

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Address by Robert S. Carney May 22, 1982

In 1932 Calvin W. Jarvis, one of the Principals of Central, wrote a brief history of Central and estimated that over 15,000 young men and women had graduated from Central during the fifty years from 1880 to 1930. During the 52 years from 1930 to 1982, at least 25,000 more students have graduated; which means that Central, during its 122 years, has graduated between 40 and 50,000 young men and women.

Central is proud of the character, talents and success of all its graduates. Of course some have become more famous and greater leaders than others. We could all name many leaders in business, in the sports world, and in all the other fields of endeavor, including those celebrities who have become widely known through television and Hollywood careers.

In addition, the eleven great principals and the hundreds of dedicated and distinguished teachers that have served Central; have rendered a far-reaching service in moulding the character, and instilling the ideals in the thousands of students who have attended Central. The character and ideals of these students is the ingredient that has enabled Minneapolis to become the city it is today. Actually the history of Central High is in large part the history of Minneapolis.

I would like you to think of the year 1860 and of two little towns that existed in that year. One stood on the west bank of the Mississippi River and the other on the east bank of the river. Think of them as joined by the third avenue bridge although in 1860 there was no bridge of any kind, only a ferry boat. In 1860 there was no electricity, there were no telephones, no airplanes and no paved streets. The little town on the west side was Minneapolis, which in 1860 had grown in nine years from nothing to 2,564 people. The little town on the east side of the river was St. Anthony and in 1860 it was six years older than Minneapolis and had 3,258 people. The two little towns merged in 1872 and after that it was all one town of Minneapolis. But in 1860 when the first School Board was created and when Central High was born the two towns were linked together in education with a west-side department and an east-side department. Central was created October 6, 1860 although it was not called Central at the time. The first space it used was in the Winslow House which stood on the site later used by the Exposition Building and still later by the Coca Cola Plant.

Central did not have a building of its own until 18 years later, 1878, when the building was built on 11th Street which it occupied for 35 years from 1878 until 1913. Between 1860 and 1878 Central occupied space in three buildings: First the Winslow House on the east side of the river; next the Academy of Music Building at Hennepin and Washington, and then the 1st floor of the Washington School which stood on the block where the Old Court House (the one with the great Clock Tower) now stands. Central moved in 1913 from 11th Street to this building we are now in and has lived in this building for 69 years.

We must say Central has great seniority. Minneapolis was not officially incorporated as a city until 6 years after Central was born. The University of Minnesota did not hold its first class until nine years after Central was started.

In addition to its service to Minneapolis, Central has played a very patriotic part in preserving the very life of our Country. On May 3, 1861, when President Lincoln called for volunteers the incredible number of 1400 men volunteered from the two little towns of Minneapolis and St. Anthony. Many of these men would have attended Central if they had not formed Company D in Minneapolis and Company E in St. Anthony.

At the entrance of Central there is a bronze plaque given by the class of 1919 which states: "To the honor of the students and alumni of Central High School who in response to the call of their country fought victoriously in the Great War for democracy and humanity."

Also in the entrance hall of Central is another plaque that states: "In honor of the more than 2000 who served their country in World War II and in sacred memory of those who paid the supreme sacrifice." 26 names are listed. If time permitted these are the names I would read. There is also in the entrance hall a more recent plaque given by the class of 1964 showing President John F. Kennedy and the words: "Ask not what your Country can do for you, ask rather what you can do for your Country".

Individuals, families, business enterprises and even empires must take their place in history after the time of their achievements is over. We can rest assured that Central High School will take a very honored place in history.