

**2010 Robert Maynard Hutchins Award
Luncheon Remarks**

by Frank G. Splitt

First, my heartfelt congratulations go to Sally Dear, the recipient of the 2010 Robert Maynard Hutchins Award, and to our newly-elected president Jason Lanter.

Next, my thanks and appreciation go out to our past presidents Kadie Otto, David Ridpath, and Linda Bensel-Meyers as well as to fellow Drakes Allen Sack, Jon Ericson, John Gerdy, and Bob Gilbert—I stood on all of their shoulders during the past seven years and hopefully will continue to do so.

As most of you know, yesterday marked the 40th anniversary of the first Earth Day. It was observed by 20 million Americans, who united to show their concern and increase public awareness about preserving and protecting our planet.

The Drake Group has much to learn about the glacial-like process of change from this environmental movement that, like The Drake Group, is still agitating in its struggle against powerful vested interests. No surprise here since it was over 500-years ago that Niccolo Machiavelli told how difficult it is to bring about institutional change.

Devra Davis, a commentator on my first essay, "Reclaiming Academic Primacy in Higher Education," provided me with the following reform-related story that is rooted in her Jewish story-telling tradition that she used in her book, *When Smoke Ran Like Water: Tales of Environmental Deception and the Battle Against Pollution*:

"A group of workers is asked to do something quite difficult and complicated. They protest, The day is short! The work is too difficult! The project is too big! We do not have the right tools! And anyway, we are too tired! We will never finish this job! Their teacher replies, It is not for you to finish the task. But—you must begin."

The Drake Group's faculty-driven reform movement has had a great beginning—characterized by the academic interests of higher education rather than the commercial values of the entertainment industry.

A notable part of this beginning is that the issues surrounding the professionalized college sports entertainment industry have been recognized by Bill Thomas, when he was chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee, Senator Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, and by Education Secretary Arne Duncan who really seems to 'get it' based on his recent challenges to the NCAA.

Although it is only a beginning, the reform movement has the potential to ignite a remarkable revolution in intercollegiate athletics.

Strong transformational faculty leadership needs to be developed and exercised to assure a sustainable effort against the daunting and sometimes devious efforts to maintain the status quo—keeping in mind that without transparency, accountability, and independent oversight there is not only no way of knowing what's going on in the academic life of college athletes, but there is also no way to achieve significant and enduring reform.

Let me conclude as I did at the 2006 RMH Award ceremony in Indianapolis—using this well-known quote from Margaret Meade:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

With my best wishes and warmest regards,

Frank

April 23, 2010

NOTE: These remarks were presented by Dr. Jason Lanter in Dr. Splitt's stead.