

Mr. President, Governor Patrick, Congressman McGovern, Dr. Boone, Dr. Harrity, City Manager Augustus, members of the Worcester School Committee and City Council, our State Delegation, honored guests, parents, ladies and gentlemen, members of the graduating class of 2014, welcome on behalf of the people of Worcester.

Mr. President, we are the second largest city in New England and the Heart of the Commonwealth. While we are the second city we are truly a city of firsts.

It was here, six months before the battle of Concord & Lexington that the American Revolution really began when over 4000 citizens from Worcester and surrounding towns, marched peacefully down Main Street - just a few blocks from here -- and took control of the courthouse, defying the British Governor. The actions of our fellow citizens led to the famous "Shot heard round the world."

It was here on July 14 1776 that the Declaration of Independence was first publicly read in Massachusetts.

It was here in Worcester on October 23 1850 that the women's suffrage movement was born, when the first national women's rights convention was held.

And it was here that Abby Kelly Foster -- a leader in both the abolitionist movement and the women's suffrage movement -- got her start.

We have a rich history. It was here that both the valentine and the monkey wrench were invented and it was here that the first perfect game in major league baseball was pitched.

It was here on one of Worcester's seven hills, that a young Clark University professor named Robert Goddard launched the modern space age, when he fired a liquid fueled rocket. That rocket rose only 41 feet, but it gave birth to a galaxy of possibilities. Because of Robert Goddard we have landed on the moon, explored the solar system, and continue to push the boundaries of space.

We're humbled and honored that you chose to be here, Mr. President, but you should know that you aren't the first president to grace these hills.

One of our Worcester public school teachers even went on to become the second president of the United States; of course I speak of John Adams.

It was here, at Holy Cross College in 1905, that President Theodore Roosevelt became the first American president to speak at a catholic college. And it was here that President Lyndon Johnson chose to announce the end of the filibuster which allowed the Voting Rights Act to become a reality.

From the American Revolution to the Industrial Revolution, from advancements in technology to

advancements in civil rights, the men and women of our city have led the way.

But we do not live in the past. Today we have a world class Biotechnology Park and a world class medical school at the University of Massachusetts.

We lead America in Robotics with our program at WPI and in video gaming with Mass DiGi at Becker College.

So to the young men and women of this graduating class and the students in our other fine high schools who have graduated this week, I remind you of the foundation you stand upon and the future that will come.

The idea that we can build a state of the art school, with talented teachers and eager learners is not, pardon my pun, rocket science. That is why Worcester Technical High School was selected as a Blue Ribbon High School headed by the finest principal in our country.

Your efforts, creativity and your fearlessness to innovate will add to our rich history.

As you leave the familiar and secure environment of this school, to embark on new adventures, I must remind you, that what lies ahead will not be easy.

Today, our nation's leaders face issues from air pollution to climate change, from pay equity to poverty, from the new economic reality to insuring the peace of our nation and our world. These challenges also face our nation's students and we look to you to make the world safer, cleaner and greener. While I wish we were sending you out into a more perfect world, I know I speak for all those here today when I tell you that we know you can make it better. The opportunities are endless.

Whether you are going off to college, entering the workforce or joining our nation's armed services, nothing is out of the question for you.

One of you may be the next Robert Goddard, launching America's next frontier or the next Loring Coes leading the new industrial revolution. Or the next Frances Perkins, from Worcester, the first female member of a president's cabinet, who led the fight for equal pay for women. That fight is not yet over, but it may be won by one of our daughters here today.

As you take the next step in life's journey, I know you will make both your parents and your city proud. Thank you.