

# Dr. Harden Comments On Pertinent Issues At NMU

The unrest on college and university campuses is giving concern to many Americans. Legislators, parents, and alumni are among those raising questions about today's students and their attitudes.

Students respond (some of them) by denouncing the war in Viet Nam, burning their draft cards, sitting in, demonstrating against any and every kind of authority. The unfriendly critic responds by urging that those who do these things should be denied an educational opportunity or be shipped off to Viet Nam at the earliest possible moment.

Let's examine the problem in a more rational light.

Why college? We happen to believe that man is important, that it is possible for him to seek a life which will be worth-while and satisfying for him and his loved ones. We assume that he must have freedom to explore those areas which will permit him to live such a life.

Believing this, we look on education as being something more than a fad or a frill. Indeed, it is an absolute necessity. One who has been free to explore new knowledge, one who has freed himself from ignorance and prejudice, one who has been free to realize self, is an indispensable member of our society. Our colleges and universities are trying to develop this kind of person.

Education in America does not have pat answers for the problems confronting our society. We should not spoon-feed our students. Education, to be meaningful, must by the very nature of the process be challenging, upsetting, and at times frustrating.

It follows, therefore, that young people, who are trying to assert their independence, find many deficiencies in the older generation and the way we do things.

Students like publicity; they enjoy writing and

speaking in ways which will cause them to be heard. Protest is nourishment for the ego. Protest can make a very small man appear very important -- at least to himself.

In all the protests that have taken place -- and this is as true in Berkeley as it is in Ann Arbor, Brooklyn, East Lansing, or Marquette -- one important fact is often overlooked. For every student who sees only the faults of our society, there are thousands of others who, while recognizing the shortcomings of contemporary America, love and respect the traditions of our great nation. Their education has enhanced their respect for the achievements we as a people have made. They understand that it is only within recent times that the waking hours of most of mankind have not been absorbed in a desperate and often futile effort to survive. They hope to contribute to a better life and a better world.

The unrest that we see among some of our students would not be tolerated in many of the totalitarian countries they sometimes support. Our country will remain strong not because of those who reject all discipline and authority. We cannot, as a matter of fact, rely on those individuals who exploit our freedoms and refuse to accept the responsibilities necessary to preserve them.

Today's world calls for those who understand the importance and implications of our freedoms, who are willing to accept the discipline a free society imposes upon its members. We need young people who will, when necessary and for the right reasons, fight to preserve the ideals we have as a nation cherished.

It is my judgment that we have such people, thanks to our system of education and the positive actions which have been taken by legislators, lay citizens, and the courts to keep our colleges and universities free.

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