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In His Own Words: Francis King Carey

On June 4, 1906, Francis King Carey delivered the Commencement Address for the University of Maryland Schools of Law, Medicine, and Pharmacy. Entitled "Professional Men and Public Enterprise," Carey attempted to put into words the radically shifted landscape of Baltimore—in law, business, and medicine—that graduates would find themselves in just two years after the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904. This is an excerpt of his address.

"This is the day of cooperation. It was never so true as now that men succeed or fail together rather than as individuals, and generosity in lending your own opportunities, and tact and ability in borrowing the opportunities of other people, are distinctly among the elements of personal progress. A community can move mountains if its members act together, while if they pull apart their very numbers constitute a source of weakness. The extraordinary emergencies of our great fire taught our people a lesson in cooperation which they will be slow to forget. We have learned to our infinite satisfaction that no community can be a great one unless each member of it rejoices almost as much in the prosperity of his neighbors as in his own.

"It is into such a community, in which it is an actual pleasure to live and work, that the members of these graduating classes step tonight. It will do no harm if that

step is taken with a little excess of enthusiasm and a somewhat sentimental view of life's possibilities and relations. No man with even a small share of business knowledge or experience will say that there is no sentiment in business, because a man without sentiment is a man without imagination, and a man without imagination is doomed to small things, mentally, morally and commercially. Let no man fool you into believing that the road to success lies in the direction of doing what is called "sticking to your own business" to the exclusion of all other interests. Be generous with your time, your sympathy and your interest in any matters, public or private, where your time, sympathy and interest will tell. That does not mean that you must scatter what brains you possess over too much territory. The greenhorn who tries to kill a quail by shooting into the whole covey can teach you better than that, but open your mind and your heart wide to your fellow men, and I prophesy that you will get back more than you give out.

"If you have not yet caught and understood the spirit which is making Baltimore a great commercial city and turning a village community into a metropolitan one, you had better leave it. There are still prophets of evil and apostles of despair who, unfortunately, were outside of the 'burnt district' and escaped with their worse-than-useless lives. Turn your backs upon them. There are still people who will tell you that this or that enterprise is too big for Baltimore. Believe me, the truth is not in them. I say again that no well-conceived, wisely planned and prudently managed business enterprise, large or small, has ever failed to succeed in Baltimore, nor is it an answer to point to failure, where enthusiasm without money, or money and ability without knowledge and training have paved an easy roadway to misfortune. The population opportunities of a city of over half a million people are enormous, and Baltimore's opportunities are in many ways undeveloped. Save your money for railroad tickets (borrow it if necessary) and travel to other wide-awake towns less fortunately situated and with smaller populations; take a cattle ship and visit European towns, and you will come back with a fuller realization of this fact.

"This, then, is the message which I have tried to carry to the members of these graduating classes tonight, and it is the message of the city of Baltimore to all of her people. Our city needs, and will warmly welcome and reward, as every worthwhile community at all times needs, welcomes and rewards, honorable, brave, well-trained and efficient men, but the price you must pay for her good will is to keep step to the music of her progress and fight under the banners of hope and confidence which she has flung boldly to the breeze, and which the spirit of her people has nailed tightly to her flagstaffs."

For Francis King Carey's full address, please visit <http://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu>.