, their way of life, their ideals, their values.

The fostering of artistic creativity and excellence has become a matter of national interest. As an essential medium of expression the arts are vital not only to the welfare of our own people but to the prestige of our Nation. Our late President Kennedy, who championed the arts, said:

"Above all, we are coming to understand that the arts incarnate the creativity of a free society. We know that a totalitarian society can promote the arts in its own way--that it can arrange for splendid productions of opera and ballet, as it can arrange for the restoration of ancient and historic buildings. But art means more than the resuscitation of a past: it means the free and unconfined search for new ways of expressing the experiences of the present and the vision of the future. When the creative impulse cannot flourish freely, when it cannot freely select its methods and objects, when it is deprived of spontaneity, then society severs the root of art."

Many observers of American life believe that we are approaching a period in our history when artistic expression will be understood and supported as never before. In recent years, we have witnessed a tremendous growth in public interest and participation in the arts. Paperback book sales have soared, symphony orchestras have enjoyed greater patronage, theatre groups have sprung up all across the nation, more and more art galleries have opened in towns and cities throughout the country. The general character of our society in the seventies is already apparent. It will be a learning society (witness the growth of all forms of educational programs); it will be an urban society; it will be a media-centered society (witness the social impact of television and the revolution in film making); because it will be a technological society, it will also be a leisure society (with shorter work days, work weeks, and extended vacations).

All of these marks of the seventies suggest that the arts will take their place in the mainstream of national life--not just for the "enlightened" few, but for a large portion of the entire population. And there are other signs. Although Viet Nam has prevented anything like adequate funding, the 89th Congress established the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities to parallel the National Science Foundation. State and municipal arts councils now abound. And public interest in community theatre, art institutes, symphonies, and museums has never been greater.

The great ages in the life of a civilization have been those in which the arts have flourished. The Age of Pericles in democratic Athens was as noted for its philosophers, sculptors, and playwrights as for its generals and statesmen. We should not forget this. It was hardly an accident.

The quality of a society is measured as much by its culture as its political and economic attainments.

I look forward to an America which will steadily raise the standards of artistic accomplishment and which will steadily enlarge cultural opportunities for all of our citizens. And I look forward to an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization as well. St. Cloud State College has an obligation to help in fulfilling this mission.

In an address honoring the life of Robert Frost, President Kennedy said: "And the nation which disdains the mission of art invites the fate of Robert Frost's hired man, the fate of having nothing to look backward to with pride and nothing to look forward to with hope."