

Draft

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COLUMN FOR RELEASE MAY 30, 1996
TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE**

Every spring I'm reminded of how hard it is to write and deliver a commencement address. Graduates are thinking much more about getting their diplomas than digesting sage advice from some wise and knowing elder. Those of us assigned the task of giving the speech inevitably find it a humbling experience -- a bit like being parsley on a dinner plate.

Now I'm sure everyone who reads this column has a message of their own for graduates, and if you want to pass yours on to me, please do. I know I'll need some new ideas for next year.

In the meantime, I'd like to share some of what I said to graduates of the University of Arkansas, Drew University, and the University of Maryland in commencement addresses earlier this month.

I talked about the importance of politics and government in a pluralistic democracy like ours, particularly at a time of such momentous change.

Just looking at the world around us we see a new global economy taking shape, offering Americans the potential of greater prosperity, but also the challenge of stiffer competition.

We also see how new technology is bringing the world closer together, changing the ways we communicate and do business, but also reminding us that virtual reality will never substitute for

human relationships.

Family dynamics are being transformed as most families send both parents -- mothers and fathers alike -- to work outside the home, posing the critical question of who is supposed to do what within our most intimate relationships.

And the world itself is changing. Communism has given way to capitalism, tyranny to democracy, closed markets to free trade, all of which is causing us to redefine the ideological labels and geographic boundaries that have framed our thinking for most of the last century.

At times like these, it's tempting to seize on easy answers, pat generalizations and stereotypes.

You know the stereotypes I'm talking about:

If you're under 25, you're an apathetic Generation X-er.

If you're over 40, you're a self-indulgent Baby Boomer. *§* If you're a liberal, you're a bleeding heart.

If you're a conservative, you have no heart.

If you're a Democratic president from Arkansas, you're all of those things, depending on what day it is.

And if you're the wife of a Democratic President from Arkansas, well, you just better make sure your hair is in place.

The truth is, there is no single label that applies to any of us. Our world is too complicated for that. So I urged *- all I urge all graduates - -* graduates to stand up for the common values, ideals and traditions that have brought our country and our democracy this far.

And while I ^{it may not} know ~~it's~~ ^{bc} not fashionable, I also urged them to get involved in politics and government. Politics, after all, is about more than pundits and pollsters, just as government is about more than buildings and bureaucrats.

Politics with a small "p" is the process that brings us together to work toward common ends peaceably. As I said to the graduates, when I talk about politics, I'm talking about you.

It's fine to bash those who believe government is the solution to every social ill. And it's fine to bash those who believe that every government power should be curbed. But one thing we can't do is reject politics and government in the process.

That's a cop-out.

Government and politics are not perfect. They may even be boring. Their achievements often seem minuscule in comparison to the issues we face.

But we are a better country today because generations before us paid the price to establish and maintain a stable, democratic government that protects our rights and expands opportunities that enable all of us to make the most of our lives.

My challenge ^{members of the Class of '96} to the graduates I spoke to -- ~~and to all graduates~~ -- is to go forth as active, committed citizens who believe that they have a stake in our government and our political system.

Now I can just see some of them rolling their eyes and saying to themselves, "Oh, c'mon, Mrs. Clinton. Really. I've

got to pay off student loans. I need to find a job. I want to fall in love. I want to start a family. How am I going to find time for politics? You come from the Sixties. Your generation had higher hopes, bigger dreams. We're past that now."

My answer is: Give it your best shot. Work hard and love your spouses and your children. And make time for your neighbors, your communities, your government as well.

You may never run for office. You may never marry someone who runs for office. But go into the future thinking of yourselves as stewards of our democracy and as men and women who will keep the flame of freedom and justice alive.

If there is one message that I hope gets across it's that citizenship can't be dismissed as someone else's responsibility. Each of us has a role to play.

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draft #3

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Now I could just see some of them rolling your eyes and saying to themselves, "Oh, c'mon, Mrs. Clinton. Really. I've got to pay off student loans. I need to find a job. I want to

fall in love. I want to start a family. How am I going to find time for politics? You come from the Sixties. Your generation had higher hopes, bigger dreams. We're past that now."

My answer was: Give it your best shot. Work hard and love your spouses and your children. And make time for your neighbors, your communities, your government as well.

You may never run for office. You may never marry someone who runs for office. But go into the future thinking of yourselves as stewards of our democracy and as men and women who will keep the flame of freedom and justice alive.

If there is one message that I hope I got across to graduates this year it's that citizenship can't be dismissed as someone else's responsibility. Each of us must play a role.

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draft #2

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At times of ~~such momentous change~~ ^{like this little here}, it's tempting to seize on easy answers, pat generalizations and stereotypes.

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And if you're the wife of a Democratic President from Arkansas, well, you just better make sure your hair is in place.

The truth is, there is no single label that applies to any of us. Our world is too complicated for that. So I urged graduates to stand up for the common values, ideals and traditions that have brought ~~us~~ ^{our democracy + our country} this far.

^{and while I know it's not fashionable}
I ~~also~~ urged them to get involved in politics and

government, ~~directly or indirectly~~.

Politics, after all, is about more than pundits and pollsters, just as government is about more than buildings and bureaucrats.

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If there is one message that I hope I ~~got across it's~~ that citizenship ^{can't} doesn't begin with someone else. It begins with each of us.

*be dismissed
as ^{so} else's responsibility*

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*Each of us has a role to
play.*

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
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TALKING IT OVER/CREATORS SYNDICATE

Note to Readers: I gave three commencement speeches this year -- at the University of Arkansas, Drew University in New Jersey, and the University of Maryland. The following is adapted from those speeches.

Those of you graduating this Spring leave your college campuses at a time of great opportunity -- and great challenge -- for yourselves and for our country.

Just look at the world around us: A new global economy is taking shape, offering Americans the potential of greater prosperity, but also the challenge of stiffer competition.

New technology is bringing the world closer together, changing the ways we communicate and do business, but also reminding us that virtual reality will never substitute for human relationships.

^{Famly} Household dynamics are being transformed as ~~most families~~ ^{most} send both parents -- mothers and fathers alike -- to work outside the home, leaving all of us with the difficult task of determining who is supposed to do what within our most intimate relationships.

And the world itself is changing. Communism has given way to capitalism, tyranny to democracy, closed markets to free trade, all of which is forcing us to redefine the ideological labels and geographic boundaries that have framed our thinking for most of the last century.

It is no surprise ~~then~~, that at a time like ~~this so many~~ ^{such dearth} Americans are overwhelmed by all this change. And as we go about looking for anchors amidst sea changes, as we sift through and sort out competing ideas and values, it will be tempting to seize on easy answers, pat generalizations and stereotypes.

You know the stereotypes I'm talking about: If you're under 25, you're an apathetic Generation X-er. If you're over 40, you're a self-indulgent Baby Boomer. If you're a liberal, you're a bleeding heart. If you're a conservative, you have no heart.

If you're a Democratic president from Arkansas, you're all of those things, depending on what day it is. And if you're the wife of a Democratic President from Arkansas, well, you just better make sure your hair is in place.

Yet the truth is, there is no single label that applies to any of us. Our world is too complicated for that. So the best

turned out to be greatly exaggerated. Think about what happened over the next 1,000 years: We saw dramatic advances in medicine, science and industry, great strides toward world peace and prosperity, and progress in basic human understanding.

Think back just 100 years ago. As so many pundits and scholars are now noting, the political divisions of our own times seem to be repeating history in uncanny ways.

At the turn of the last century, vast dislocations brought on by industrialism, immigration and the movement from farm to city unleashed uncertainties much like those we are feeling today. Fear of rapid change fueled a sentimental fervor for simpler times, just like today. Populist politics raised valid concerns about economic exploitation and political corruption, but also unleashed extreme reactions that gave rise to racism, ethnocentrism and isolationism, just like today.

But then look at what happened next. Reactionaries and extremists didn't triumph. Instead, a progressive political consensus was achieved that addressed genuine concerns about economic and political equality. That new spirit of progress won out over hate and intolerance and fostered a new politics of inclusion.

The result was that Americans of all political stripes -- Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives -- began to think differently about what politics and government could do.

Progressive politics spawned decades of dynamic change, years in which Americans overcame the Great Depression, achieved sustained economic growth, brought greater opportunities to women and minorities, cleaned up the environment, and secured two successive generations of the most prosperous workers and the most secure retirees anywhere in the world.

Progressive politics provided the impetus for the minimum wage and industrial safety on the job. For public schools, clinics and hospitals. For safe food and safe drugs. For clean air and clean water. For national parks and urban playgrounds.

And, of course, for the growth of the greatest public education system in the world -- from kindergarten through college -- where great public universities like this one draw students from around the country and around the world. Now is no time to go back on this historic commitment to public education.

I learned from President Kirwan that more than 60 percent of Maryland's students receive some form of scholarship or financial aid. This is the best investment our country can make. It is not only an investment in you as individuals, or in the skills and knowledge you acquire. It is an investment in your ability to learn

to solve problems and adapt to new circumstances, to enlarge your understanding of the world and your sense of responsibility toward others.

That's why we must continue to invest in public education. Reform it, yes, change it, yes, make it better, yes. But close the doors on it? Never!

For more than two centuries, we have faced the challenge of building a more perfect union. And today we must face that challenge together, whether it is to expand the opportunities of education, protect our environment, or make our streets safe for our children.

The debate between liberals and conservatives, progressives and Populists, Democrats and Republicans, should not be about whether we should govern ourselves, but how; not whether we need public programs, but what kind; not whether we should pursue national goals, but what means we should employ.

Much of what determines our future will happen out of the political arena -- voluntarily, step-by-step, in our families and neighborhoods and religious communities.

But that doesn't mean we can do without politics and government. Politics is about more than pundits and pollsters, just as government is about more than buildings and bureaucrats.

Whenever anyone asks me, "How can you stand being involved in politics?" I always say: "Are you married? Do you have a family? Do you belong to a church, a school, a sports team or a civic group?" Politics with a small "p" is the process that brings us together peaceably to work toward common ends. So when I talk about politics, I'm talking about you.

Yes, you can bash those who believe government is the solution to every social ill. You can bash those who believe that every government power should be curbed. You can reject political extremes -- in fact you should reject them. But I ask just one thing: Don't reject politics and government in the process.

That's a cop-out.

Government and politics are not perfect. They may even be boring. Max Weber once said, politics is "a strong and slow boring of hard boards." Often progress seems minuscule in comparison to the issues we face.

But we are a better country today because generations before us paid the price to establish and maintain a stable, democratic government that protects our rights and expands opportunities like public education.

We are a better country today because previous generations -- through our political process and system of government -- devised the G.I. bill, Social Security, and Medicare and other tools of opportunity for those willing to work hard and take responsibility in pursuit of the American Dream.

So when I hear people complain about government, I am reminded of all the people I have met in my travels overseas -- people who have endured torture, exile, and jail because they fought for the freedoms we enjoy. People who can't imagine the privileges and opportunities that our democracy makes available to Americans every day.

I remember meeting a young Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal who had walked ten hours from a remote village to catch a bus so that she could see me in Katmandu. She told me that she had been living in a house with no running water or electricity. She was working at a school where nearly all the students were boys, since most girls were still denied schooling and were often married by the age of twelve or thirteen.

She had thoroughly enjoyed her experience in Nepal, she said, but she missed her family and all of the blessings of daily life that we take for granted in America: safe drinking water that comes out of every faucet; meats and vegetables that you can eat without fear of getting sick; enough food all year round; free public schools for boys and girls; warm baths and electricity at any time of day or night; paved roads, cars, and phones that always work.

Those may seem like trivial examples of what our government and our people have accomplished together. But they represent the larger spirit of democracy that has enabled us to solve our problems for more than 200 years.

I thought again about that Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal when I was in Bosnia with my daughter recently. I met with civilians from Tuzla and Sarajevo who described what life was like during four years of war and ethnic violence. Doctors and nurses told me how they kept the most rudimentary facilities open despite being bombed daily. I heard from mothers and fathers who had lost children, and wives who hadn't seen husbands. There was bewilderment in their voices as they tried to explain how such horror and tragedy could have ever occurred. And yet, they also expressed hope that the world was helping them establish a lasting peace and resume some semblance of normal life.

Then I visited our soldiers at two outposts, Camp Alicia and Camp Bedrock. I wish you could have been with me. What I saw was American democracy in action: black, white, brown, men and women, Christian, Muslim, Jew, kids from farms, suburbs and cities. They were all there, serving our country in the cause of peace, and serving as model for Bosnia of how people of different backgrounds

and beliefs can work together for a common enterprise.

It reminded me once again that, despite our imperfections and flaws, we have a system of government and politics has endured because it is the best system ever devised. It is rooted in values. It understands the imperfections of human beings. It believes in the ideals of education and service.

So my challenge to you today is to go forth from this campus as active, committed citizens who believe that you have a stake and in our government and our political system.

Now I can just see some of you rolling your eyes and saying to yourselves: "Oh, C'mon, Mrs. Clinton. Really. I've got to pay off my student loans. I need to find a good job. I want to fall in love. I want to start a family. How am I going to find time for politics? You come from the Sixties. Your generation had higher hopes, bigger dreams. We're past all that."

I hear you. But I still ask you to give it your best shot. Work hard and love your children. And make time for your neighbors, your communities, your government as well.

Each of us has a role to play in our democracy. Citizenship and service cannot be dismissed as someone else's responsibility. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said: "human progress never rolls on the wheels of inevitability the time is always ripe to do right."

You may never run for office. You may never marry someone who runs for office. But I hope that all of you who are graduating today will go into the future thinking of yourselves as stewards of our democracy and as men and women who will keep the flame of freedom and justice alive. You can make a difference. And I know you will.

Godspeed on your journey. And thank you all very much.

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FOR COMMENCEMENT FOLDER.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND
MAY 23, 1996

President Kirwan, Chairman Billingsley and distinguished members of the Board of Regents, honorary degree recipients, administrators, faculty, students, parents, friends, and most of all, honored members of the Class of 1996:

Thank you for welcoming me to your campus. It is a great pleasure to be at the University of Maryland, a place that I have long associated with academic excellence and public service -- not to mention women's lacrosse! Let me join in congratulating the men and women graduating today, as well as the mothers and fathers whose sacrifices got them here.

And let me also congratulate the lacrosse team for lifting Maryland to the national championship against Virginia last weekend. I don't know how many of the team members touched Testudo [Tess-TOO-doe] the Turtle's nose before the game, but next time I need some good luck, you may see me visiting with the turtle myself.

I also want to thank my friend, Professor Bill Galston, who brought his considerable talents from this university to the White House to help the President formulate domestic policy. We are grateful for his service, and we are grateful to Maryland for having shared him with us.

We are grateful as well for the role this university has played in promoting national service -- both by hosting the first National Service Summit and serving as a site for the national demonstration program for national service, as well as through programs offered by the Center for Political Leadership and Participation.

Those of you graduating today leave the confines of this campus and this community at a time of great opportunity -- and great challenge -- for our country. My husband often calls it an Age of Possibility -- the possibilities for progress that accompany any period of momentous change.

Just look at the world around us:

A new global economy is taking shape, offering Americans the potential of greater prosperity, but also the risk and challenge of stiffer competition.

New technology is bringing the world closer together, changing the ways we communicate and do business, but also reminding us that virtual reality will never substitute for human connections and relationships.

Family dynamics are being transformed as most families send both parents -- mothers and fathers alike -- outside the home to find a job and earn a living, posing the critical question of who is minding the children and who is supposed to do what within our most intimate relationships.

And the world itself is changing. Communism has given way to capitalism, tyranny to democracy, closed markets to free trade, all of which is forcing us to redefine the ideological labels and geographic boundaries that have framed our thinking for most of the last century.

It is no surprise that at a time like this so many Americans are sifting and sorting out competing ideas and values as we make our way in this unpredictable world. As the forces of history and technology change the face of human civilization, the greatest danger we face is to seize on easy answers, pat generalizations and stereotypes.

You know the stereotypes I'm talking about:

If you're under 25, you're an apathetic Generation X-er.

If you're over 40, you're a self-indulgent Baby Boomer.

If you're a liberal, you're a bleeding heart.

If you're a conservative, you have no heart.

If you're a Democratic President from Arkansas, you're all of the above, depending on what day it is.

And if you're the wife of the a Democratic President from Arkansas, well, you just better make sure your hair is in place.

Yet the truth is, there is no single label that applies to any of us. Our world is too complicated for that. So the best we can do is look back at the values, ideals and traditions that have gotten us this far and develop a coherent vision of what our common destiny requires of all of us.

That said, I realize there may be little comfort in looking back to the end of the last millennium, when a lot of folks were convinced that the world was coming to an end. Civilization had reached rock bottom.

Well, to paraphrase Mark Twain, fears of the world's demise

we can do is look to the common values, ideals and traditions that have brought us this far and commit ourselves to moving forward together, as one people.

transcript
Much of what determines our future will happen out of the political arena -- voluntarily, step-by-step, in our families and neighborhoods and religious communities.

But that doesn't mean we can move forward into the next millennium without politics and government. Politics is about more than pundits and pollsters, just as government is about more than buildings and bureaucrats.

Politics with a small "p" is the process that brings us together to work toward common ends peaceably. So when I talk about politics, I'm talking about you.

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But we are a better country today because generations before us paid the price to establish and maintain a stable, democratic government that protects our rights and expands opportunities that enable all of us to make the most of our lives.

So my challenge to you today is to go forth ~~from this campus~~ as active, committed citizens who believe that you have a stake in our government and our political system.

Now I can just see some of you rolling your eyes and saying to yourselves, "Oh, c'mon, Mrs. Clinton. Really. I've got to pay off student loans. I need to find a job. I want to fall in love. I want to start a family. How am I going to find time for politics? You come from the Sixties. Your generation had higher hopes, bigger dreams. We're past that now."

I hear you. But I still ask you to give it your best shot. Work hard and love your children. And make time for your neighbors, your communities, your government as well.

You may never run for office. You may never marry someone who runs for office. But I hope that all of you who are graduating ~~today~~ will go into the future thinking of yourselves

as stewards of our democracy and as men and women who will keep the flame of freedom and justice alive. You can make a difference. I know you will.

~~Godspeed on your journey.~~

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draft #1

It's way too long

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During the past month I had the privilege of delivering commencement addresses at the University of Arkansas, Drew University, and the University of Maryland. I'd like to share my message with other members of the Class of '96:

Those of you graduating this spring leave your college campuses at a time of great challenge ~~and~~ ^{great} opportunity for our country and our world.

Just look at the changes around us: A new global economy is taking shape, offering Americans the potential of greater prosperity, but also the challenge of stiffer competition.

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> ~~Even~~ the world itself is changing. Communism has given way to capitalism, tyranny to democracy, closed markets to free trade, all of which is forcing us to redefine the ideological labels and geographic boundaries that have framed our thinking

for most of the last century.

It is no surprise that at a time of such momentous change we search for simple answers to our problems. As the forces of history and technology change the face of human civilization, the greatest danger we face is to seize on easy answers, pat generalizations and stereotypes.

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If you're a Democratic president from Arkansas, you're all of those things, depending on what day it is.

And if you're the wife of a Democratic President from Arkansas, well, you just better make sure your hair is in place.

Yet the truth is, there is no single label that applies to any of us. Our world is too complicated for that. So the best we can do is look to the common values, ideals and traditions that have brought us this far and develop a coherent vision of what our common destiny requires of us.

That said, I realize there may be little comfort in looking back to the end of the last millennium, when a lot of folks were convinced the world was ending and civilization had hit rock bottom. But then look what happened in the next 1,000 years: We saw dramatic advances in medicine, science, and industry, great strides toward world peace and prosperity and progress in basic

human understanding.

There were similar anxieties one hundred years ago, when vast dislocations brought on by industrialization, immigration and urbanization fueled a sentimental fervor for simpler times and also unleashed extreme reactions like racism, isolationism and ethnocentrism.

But instead of giving in to extremism, Americans of all political stripes formed a progressive political consensus that addressed genuine concerns about economic and political equality. Progressive politics provided the impetus for the minimum wage, industrial safety on the job, safe food and drugs, national parks and urban playgrounds, for prosperous workers and secure retirees, and for the growth of the greatest system of public education in the world.

These advances were only possible because Americans had faith in themselves and in their system of politics and government. They believed that government could be an agent for positive change.

Politics, after all, is about more than pundits and pollsters, just as government is about more than buildings and bureaucrats.

Politics with a small "p" is the process that brings us together to work toward common ends peaceably. So when I talk about politics, I'm talking about you.

You can bash those who believe government is the solution to every social ill. You can bash those who believe that every

government power should be curbed. You can reject political extremes -- in fact you should reject them. But I ask one thing: Don't reject politics and government in the process.

That's a cop-out.

Government and politics are not perfect. They may even be boring. Their achievements often seem minuscule in comparison to the issues we face.

But we are a better country today because generations before us paid the price to establish and maintain a stable, democratic government that protects our rights and expands opportunities that enable all of us to make the most of our lives.

So my challenge to you is to go forth as active, committed citizens who believe that you have a stake in our government and our political system.

Now I can just see some of you rolling your eyes and saying to yourselves, "Oh, c'mon, Mrs. Clinton. Really. I've got to pay off student loans. I need to find a job. I want to fall in love. I want to start a family. How am I going to find time for politics? You come from the Sixties. Your generation had higher hopes, bigger dreams. We're past that now."

I hear you. But I still ask you to give it your best shot. Work hard and love your spouses and your children. And make time for your neighbors, your communities, your government as well.

You may never run for office. You may never marry someone who runs for office. But I hope that all of you who are graduating today will go into the future thinking of yourselves

as stewards of our democracy and as men and women who will keep the flame of freedom and justice alive. You can make a difference. I know you will.

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5

HELEN BENHAM (Mrs. Dick Robinson)
Corporate Vice President
Scholastic Corp.

Helen Benham is a Corporate Vice President at Scholastic where she founded the company's Early Childhood Division. The division publishes *Early Childhood Today* magazine, *Parent & Child* magazine, *The Early Childhood Workshop* (a national bi-lingual curriculum), and a variety of books for teachers, parents, and children.

Ms. Benham began her 22-year career with Scholastic in 1974 in the company's book club art department. Before that she was a teacher of junior high school English and Dramatics in the Wheat Ridge, Colorado public schools.

In the late 70s, she worked in Scholastic's text division, where she created two multimedia programs, *Feeling Free*, for mainstreaming handicapped children, and *Listening Skills*, an audio teaching program.

Ms. Benham later joined Scholastic's classroom magazine publishing division where she was editor of *Sprint* and *Action*, high interest magazines for remedial readers. In 1980, she was promoted to Editorial Director of *Scholastic News*, one of the largest classroom magazines in the U.S., published for students in six grade-level editions. She also served as Editorial Director for *Let's Find Out*, Scholastic's classroom magazine for kindergartners.

In the spring of 1985, Ms. Benham created *Pre-K Today* magazine (now called *Early Childhood Today*). Launched to serve the nation's growing number of teachers and directors of infants to five-year olds, the magazine has since become the leading magazine in its field. When Scholastic expanded its commitment to early childhood education by forming an Early Childhood Division in 1989, Ms. Benham was named its publisher and editor-in-chief.

Scholastic is one of the world's largest companies dedicated to the education of young people. It publishes books, magazines, software and video. Its products are used in 9 out of 10 of America's elementary through secondary schools, as well as in schools, abroad.