ADDRESS OF SENATOR STROM THURMOND AT COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES
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I want to talk with you today about the Miracle of America. This land of ours has grown and flourished as the result of miracles—miracles which were the results of far-seeing people having the courage to venture where men had not ventured before them—people who saw and made the best use of their opportunities.

The early settlers came to this country seeking opportunity. Some of them wanted an opportunity for religious freedom. Others sought escape from political persecution. Many came because they believed the new land offered great opportunities for trade. Still others risked their lives and their fortunes purely for the sake of adventure.

But whatever brought those early settlers to this country, opportunity was the underlying desire in the minds and hearts of those hardy people. They knew that hardships awaited them in the new land. But they were willing to face the unknown in search of a better future.

Courageous ambition was a mark of all those who set out for the shores of America. Having arrived here, they
established a great heritage of courage for us even before they established a nation.

Our pioneer forefathers were adventurous leaders. They realized the opportunities lying dormant in America as they began to push back the frontier toward the mountains and to till the soil. So they began to develop trade with the lands from which they had come and with the Indians they found here.

A new type of leadership was born of the necessity to make use of the resources our ancestors found in this new land. The need for mechanical devices soon caused inventors to spring up to supplement the leadership of fighters and political thinkers.

Only 26 years after the Pilgrims landed in 1620, the General Court of Massachusetts issued the first American patent to a man named Joseph Jenkes for his sawmill driven by water-power. He seized the opportunity to invent his sawmill when he realized the need for such a machine.

Many others had similar vision. During the following century of colonial development, wars and privation failed to curb the inventive natures of men who saw the need for various implements. Oliver Evans invented a mill to turn grain into flour by 1776. In 1785, James Fitch launched a steamboat in the Delaware River, a forerunner of the first successful steamboat which was designed by James Fulton in 1807.

Still in the 18th Century, Eli Whitney invented his cotton gin in 1790. Thus he set the stage for the development of a
great manufacturing industry/which is vital to our nation and, in South Carolina employs 133,000 people.

By 1830 the steam locomotive had been tested/and in 1831 the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was operating. Here again was proof of the vision and genius of American inventors. As river travel and covered wagons no longer met the needs of the time, there were men to take the initiative with a new idea. The steam locomotive, like the steam ship, revolutionized transportation, a basic development in creating our modern economy.

Looking back again, it was in 1834 that Cyrus McCormick patented the reaper/which provided the farmer with a way to harvest crops large enough to meet the growing need/of a growing people. By 1850 the large-scale manufacture of the reaper had made farm mechanization a reality.

As cotton exporting became possible with the invention of the cotton gin, exportation of grain was possible after the reaper came into use.

Before 1860, Fairbanks had invented the platform scale; Deere the steel plow; Colt the revolver; Morse the telegraph which was the first great electrical achievement; Howe the sewing machine; Goodyear vulcanized rubber; and Hoe the process of printing newspapers from type locked on cylinders.

The mid nineteenth Century seemed to open wide the doors to opportunity/for those who had vision and energy. Many new ideas and devices were developed. All of them contributed to making the United States the great country it is today --- leader
of the world in know-how.

About 100 years ago, great developments took place in the use of petroleum and aluminum resources and in processing steel by new methods. Before 1900, the automobile was invented. Hoisting machinery was devised which made possible the construction of great buildings and the concentration of population in large cities.

Within the last 100 years, even more wonderful things have been invented to meet the growing need for new devices for a modern age. The freedom of men to work in a land of democracy has been conducive to the development of ideas which have led to the world's greatest inventions.

Bell invented the telephone in 1876; Edison the incandescent lamp in 1879 and followed it with the electric generator, the cable, electric meter, the production of electricity for sale and the discovery that electricity could be drawn from a vacuum. This source of free electrons was developed into what we call electronics. This includes radio, radar, and television. Electrical instruments required copper, lead and zinc, so these natural resources were soon developed to a high degree.

Other new industries were established when C. L. Sholes invented the typewriter. Imagine an office today without one!

Edison invented the first phonograph and thus established the basis of sound recording which serves us today on radio, television, and in many other ways.
The chemical and metallurgical industries increased greatly in importance after 1900, further developing our natural resources.

In 1909 Leo H. Baekeland invented bakelite and thereby started the plastics industry. The oil cracking process by which greater amounts of gasoline are obtained from petroleum helped found the new giant chemical industry called petrochemicals.

It was Henry Ford who consolidated many ideas to bring about mass production of the Model T automobile. Thus he set the production pattern for all the industrialized countries of the world.

Henry Ford is typical of that remarkable group of men who, with their powers of organization for production and marketing, utilized the resources of nature and man to produce industrial greatness. They developed the inventions and utilized the natural resources to manufacture products which have given this country and the world a higher standard of living.

This process is going on today, and we are all a part of it. Air transportation has long since been added to land, rail and water transportation. We can now see the possibility of space transportation in rockets.

The atom has been split and nuclear physics has given us a new source of heat—atomic energy. This new fuel may soon be used in all means of transportation just as it is being used in submarines today. Atomic energy may soon be the fuel used to produce electricity commercially.
Today, industrial companies have great scientific laboratories with teams of engineers and scientists searching for new products to aid mankind. Their total annual cost for research by private enterprise is estimated at about two billion dollars.

The result of this great technological and economic development in the United States, in terms of material benefits to the people, has been miraculous. That is why I have called it the Miracle of America. With this background of development, let me now point out the scope of our Miracle.

With only one-fifteenth of the world's population, and about the same proportion of the world's land area and natural resources, our country produces about half of the world's manufactured goods.

In America, we now have more than half of the world's telephone, telegraph and radio networks; more than a third of the railroads; three-quarters of the world's automobiles; and over half of the world's radio and television sets.

We consume more than half of the world's coffee and rubber, almost half of the steel, a quarter of the coal, and nearly two-thirds of the crude oil. We produced over three-quarters of the world's passenger cars in 1953.

We also had 46 million dwelling units in the United States in 1950. Of these homes, nearly 9 out of 10 had electric irons, 8 out of 10 electric refrigerators, more than 7 out of 10 had gas or electric stoves, and almost the same number
had electric washing machines, 6 out of 10 had vacuum cleaners, and 3 out of 4 electric toasters. Approximately 750 million light bulbs are used to light the 42 million homes wired for electricity.

In 1953, national income per capita in the United States was $1,709, which meant about $5,982 per average household. This was higher than any country in the world and probably five times the world average. The average worker in America now has a 40-hour, 5-day week. While hours have been declining since 1900, real wages have been rising.

The average worker in 1947 could buy twice as much as he could in 1909, and he worked 11 hours less each week. In 1954, the average worker in New York City could buy a loaf of bread with the pay he gets for 6 minutes of work, while a Russian in Moscow would have to give the equivalent of 11-1/2 minutes; the cost of a suit of men’s clothes in New York City equals 3 days work, in Moscow 47 days; shoes equal 1 days work in New York City and 12 days in Moscow; a dress equals 2 hours in New York City and 18 hours in Moscow; and finally, an American worker can earn a cake of soap with 3 minutes of work, while a Russian must give 24 minutes.

My young friends, I have recited these statistics in such detail for two reasons. First, I wanted to emphasize to you the opportunity which our great country has provided in the past. Second, I want to declare my firm belief that opportunities of equal importance await you today, in whatever field you seek opportunity.
Patent commissioner Henry L. Ellsworth in his report for 1843 made the following statement:

"The advancements of the arts, from year to year, taxes our credulity and seems to presage the arrival of that period when human improvements must end."

I am sure that he was expressing his amazement at those great inventions of the mid-19th Century to which I referred earlier. I do not believe he was implying that the patent office should be closed because there was nothing else to invent, as he has been so widely misquoted.

Since 1790, 2,719,211 patents have been issued. This year, through the past week, 12,040 patents have been issued. What further proof do we need that we live in the Miracle of America?

Whether you continue your formal education or enter some work immediately, there is only one limitation placed upon you. That is the goal you set for yourself.

With courage, intelligence, industry and integrity, you can attain success. But more important, you can contribute, as did our forbears, to the improvement and advancement of this great nation, which offered them and offers you, freedom and opportunity.

End.