

On the other hand, Old Main Building, rightly or wrongly, has represented in the minds of many our faults and our failures in the difficult problem of treating and curing the mentally ill. The fortress-like structure, built in an era when patients were called, and for the most part treated like, "inmates," was the focal point of the criticism leveled at our program of mental hygiene in the era of "Maryland's shame." The bad image it had created in itself was considered by some to be ample justification for its destruction. And so, the event which we are celebrating here today has deep meaning and true significance. We have not met here just to destroy. We are here to tear down the old so that we may make way for the new.

On the site where Old Main has stood for almost a century will be erected a new building for research in mental illness. And out of its ruins, we all hope and believe, will spring the phoenix of a new and modern program for prevention, early treatment and eventual elimination of disabling mental illness. The Old Main Building, as I have stated, has been identified with chronic hospitalization and despair. Within the walls of the research building which will replace it will dwell the atmosphere of hope.

With respect to mental hygiene, we are living in an era of transition. Some months ago, Dr. Robert H. Felix, Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, made a speech in College Park before the Maryland Association for Mental Health. In his discourse, he expressed confidence that within a very few years mental illness will be understood and brought under control. Let me offer you this quotation from his remarks:

"I can truthfully say," said Dr. Felix, "that in my more than 30 years of psychiatry I have never before been so enthusiastic or so heartened as I am today, for we stand at the threshold of the solution to problems that have plagued mankind for centuries.

"I have no doubt," he continued, "that if communities assume the role that they, and only they, can play in building strong mental health programs, mental hospitals as we know them today will have ceased to exist within 25 years.

"In the history of mental illness," he went on to say, "this will be recorded as an accomplishment matching that of Pinel when he broke the chains in a Paris asylum."

Dr. Felix was talking about the transition from patient care that was primarily custodial to a new concept of comprehensive treatment, with community based treatment programs. I know that all of us share the hope with Dr. Felix that we have reached a point in the history of the prevention and treatment of mental illnesses that we can with reason-