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*see notes*

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
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HINE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
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Today marks another milestone in your lives, an ending and a beginning. All of us at the Department of Transportation, your "partners in education," are proud of you. We have gained much from meeting and working with you this past school year. And I want to assure everyone here that our commitment to Hine Junior High School is not graduating along with these students today. We look forward to continuing our relationship come September.

During the school year, many of you have participated in programs sponsored by the Department of Transportation. I hope you enjoyed the presentations and field trips, but more important, I hope you saw them as educational. Perhaps some of you are now thinking about careers you want to follow as a result of our "career days."

Long ago, the Greek writer Aesop wrote in his fable The Traveler and Fortune, "Everyone is more-or-less the master of his own fate." What he said more than two-thousand years ago still applies today. Each of us has the potential to accomplish anything to which we set our minds. Let me share an example with you.

Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting Michael Jackson at the White House, where he received an award from the President for helping us in the fight against drinking and driving.

Michael is a young man with God-given talent and a determination to excel. He has become one of the most successful musical entertainers of all time. He is a living example of the truth that in this country every person can be successful -- if you have the determination and the discipline to persevere.



Now there is only one Michael Jackson, but each of us has the potential to reach the goals we set for ourselves. Our lives are what we make of them. But we can't do it alone. We need the support of parents, the love of friends, the instruction of others and an inner spirit of strength and purpose. Do you remember the film "Chariots of Fire?" One of its heroes was the great Olympic runner Eric Liddle. Where did he get the strength to practice year after year, to overcome difficulties and doubts? The strength came from within, he said in the film. It's there for you too. But you must never give up, you must always try harder, improve your skills and not let the words "I can't do it" in your vocabulary.

I know personally how hard it is when someone tells you that you can't do something or you shouldn't do something. I'll never forget a day back in September 1962 when I entered Harvard Law School. I was one of 25 women in class of 550. My first day at Harvard, I was accosted by a male classmate, a young man who demanded to know what I was doing there. "Don't you realize that there are men who would give their right arm to be in this law school, men who would use their legal education?"

Obviously, the implication was that I was taking the place of a man. But I didn't let his comments stop me from pursuing my goal.

Times have changed for the better, and America in the 1980s has far more open doors and opportunities than before. We are in an exciting period of growth, and if you take the time to plan and work for your future, you can find yourself a rewarding career.

Hine Junior High School has put a lot of emphasis in recent times on the basics. Even in this rapidly-changing "high-tech" age, fundamental skills are still necessary to open doors to future careers, the same way successful athletes spend a lot of time on practicing basics before they become professionals. The truth is, such skills are required no matter what career path you choose. A carpenter cannot build anything without his tools; we all need the tools our school education provides to build the foundation for a successful career.

So, set your course to obtain what you want out of life. And never forget that you do not travel alone. Remember that just as you receive help from family, friends and society, you have a contribution to make. Some years ago a company urged its workers to "think big." Then, another company, a builder of compact cars, asked people to "think small." Another company came up with a different slogan. It posted signs on office walls, asking employees just to "think."

Those are all good ideas, but there is one I believe is still better. On this Graduation Day, I invite you to make "think of others" your motto.

When our thinking is rooted first in our concern for other people -- for their needs, their interests and their problems, we will live in a more sharing community, a really caring country and a much better world.

President Reagan tells a story that shows what I mean. A few years ago in Newport Beach, California, there were some lovely beachfront homes that were threatened by high tide and heavy surf -- homes in danger of total destruction. All through a cold winter day and night, volunteers worked filling sandbags to save the



homes. About 2 o'clock in the morning a newscaster grabbed a young fellow in his teens, wearing only wet trunks. Along with several hundred other young people, he'd been working day and night. No, he didn't live in one of those homes they were trying to save. Yes, he was cold and tired. Why then, were he and his friends doing this, the reporter wanted to know. The young man stopped for a moment and then he answered, "Well, I guess it's the first time we ever felt like we were needed."

These young people found purpose and meaning in their lives. They could have spent their time playing sports or video games, but they put the needs of others ahead of their own wants.

Put others first in your thinking and you will find that concern for others is like an echo -- your thoughtfulness is returned quickly from all sides. Winston Churchill once said: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

As you graduate from junior high to high school, you take a big step forward in life. Remember that what you achieve in your adult years will depend largely on the skills you gain from the educational opportunities yet before you. But so much of how you live will depend on what you give of yourself to others along the way.

From your "family" at the Department of Transportation, congratulations and best wishes. Good luck and God bless you.