

(Remarks made by the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, at the Inauguration of Harris L. Wofford, Jr., as President of Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Saturday, October 17, 1970)

At the risk of being confused with Ernest Hemingway, may I begin by saying that there is a well-known resort in Acapulco called Las Tres Vidas. That is as good a title as any for my brief remarks: the three lives of Harris Wofford as I have known him and followed his career over the past dozen years.

These three lives could be most briefly categorized under the rubrics of Civil Rights, Peace Corps, and education. I should add, however, that all three lives were ever intertwined as Harris' interest and considerable talents were directed more specifically in this or that direction.

Our friendship began, Baruch-like, on a park bench in Jackson Square in front of the White House. As a brand new Commissioner of a newly-created United States Commission on Civil Rights, I was looking for a legal assistant. Harris, a Yale law graduate and Chicago undergraduate, was working in Dean Acheson's prestigious Washington law firm of Covington and Burling. It was early in 1958. We had long tough years ahead of us in Civil Rights and I wanted someone to help me who would look upon the task not as a job, but as a passionate and compassionate commitment. After the conversation on the park bench, I looked no further and never regretted it. Harris brought great imagination and vital ideas to the Commission and helped us all off to a good start in our early meetings, public hearings and,

especially, with our 1959 report which became the first of more than sixty volumes since, and set the standard for all the rest. President Eisenhower, like all of his successors, was surprised at what this small Commission had brought forth. Millions of blacks are voting today who could not even register then; hundreds of thousands of black children are in integrated schools and school systems who would still have been in segregated schools; and many thousands of jobs and houses and places of public accommodation have been opened to equal opportunity because, in part, of the long and fruitful hours Harris and his associates worked in those dingy offices on Jackson Square, especially through two long hot Summers. Harris knew everyone in the movement, black and brown and white, and will always be part of this movement until "the promise of the Constitution" (one of his favorite phrases) is better realized in America.

Now comes a brief educational interlude. When the Commission had completed its first two years of life and had been renewed for a longer life, legal assistants of Commissioners were discontinued. I then enticed Harris to come to Notre Dame's Law School as a Professor of Jurisprudence. Sargent Shriver, then, among other things, President of the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago, had met Harris while he subbed for me in a speech to the Council. As the school year ended, Shriver asked Harris to join the Kennedy Campaign effort in the Wisconsin primary as an expert on Civil Rights. Harris was so

helpful in winning that first round that Jack Kennedy asked him to stay for the rest of the campaign, all the way to the California Convention and to the final vote. Theodore White, in his Making of the President, credits Harris' suggestion of a helpful phone call to Martin Luther King in a Southern jail as responsible for the narrow Kennedy victory. Thus is history made.

As Kennedy's Presidential Assistant for Civil Rights in the White House, Harris aided Shriver in scouting all that academic talent for the new administration. Together they wrote what became the executive order launching the Peace Corps and together toured the whole wide world of underdeveloped countries to give this new Peace Corps crusade roots and substance.

Having launched so many new frontiers for others, Harris ultimately told President Kennedy that he needed one of his own, and left for Ethiopia with a group of volunteers that doubled the number of high school teachers in that ancient land, the Wofford's home for the next two years. It was there that Harris wept for the vision that was blurred by the death of two Johns -- Pope John XXIII and President John Kennedy. When President Johnson assigned Shriver to the additional difficult task of launching the Poverty Program, again Shriver called Harris Wofford back from Ethiopia and placed him for double duty as Associate Director of Peace Corps, for Research and Education. Harris had always thought of the Peace Corps as a kind of university in dispersion. His second life was now drawing to a close.

It was not unusual that his third life should draw upon the experience and inspiration of the other two lives as he finally settled down to give primary focus in his life to higher education. Launching Old Westbury was again a great learning experience for him, for the new faculty, and for the pioneer students. I was happy to see him settled at last in education for he is a natural teacher, as well as a lifelong learner. I was happier still to learn of his coming here to Bryn Mawr, because he would be following the sprightly lead of one of America's great ladies and great educators, Katherine McBride, and would continue the kind of inspirational leadership for which she is noted throughout America. As this third life of education, which was always present in his other two lives, lengthens in this place, I know that Bryn Mawr will be further enriched.

You will agree with me that few young men of our times have been closer to the romance and the reality of bright history in the making than Harris Wofford. May he now begin to make new bright history here, and continue to deepen the values that have given this institution a name of honor and distinction in the world of higher education.

One last word, stolen from the concluding paragraph of George Shuster's autobiography, The Ground I Walked On, It is said that most wives bask in the shadow of their husbands. This is not true of Clare Wofford in the years I have come to know and love her. She and Harris have cast a single shadow.

I will not, I trust, be betraying a confidence when I tell you that Harris Wofford told me this morning that this ceremony and oath are the most important in his life since an earlier one, twenty-two years ago on August 14, 1948 when he married Clare. It was perhaps most appropriate then that we marched in here this morning to the strains of a very popular wedding march.