

FRANKLYN PIERCE COLLEGE

DECEMBER 4, 2007

Thank you for inviting me to come to FranklynPierce University this morning to talk with a few of you. I am honored to be here. I know you have all worked very hard to get to this moment and I admire you for that. Life is much more complex and fast-moving than when I went to school, and things were already hard enough back then.

I know you are all grateful to be back on campus and safely away from all your grandparents and aunts and uncles who have been asking you what you will major in, what career you have chosen, and where you plan to retire and be buried. Older people like me are stuck in a view of the world that is quite rigid. You go to school - according to this view - to learn a trade or a profession, get married, get a house, raise kids to

take your place in life, have a well-attended funeral, and then do your part to increase New England's insufficient topsoil.

The institutions of great New England schools like Franklin Pierce are so reliably longstanding that they create a mirage of constancy, when in fact the world is changing being swept away. rapidly and the plannable world of your parents and your aunts and uncles ~~is~~ ^{has} changed.

For you, college will be a lifelong affair. You cannot learn enough here in four years to get you through your entire life. Your life will be about constant learning and growing through a number of related or unrelated careers, and that is a dramatic improvement in the condition of human beings--if life is about maximizing our potential, which it indeed is.

You will have a number of personal relationships in your life . I am glad to have had one marriage to one husband, but your life may well be quite different. While I recommend loyalty, I know the statistics today The bright side of this difficult emotional terrain is that you will have the opportunity to experience enriching pain and you will have the advantage of essentially living several lives, to my one.

Of all the shifting sands your tent will be pitched upon perhaps the condition of the earth's ecosystem and its democracies will present you with the greatest changes and challenges. If the great present division persists between the world's poor and rich, I assure you that you will live in a violent world, and that the tragedy of September 11 will be remembered as the beginning of such things in your experience. If the great exploitation of the earth's resources persists at the expense of sustainability

**you will experience the flooding of New
York City, Venice and other great
seacoast cities and treasured beaches
and you will curse my generation that let
it happen without trying harder to end
the corruption and the selfish misuse of
resources. You will learn to adapt and to
fight for the planet's survival. Your
career and your life will be about this
struggle, one way or the other.**

**Yours may be the most privileged
generation to ever have lived upon earth.**

**I don't mean that you have soft
advantages, but that you find yourself in
a heroic importance to the world. This
may sound overblown. It may make no
sense to you for an old woman to stand
here and tell you that you, personally,
are the hero or heroine whose actions
will decide things for a troubled world.
But I think that may indeed be the case.**

**Our lives are more beautifully linked
than you can imagine, and the genius of**

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**one life can affect all the others in
unimaginable ways.**

**You must become the hero or heroine of
your own life in any case, and that is
enough for your happiness, regardless
of your degree of extension into the
world.**

**Finding your genius is some times a
hard trick. Sometimes it is easily
spotted, embraced and nurtured. But
some of you will never find it, though it
was always there for you to find, I assure
you, sometimes we see it and do not
want to find it quite where it pops up.
"Well, yes, I happen to be very good at
that, but I don't want to be doing that for
the rest of my life." Indeed you may turn
away from your own genius many times
before it comes knocking with a baseball
bat on some dark night of the soul.**

**=Be open to your own genius.
Fearlessly try everything in life. See**

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**what gives you energy instead of taking
your energy away. Discover the things
that keep you joyfully up until 5 A. M.**

**Sex, of course, doesn't count, because
we are all geniuses at thinking about
that. It is a given.**

**If you can't get excited about anything in
the way of a first career, do not despair.**

**Keep exploring. You are on a Grail
quest, and your quest will be rewarded if
you keep combing through life, looking
for the thing that sparkles for you. It is
there, believe me. It is your soul. It is
your life's work.**

**Finding your soul is a great project. But
it is not the only happiness to be enjoyed
in your life--especially in these glory
days of your youth. Take time each day
to look at the beautiful lives around you.
Look with love from above at these lives,
and be a force for good in them. There is
no better way to find your own heart than
to look with kindness to the needs of**

others. We cannot find ourselves except through friendship and love and serious respect for the lives around us.

The crisis we face in this century is far more difficult than just our ability to prosper, for it is not just our ability to prosper that is at stake, but our ability and nature's ability--to survive at all.

Alaska's glaciers are melting. Seas are rising. Droughts and their fires sweep across our purple mountains and our fruited plains. Any mountain with coal under it is being sheared off and dumped in the next valley. Why? So we can burn more coal in an already carbon-saturated environment. No respected scientist doubts any longer that we are destroying the planet rapidly. We have an obligation to those coming after us. We will have to stand in front of our Maker - will we not? - and explain how we properly cared for the great gift of life we were given - the birds, the fish and the

Dear Friend: You hold in your hand information that we would like to spread throughout the entire country. Corporations and special interest money has taken over our White House and our Legislature. We have three states using public funding for elections at the state level. They are Maine, Arizona and now Connecticut whose legislature has recently passed such a bill. Will your state be #4? Make copies of this information and send it to your friends, relatives, co-workers and ask them to do likewise to their friends, etc.

flowers of this Eden.

Remember where you stand is the center of the world and you can do anything if you get your immediate family, your extended family, your relatives, your neighbors, your friends, your working colleagues behind you. Because they all love this country, are proud of this country and its democracy. They are proud to be the greatest country in the world and they don't like to believe that there is corruption in their government - that a man has to sell his votes to run for office, that a man has to beg for money to get re-elected. The people that serve as our public servants should be paid by public funds, as are judges, our police, our soldiers, our fire-men, our teachers.

Today we have three states that use a public-funding system for people in government in Arizona, Maine and Connecticut. 19 different states did some form of legislating this past year

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towards partial public funding of elections in their state.. Many other states are working towards this system. when enough states accomplish public funding of elections a critical mass will form and the system will go federal.

I am happy to tell you that the state of New Hampshire has passed HB794 out of Sub committee and full committee and it will be studied by a commission of seven men before it is ready to be presented to the House and Senate in 2008. It will cover the Governor, the Governor/s council and the Senate. There will be a time when we can use the help of you students to send letters and make telephone calls to the members of our Legislature urging them to make us State #4 for public funding of elections. I hope we can plan on your help. For if HB is passed we will make one more big step towards that critical mass that will form to cause the system to go federal. Then

we will have a real Democracy in the United States of America at last.

and a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

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Public Funding
Here is how Public Funding for a state works. First, it is voluntary so there are no constitutional problems about anyone's rights. The participating candidate has to personally collect a certain number of qualifying signatures and small contributions -- usually in the five dollar range -- from people who live in their district. This demonstrates community support. Someone who has long been active in a parent-teacher group or of scouting, will have an easy time of it. When the candidate meets this requirement his campaign receives advertising money from the state fund. The candidate must agree to neither raise nor spend any other money, including his own. This neatly gets special interest contributors right out of the picture.

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