

I'd like to thank President Kelly, Dr. Cruise, and the rest of the FAU team for honoring my late grandfather by renaming its public ethics academy the LeRoy Collins Public Ethics Academy, and for the creation of this endowment. His high ideals and hope can now continue to be an influence to future generations.

I am reminded by John Ruskin, the Victorian English Artist and critic, who believed that the best teachers were not those who teach us to think thoughts we do not now think, but those who cause us, by their example, to behave in ways we do not now behave.

My grandfather, LeRoy Collins, was one of those teachers not just for me, but for many Floridians. He was as real as it gets. What you would read about him in public was just the way he was in private. There were no pretenses...just a profound sense of what was good, decent...honorable. He acted on moral convictions. You always knew where he stood...and his reasoning for arriving there. Natural settings and real life interactions were his classroom for instilling the basic right and wrong, from taking me fishing,

or canoeing upriver, to baseball and FSU football games and of course...as I got older...a discussion of politics. You can imagine the debate when my father switched political parties in 1988!

His love of family, his State and his God were paramount. He had a steadfast belief that all people had good in them and he knew how to get it out of them with a genuine personal touch.

There was a great story in *Vanity Fair* magazine in April 1994 by Jeffrey Rosen that profiled Janet Reno when she was attorney general. She recounted that she knew a renowned chef who had come from humble beginnings. She asked him what influenced him to reach such heights in his profession. He pointed to Gov. Collins. This man was just a young man when my grandfather was having dinner at a simple roadside restaurant. He enjoyed the pie so much, he just had to meet the person in the kitchen responsible. And if you knew my grandfather...he liked his pie. He went back in the kitchen, and with his well-known sincerity, shook the man's hand and told him it was the

best pie he ever tasted. My grandfather's simple recognition of this man and his skills had a direct influence on his life and gave him the confidence to succeed and be at the top of his profession.

As a public servant, my grandfather had a vision and sense of purpose for tackling the problems that faced him – from racial segregation to education funding, legislative reapportionment and the environment. It was his steadfast conviction with respect for others and a moral courage guided by the truth and by his conscience that helped define his leadership.

In 1957, the state legislature passed the "interposition resolution" which, in essence, was denying the US Supreme Court's right to force desegregation. He denounced this as a hoax and a fraud. On the face of the original document, he wrote:

"Not only will I not condone 'interposition' as so many have sought me to do, I decry it as an evil thing, whipped up by the demagogues and carried on the hot and erratic winds of passion, prejudice, and hysteria. If history judges me

right this day, I want it known that I did my best to avert this blot. If I am judged wrong, then here in my own handwriting and over my signature is the proof of guilt to support my conviction.”

And during his reelection campaign, his aides were telling him his prospects looked quite bleak due to his stance on civil rights and felt he needed to moderate it. He responded, “I don’t have to get reelected, but I do have to live with myself.” There was never a truer testament of his character.

In my grandfather’s words, “To live, every democracy must be supported by leadership committed to achievement for the common good. Abiding moral values, pervasive public education, freedom of speech and religion, and work opportunity must become the glue that holds free people together.”

He believed in the human potential for positive improvement, and that leaders in government must, from generation to generation, avoid sterile thinking and bring

into clear view and understanding ever higher standards which people can achieve by working together.

One of his most insightful observations was, “Government cannot live by taxes alone, or by jobs alone, or even by roads alone... Government, too, must have qualities of the spirit. Truth and justice and unselfish service are some of these. Without these qualities, there is no worthwhile leadership, and we grapple and grope in a moral wilderness.”

That is never more appropriate than today, and can only be accomplished by supporting, inspiring, and training our youth. FAU is a worthy partner for that endeavor, and I’m excited for all they will accomplish.

My grandfather was very focused on training future leaders with a strength of character. Doing what was right was more important than doing what was popular. We need leaders with a vision and sense of purpose to tackle the problems we, as Floridians, face in today’s modern world. And I believe my grandfather would be pleased that his legacy is being perpetuated at FAU.

In his own words, "A fight for right is never lost. What we fail to achieve we will make easier for achievement by those who will follow. God forbid that it shall ever be said ... 'they did not have the vision to see,' or seeing, 'they did not have the will to try.' " Let future generations never forget that lesson.

Thank you.