

*Mr. Plung
Mr. Finkel
Dashed lines*

ADDRESS BY MR. JACK I. STRAUS

AT DEDICATION CEREMONY OF JESSE ISIDOR STRAUS SCHOOL

TUESDAY, MARCH 24TH, 1964 AT 8:15 P.M.

Let me first of all thank you Mr. Plung and Mr. Finkel, and through you both the Board of Education of the City of New York, for this wonderful tribute being paid to my father by naming this magnificent school in his honor. Mr. Edward Durell Stone certainly designed a handsome building which may well stand as a symbol for beauty and practicability for years to come. Certainly anyone who attends, whether as teacher or pupil, must be imbued with a great sense of pride, something which can hardly be called typical of most of the schools in the city.

My mother, who is on the threshold of her ninetieth birthday, and the other members of my family are truly grateful and are delighted to participate in this wonderful occasion. (Introduce Mother)

My father would have been very proud that the city chose to name a school after him, for education was one of the major interests of his life.

He was truly a very versatile man - warm, imaginative, creative, a great merchant and, in his later years, a fine diplomat. He had been head of the Macy organization from the time of the death of his father and mother

in 1912, who were lost in the disaster of the steamship Titanic, until 1932. Under his guidance and along with his two brothers, he developed the business from a comparatively small store to the world's largest.

Then, in 1932 during the depth of the depression when President Franklin D. Roosevelt was still Governor, he asked my father to become the head of the Temporary Emergency Relief for the entire state. My father thereupon left the business and spent his full time and energy helping to alleviate the major unemployment crisis. Subsequently, when Mr. Roosevelt became President in 1933, he appointed my father to the post of Ambassador to France, where he served until his death in 1936.

As I said before, my father was a very warm person. He loved people, but particularly children. His grandchildren were extra special. He took tremendous pride in his family. In his eyes they could practically do no wrong. I remember a personal experience I had with him when I went on probation my freshman year at Harvard. I had flunked a German oral examination and had to stay on probation until I was able to pass it satisfactorily. Well, this was a major calamity as far as my father was concerned. It just couldn't or shouldn't happen to a young member of the Straus family. I always had a suspicion that one of my father's secret frustrations was that he would have liked to have been an educator, to have worked with youngsters.

So you can readily understand what a thrill it would have been for him to have known that this great school is dedicated to his memory.

Last week I attended a small dinner at which Secretary Wirtz of the Department of Labor spoke quite informally. He discussed the current unemployment problem and its relationship to education. Certainly no one today can deny that the future strength of this nation, in fact all nations, will be measured to a great degree by the amount both quantitatively and qualitatively of the educational fibre of its people. Schools of the calibre of this one are symbolic of the "new look" in education, not only in the bricks and mortar so ably put together by Mr. Stone, but by the fine staff assembled by Mr. Gross and supervised by Mr. Plung.

On behalf of my mother and all the members of my family, I want to express our deep appreciation of this signal honor being paid to the memory of my father. I want to announce also that we are making available to the school a fund of \$2,500 to be known as the Jesse Isidor Straus Fund, the annual interest of which will be used to replace appropriate books for the education and enjoyment of the students in the school.

It has truly been a wonderful experience for us to participate in this dedication ceremony. Thank you.