

TALKS BY MRS. ROOSEVELT

June 16, 1937

Description: ER and Constance Eberhardt (from the graduation class of Hunter High School, New York) discuss graduation.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt and Constance Eberhardt

ANNOUNCER:

The Pond's Program ... with Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt!

BARR:

This is Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company, speaking from New York, and bringing you – Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt! Tonight, Mrs. Roosevelt has with her Miss Constance Eberhardt, New York High School girl ... a member of the class of 1937, and through her Mrs. Roosevelt talks to all this year's graduates – their families and friends.

First, may I take a moment for a question that often comes my way. What's a girl to do when she rushes in from a long afternoon of tennis, with just about 2 seconds to fix up in for a date, and finds her face just won't take powder! It's all roughed up with little flaky patches!

Well, there's a special cream for just that problem. Pond's Vanishing Cream contains an ingredient that melts that flakiness off! The moment it touches your skin, your skin is smooth as satin. Right away, your powder goes on beautifully. And off you go for that extra special date looking fresh as a flower.

Next time your skin roughs up won't you try Pond's Vanishing Cream? Get a jar tomorrow morning.

And now I have the great privilege of presenting – Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt!

(8 MINUTES FROM MRS. ROOSEVELT
ENDING WITH INTRODUCTION OF VIRGINIA BARR)

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Good evening. Many of you have been good enough to invite me to speak at the exercises which mark the completion of one period of the education of thousands of boys and girls. While I cannot be with each of you on your own Commencement days, I would like to talk to you and send you my greetings.

And that is what we are going to do this evening. With me in the studio is Miss Constance Eberhardt, a young lady of 17, who is graduating this week from the Hunter College¹ High School here in New York.

Rather than a formal Baccalaureate address, Constance and I are going to have a Baccalaureate Conversation. She has a number of questions that she and some of her friends thought would interest most members of the Class of 1937.

Now, Constance, I think we'd all be interested in knowing a little about you. You're connected with Girl Scouts, I think you told me.

EBERHARDT:

Yes, I am. I've been a Girl Scout for a number of years. My sister is one, too, and Mother is a troop leader.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I'm very glad to hear that so many of your family are active in the Girl Scouts. I'm very much interested in them, too, and in the work they do. But, what are you planning to do when you're through High School?

EBERHARDT:

This summer, I'm going to be an Assistant Councillor at Camp Genevieve Brady, near Towners, New York. Then in the fall I am going to Cornell, and after that I plan to study Law.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

You are planning a career, aren't you! Do you think the majority of your classmates have reached as definite a decision about the future as you have?

EBERHARDT:

Well, quite a few I know have. But, Mrs. Roosevelt, one question I'd like to ask you. When a girl or a boy has a particular talent for one thing -- art, or music, or science -- do you think she is wiser to go to a school where she can specialize, or is a college training better?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Well, Constance, where it is possible, I would advise going to college first. But I would be sure to select a college where the subject you are most interested in is well taught. Then, after that, I would take a specialized course.

EBERHARDT:

That's kind of expensive though, isn't it?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, it can be expensive. But if you cannot afford it, then I should say go to the place where you can get the best training in the subject in which you're most interested.

In many schools and colleges now, there are ways for students to earn money on their way through. I know boys and girls who wait on table, - others who live in faculty houses and help with the housework and with children. In one college I visited recently, several of the girls lived together and brought food from their homes. This cooperation helped keep their living expenses at a minimum.

EBERHARDT:

We've all studied Latin in school, I guess, - do you think it's worthwhile continuing it?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

That depends entirely on what you want to do, and whether Latin is required for any further study you intend to make. When I was in school, I hated Latin, but I found it valuable in studying modern languages such as French, Italian and Spanish.

EBERHARDT:

In going to college, how much time do you think a boy or a girl should give to extra-curriculum activities? How valuable are they?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I think you should give as much time as you can spare to extra-curriculum activities without slighting your regular work.

I think their greatest value is in giving you a broader vision and interest in life in general. Sports, for instance, teach you how to work together and play together, and to be more interested in the good of a team than you are in your own personal achievements. I think any additional reading you can do is extremely valuable. I'm afraid you young people do not read as much for diversion and entertainment as my generation did. Not long ago, at a young people's party we had at the White House, I made some reference to one of Kipling's books. And I was very much surprised to find that not one of the boys or girls present had read any Kipling. My own children knew some Kipling because I read it aloud to them, but they tell me they've forgotten much that I read.

EBERHARDT:

~~_____ Mrs. Roosevelt, some girls I know are planning to get married and raise a family. They don't think college is necessary.~~

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

~~_____ It isn't necessary, of course, but it can be very helpful. There comes a time when your job as housewife and mother is not entirely sufficient to occupy you. Then, if you've had some training you can turn it into some constructive work.~~

EBERHARDT:

~~_____ Those girls who aren't planning anything definite now – what would you suggest as some good things for them to do?~~

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

One of the first things I did, after I got through school, was to join the Junior League, where I worked a great deal in Social Service. The Junior League, of course, is just one of the many organizations doing work of that sort. You can take an active interest in things in your own communities. If you just look about you, you can find any number of places into which you could fit and be very helpful – enough places, I am sure, so that you could have a very wide choice in the matter.

By volunteering, of course, I don't mean working spasmodically. I mean doing a definite piece of work for so many hours a day, and being responsible for a certain job, so you can really know what it is like to work.

If you have any imagination, you may be able to work out an idea which will provide employment for those who need it. I know one woman who doesn't have to work, and who never went to college. But she has organized and runs a woman's exchange in a small community. (OVER)

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (Continued)

She sells things made by the women of that community which gives them some income. The business is very successful, but run entirely without profit to herself, - yet she told me that if it was ever necessary, she could make it a paying business. That woman really works.

EBERHARDT:

What new careers are there today that you think are good for girls to go into – or boys, too?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Of course, science and invention are bringing new businesses into the field every day. For instance, in recent years, the radio has provided a new career for boys and girls. Television seems to be next. Girls can give budgeting and consumer advice. By this I mean a girl who has taken a course in home economics, for instance, could offer a service in helping people make a budget, help them to do their buying. She would know how to test materials. She can buy more, and get better value for her customers' money, and at the same time, she can frequently create a market for things in the shops.

The fashion advisor is often useful, both in wholesale and retail businesses, and this work can be very interesting.

Social service should be a wider field, with the awakening social conscience of this country. Government positions offer opportunity for trained and ambitious boys and girls. And for boys, there are any number of skilled trades and new businesses. For instance, there seem to be increasing opportunities which require engineering training and a greater knowledge of chemistry.

EBERHARDT:

As I told you, Mrs. Roosevelt, I'm hoping to study law -- then you mentioned government positions. I'd like to go into the Diplomatic Service. Do you think there is a chance for a girl there?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Why, yes, I do. We have sent women as Diplomats to two foreign countries already, and I think as they show what they can do, and convince the world that they can be judged not just as women, but as individuals, there will be more and more opportunities for women in that field.

EBERHARDT:

Do you think there will ever be a woman President of the United States?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I feel sure there will be a woman President some day, but that day is not yet here. We women have still to prove ourselves, and at the present moment, I do not think the country as a whole would have enough confidence in a woman, and without that confidence and cooperation she could not do a good job.

Before we have a woman President, we will have to have more women Governors of the states, more women in the Senate and in Congress. The women who have served in those capacities have done good jobs, but they are far too few to create the confidence necessary.

But now, Constance, before we go on with our other questions – Virginia Barr has something to say.

(INSERT MIDDLE COMMERCIAL)

MIDDLE COMMERCIAL

BARR:

Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt!

If there's one thing girls are everlastingly concerned about, it's that flakiness on your skin after you've been out of doors a lot ... those tiny bits of skin that keep your powder from going on right. And what one girl tells another to do for it, is always worth a try. Well, here's a message from a young Society girl – Mrs. C. Henry Mellon, Jr. Mrs. Mellon hasn't been married quite a year yet ... I should say she's just around 22. She plays badminton a lot. She rides horseback all year round. And she travels a great deal.

Mrs. Mellon says: "After a day out of doors, Pond's Vanishing Cream smooths my skin in a second. I just couldn't get along without it. My powder looks smooth. And stays on longer, too."

Now, isn't that worth trying? You see, Pond's Vanishing Cream contains an ingredient that melts away those little flaky particles. It makes your skin smooth in a jiffy. If you love sports, and like to have a nice skin, too, just get a jar of Pond's Vanishing Cream tomorrow morning.

And now, once again, we have the honor of hearing – Mrs. Roosevelt!

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Now, Constance, you said that you had talked over these questions with some of your friends.

EBERHARDT:

Yes, we did, and there were one or two other questions -- a little different, that they hoped you would answer.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Well, I hope I can answer them.

EBERHARDT:

This may sound kind of funny -- but there's one girl we know. She has an awful independent streak. She resents it every time her Mother asks her where she has been, or where she's going. She flies out of the house -- slams the door, - and she doesn't tell them anything either. I know she hasn't anything she should tell them, but do you think -- well -- should she tell them everything?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I know many young girls do worry about that a great deal. I think that life is a pleasanter all around when families are frank with each other ... when they are willing to tell each other about their interests and what they do. By sharing each others' interests they can have much more in common. They grow closer together. But that should be the result of understanding and trust, not of inquisitiveness, and a sense of possessiveness on the part of parents. The volunteer system is much the best.

EBERHARDT:

At our school, in our Hygiene course, part of it is teaching girls how to dress properly and how to use cosmetics. A lot of the girls said to me: "Ask Mrs. Roosevelt what she thinks of that idea?"

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I think it's a very good idea. In my day, of course, few girls used cosmetics, but today it isn't taboo, and I think it is much more sensible to know how to use cosmetics correctly and becomingly.

Knowing how to dress properly is an economy, very often. Many business women I know buy two fairly good dresses, and with a change of collar or belt they vary them so they always look attractive.

One girl I met told me her system was to choose one color that suits ~~you~~ her⁶. Then get all ~~your~~ her⁷ clothes either of this color, or of one that blends with it. ~~You~~ She⁸ save on accessories and shoes and it's easier to have variation without too great expense.

EBERHARDT:

There are some girls I know, who have already got jobs -- and some of them have them in strange cities, away from their families and friends. How can they make their social contacts? With boys, for instance, what do you think is the right way for a girl to go about meeting them?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

If you have a job, you are bound to make friends with some of the people with whom you are working. And through them you will make other friends. Then there is a Y.W.C.A., and, of course, your church. I really don't think there is such a problem to girls nowadays, for they have a great deal more freedom than we did when I was young. But I think girls should use their judgment about the people they meet. Frequently, I think it is better to remain on a rather casual footing with boys and girls until you really know they are the type you want to know well.

EBERHARDT:

~~———— We've had a lot of talk about co-education around school. We argue about it, and I wondered what you think are the advantages of a co-educational system — or the disadvantages?~~

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

~~———— The advantages of it are a more normal contact between boys and girls, and a recognition of each other's abilities. The disadvantages are the greater opportunity for emotional interference in their work, because of more interest in each other than in the tasks assigned to them. That, of course, is a question for the individual to decide.~~

EBERHARDT:

In hunting for jobs, Mrs. Roosevelt, so many people say: "You can't get a thing unless you know typing and shorthand." Is that the case always?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I should say — not always. Certainly not in specialized work, but if you haven't specialized in any particular thing, I think it is useful and very often a stepping-stone to a real job. In this day of haste, it's valuable for your own sake to be able to take notes and type letters and articles, and so forth. In addition, it is good training for your memory and for your hands.

EBERHARDT:

Are charm and personality as important in job-hunting as ability -- do you think?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, in getting a job. But ability is all important in holding it. So many girls make the mistake of thinking they can get through on charm. That's what men resent. In business women should be considered as individuals. They have to make their own reputations, and they cannot expect men to treat them the same way on the job as they might socially. They should be courteous, but the women should hold up their end of the job.

A number of women I know, for instance, work as newspaper reporters. The successful ones are those who go after their own news, write their own stories, and do not ask any quarter from the men, or

help of any kind. Sometimes they work exhausting hours, but I believe women often have more staying power than men. ~~But~~ if you are going to take up any particular kind of work, you should see to it that you are physically able to stand the strain as well as the men can.

(PAUSE)

And now, Constance and I must leave you, -- but before we go, may I congratulate her on her graduation and extend my congratulations to all members of the class of 1937.

Next Wednesday evening, I will be with you again, and at that time, I am going to have Mrs. Ida Harris with me. She is President of the League of Mothers Clubs of New York -- an organization of tenement mothers who are working for better living conditions in their districts and together we are going to talk over ~~housing conditions~~. some of her problems⁹

Good night.

(CLOSING)

CLOSING COMMERCIAL

BARR:

The Pond's Company will bring you Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt next week at the same time. Mrs. Roosevelt will have as her guest Mrs. Ida Harris whose home is on the lower east side in New York. With her Mrs. Roosevelt is going to talk over housing problems there. And may I remind you to get your jar of Pond's Vanishing Cream, to melt away skin flakiness, and make your skin instantly smooth for powder.

This is Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company. Good night!

ANNOUNCER:

This is the National Broadcasting Company.

Transcribed by: Lee Febos.

Proofread by: Ivana Mowry-Mora, Matt Girardi, Olivia Kinhan, Meg Swenson, Crystal Brandenburgh, IK David.

Transcribed from a script held in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹ This is a handwritten interlineation.

³ The letter "G" is a handwritten interlineation.

⁶ This is a handwritten interlineation.

⁷ This is a handwritten interlineation.

⁸ This is a handwritten interlineation.

⁹ The words "some" through "problems" are a handwritten interlineation.