

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

NASHVILLE 5 TENNESSEE

School of Law

9 March 1962

Mr. Robert E. Smith
The Harvard Crimson
14 Plympton Street
Cambridge 38, Mass.

Dear Mr. Smith:

My response to your letter of March 3 must be brief and unsatisfactory. My assignment was merely to escort General Marshall from the Yard to the platform and seat him at a designated place, and to escort him from the platform to the room where the recipients of the degree were assembled with the "dignitaries" of the University who were to be at the luncheon. (These dignitaries escorted him to the luncheon.) My function was of no importance, and I feel sure that no one, including General Marshall, regarded me, a mere professor, as of any importance in the proceedings.

I had heard the addresses of some recipients of honorary degrees and none of them had said anything of more than temporary value except for specialists in their respective chosen fields. I expected nothing more from General Marshall. And I intimated to him that his apparent anxiety about his coming performance was unusual, but he assured me that he was expected to say something of importance. (Who expected it? He did not specify.)

I am sure that he did not think of his message as a restatement of the ideas of any one else. Whether he believed that his speech would be history-making I do not know, but I do know that he was too modest a gentleman to express any such belief. And so far as I know, he set the precedent of using the Harvard Commencement as the forum for making statements of outstanding public importance. I am sure also that he was fully aware of the importance of the office he held, but he had no exaggerated idea of his own superior abilities.

The one clear impression left on me was of General Marshall's modesty and sincerity. But certainly, the one who knew him best, Mrs. Marshall, was convinced of his greatness and didn't hesitate to say so.

Sincerely yours,

E. M. Morgan

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EMM:mpg