

STANFORD 125th

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My subject is Stanford University at 125 years of age. That's just a bit longer than any documented human life-span. But in institutional terms, we are still young – 255 years younger than the oldest American university, three and a half centuries younger than the oldest Mexican university, and nearly a thousand years younger than the oldest universities in Europe and Africa.

So 125 years ago, Stanford made its bid to join a very exclusive club – composed of the oldest continuously operating institutions on the planet. That small fraternity includes the Roman Catholic Church and the Imperial House of Japan -- and a handful of universities.

At this moment of recollection and reflection, and especially amidst the notoriously disruptive dynamism of our own age and place, it's worth pausing for a moment to ponder what it is about universities – Stanford University in particular -- that has rendered them so long-lived. And to ask if Stanford is on course remain in that club for the next

century – or, since we are used to thinking big around here, the next millennium.

I'd like to begin that exercise by telling you a story. It's a story that has something of the character of a parable. It concerns a legendary railroad journey across the United States. I tell it in order to draw some lessons about the history of Stanford's founding season, about the American West, California in particular, and about the purposes of education.

Our story begins in 1879, before Stanford University existed, or was even conceived. It's a story about a famous traveler to the West who never saw the University, may never even have heard of it -- since he died, in faraway Samoa, in 1894.

Our hero, in case you have not already guessed it, is Robert Louis Stevenson. His journey began, as so many journeys do, as a matter of the heart. Stevenson had fallen in love with an American woman from California. Her name was Fanny Osbourne. She and Stevenson had met in Europe in 1876. She returned to California in 1878. Stevenson in the following year decided to join her there.

So in August, 1879, Stevenson took ship to New York, and there boarded his train, carrying a "carpetbag" that contained his reading for the trip: George Bancroft's History of the United States -- all eight volumes of it. This was a work of serious gravity, both spiritual and material. Its presence in the young Stevenson's travel kit testified to the intention of our traveler, even as he pursued his sweetheart across ocean and continent, to make his westward journey also serve the purposes of education. In this high-minded earnestness we may recognize the first of many connections between Stevenson's story and the story of our university.

Stevenson proceeded without incident until he crossed the Mississippi River, where he entered the western half of the North American continent. Here his storyline begins to braid itself still further into the principal subject of these remarks: the founding of this university in the 19th-century West. An incident on the western bank of the river served to instruct Stevenson that he had passed into a new territory, with different rules and customs. A drunk stumbled aboard,

and was thrown off the train -- literally thrown off -- by the conductor, in a maneuver so swift and deft that Stevenson described it as "done in three motions, as exact as a piece of drill." Then the ejected drunk staggered to his feet alongside the tracks, and reached back to the region of his kidneys for a revolver. At that moment, Stevenson wrote, even though English was being spoken all about him, "I knew I was in a foreign land."

Every hour brought him twenty miles closer to California and reunion with his lover. He had plenty of time to observe his fellow voyagers. They were an astonishingly diverse lot. Stevenson's traveling companions included an entire (segregated) car-load of Chinese, as well as Germans and Cornishmen from Europe, and venturers from Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, and Canada. ["I]n the car in front of me," he wrote, there were half a hundred emigrants from [Asia]. Hungry Europe and hungry China, each pouring from their gates in search of provender, had here come face to face." Stevenson here echoed a famous piece of doggerel penned by Bret Harte about the

meeting of the Union Pacific's locomotive no. 119 and the Central Pacific's "Jupiter" at Promontory Point, Utah on May 10, 1869: "facing on a single track, half a world behind each back."

No Indians rode the train, but occasionally a small group of Indians would appear at one of the way stations. "The pathetic degradation of their appearance," Stevenson noted, "would have touched any thinking creature, but my fellow-passengers danced and jested round them with a truly cockney baseness. I was ashamed for the thing we call

Stevenson likened the Great Plains to the sea -- "an empty sky, an empty earth ... on either hand the green plain ran till it touched the skirts of heaven." The land lay pristine and idle, untouched by the quickening hand of man except, he emphasized, where the railroad "toiled over this infinity like a snail; and being the one thing moving, it was wonderful what huge proportions it began to assume in our regard."

Then at last he reached Ogden, Utah, and transferred from the Union Pacific to the Central Pacific line. Now his journey had taken him into the deep West of the Great Basin, and into the arms of Leland

Stanford's Central Pacific railroad. I'm happy to report that he found its cars far superior to those of the Union Pacific – "twice as high, and proportionately airier; [and] freshly varnished" -- among the many improvements that Westerners hoped to make over practices in the East.

For the next two days the train labored across Utah and Nevada, and our travel-worn voyager did a lot of dozing.

Then he awoke, just as his train shot out of the half-gloom of a snow shed, on the westward slope of the Sierra Nevada, descending into the central valley of California. Here his account takes on an unmistakably different, more vibrant, even lyrical, tone. No doubt the hastening proximity to his lover fed this mood, but the sheer grandeur of California moved him, too. "[Y]ou will scarce believe how my heart leaped at ... every trouty pool along that mountain river ... down by Blue Canyon, Alta, Dutch Flat, and all the old mining camps, through a sea of mountain forests, dropping thousands of feet toward the far sea-level. ...[We all] bawled like schoolboys, and thronged with shining eyes upon the platform and became new creatures within and without.... and the

next day before the dawn we were lying to upon the Oakland side of San Francisco Bay.... a spot of cloudy gold lit first upon the head of Tamalpais ...and suddenly ... the city of San Francisco, and the bay of gold and corn, were lit from end to end with summer daylight."

But though our traveler is now safely arrived in the Bay Area, and about to be reunited with Fanny Osbourne, whom he will soon marry, I want to take you back eastward along the rails some 1000 miles or so to Wyoming, where Stevenson recorded probably his most thoughtful reflection on what he was seeing from his coach window, in a passage that is most instructive for the purposes of our parable. He was somewhere west of Laramie, pondering the scene he was passing: "mile upon mile, and not a tree, a bird, or a river," he wrote. Only down the long, sterile canyons, the *train* shot hooting and awoke the resting echo. **That train was the one piece of life in all the deadly land; it was the one actor, the one spectacle fit to be observed in this paralysis of man and nature.**"

"And when I think," he wrote, "how the railroad has been pushed

through this unwatered wilderness and haunt of savage tribes ... how at each stage of the construction, roaring, impromptu cities, full of gold and lust and death, sprang up and then died away again, and are now but wayside stations in the desert; how in these uncouth places pig-tailed Chinese pirates worked side by side with border ruffians and broken men from Europe, talking together in a mixed dialect, mostly oaths, gambling, drinking, quarreling and murdering like wolves; how the plumed hereditary lord of all America heard, in this last fastness, the scream of the 'bad medicine waggon' charioting his foes; and then when I go on to remember that all this epical turmoil was conducted by gentlemen in frock coats, and with a view to nothing more extraordinary than a fortune and a subsequent visit to Paris, it seems to me, I own, *as if this railway were the one typical achievement of the age in which we live, as if it brought together into one plot all the ends of the world and all the degrees of social rank*, and offered to some great writer the busiest, and most extended, and the most varied subject for an enduring literary work. If it be romance, if it be contrast, if it be heroism, that we

require, what was Troy town to this?"

Now there's a real challenge to the historian: to thread all those great themes onto that lonely filament of trackage, and to shape thereby an American epic comparable to the Iliad.

But the scope of my enterprise today is not epic but parable, so let me give you merely the briefest sketch of what would be the major themes of such an heroic account -- the "Railroadiad," it might be entitled -- and how those themes bring us back eventually to the history of the West and the founding -- and future -- of Stanford University.

Our Railroadiad would begin on a note of irony. The Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 that stimulated and subsidized the construction of the transcontinental railroad was a piece of legislation made possible only because of the disunited situation of the formerly United States. The Civil War meant that the Southern congressional contingent was absent, and consequently could not continue to block the passage of railroad-building legislation by insisting on a southern route. So the transcontinental line, born in disunion, came to symbolize, and actually

to serve, the purpose of stitching the Union more tightly together. It was the railroad, more than any other single factor, that made the West a part of the United States -- and, as we know, it was the Central Pacific and later Southern Pacific railroads that made the man who made the money that made this university.

Still other ironies would attend our story, not least concerning money. The epic wheeling and dealing in the post-Civil War United States prompted two authors, Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, to pen in 1873 one of the most famous satires in the American canon, *The Gilded Age* — a book whose title gave a lasting name to the whole epoch. *The Gilded Age* portrayed America as seething with buccaneering, dollar-mad capitalist scoundrels and feckless, grasping politicians with elastic consciences. That image has persisted to this day.

But there was another side to that era. The Gilded Age was also a Golden Age for philanthropy – all the more notably so when we recollect that there was no such thing as an income tax at that time and hence no tax advantages for charitable giving. Many of the so-called

“Robber Barons” who made such stupendous fortunes in Gilded Age America — like Leland Stanford and John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie —took quite seriously their role as "stewards" for society and for the future. In 1889, Carnegie wrote an article that stands to this day as a kind of foundational charter for the distinctively American tradition of philanthropy. It was entitled, simply enough, “Wealth.”

There Carnegie wrote that "the man who dies rich, dies disgraced," and on his demise in 1919, many of his countrymen were curious to know whether he had gone to meet his Maker in a state of grace. He had. He had succeeded in giving away some \$350 million. Similarly, the Stanfords gifted virtually the entirety of their estate to this University.

And yet, for the founding of a University, 1887 seemed a most unlikely time, and California, at the far western edge of the continent, an exceedingly improbable place. The British historian and statesman James Bryce, visiting California in the 1880s, declared that on this Pacific shore the “scum which the westward moving wave of migration carries on its crest is here stopped.”

Even David Starr Jordan, who, after all, was among those borne westward by that wave of migration, wrote in 1899 that California “is commercially asleep.... Her industries are gambling ventures... Her local politics in the hands of pickpockets... her small towns are the shabbiest in Christendom....Her saloons control more constituents than her churches....she is the slave of corporations...And she has not yet learned to distinguish enterprise from highway robbery.”

This was strong stuff from the man who, when he accepted appointment as Stanford’s first president some years earlier, had jotted in his notebook: “Never be betrayed into disparaging California.”

So when the Stanfords summoned their university into being amidst the wheat fields of their Palo Alto Stock Farm, it was small wonder that people scoffed in the East. It seemed to one eastern editorial writer that "Stanford's great wealth can only be used to erect an empty shell and to commemorate a rich man's folly."

But perhaps this kind of criticism was to be expected from people whom Jordan characterized as "men whom nothing would induce to go

west of Springfield [Massachusetts], and men the regret of whose lives is that they were born outside Boston."

Slowly, fueled by the Stanfords' railroad wealth, the University arose where only the rustic farm had been. From the outset it showed the impress of its birth in Gilded Age America, and in the West. The private schools of the East were the notoriously exclusive preserves of the sons of the rich and privileged. Stanford, by contrast, was to be open to all students, without regard to wealth, status -- or gender. There was to be no tuition — so that even young persons of very humble means, like Herbert Hoover in the pioneer class, could afford to attend, as well as the children of the Chinese laborers who had built the Central Pacific railroad, whom Jane Stanford specifically encouraged to apply.

So the ironic nurturing of nationhood, even in the midst of Civil War, would be one theme of the kind of "Railroadiad" that Stevenson imagined. The opening to settlement of that vast empty western region that Stevenson transited would be another. And the creation of the

fortune that gave birth to Stanford University would be a third.

There is a fourth theme, and it takes us back once again to the railroad as the central element in our parable. Our epic would also relate that for people in the nineteenth century, the railroad symbolized -- say, rather, the railroad embodied, the railroad was synonymous with, the railroad was "progress." Nothing more emphatically represented the drama and promise of the new industrial age. The railroad was the single most disruptive technological innovation in all of history up to that time. It generated further cascading innovations that transformed politics, warfare, commerce, and the very texture of everyday life -- and, in Stanford's case, gave birth to a great university. Writers from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Henry David Thoreau to Karl Marx invoked the railroad as evidence of a fundamental, revolutionary break in history across whose jagged edges they sensed they were living. Marx in the Communist Manifesto of 1848 compared the advent of railroads to the discovery of America as an event that fantastically accelerated the pace of history.

Stevenson strikes this same note when he figures the railroad as the giver-of-life to the barren land, the one thing moving, the one actor, the one spectacle fit to be observed in "the paralysis of man and nature" that was the pre-railroad West.

The only other event in nineteenth-century America that compared with the completion of the transcontinental railroad as a symbol of the benign and quickening trajectory of history was the emancipation of the slaves.

Interestingly enough, Leland Stanford played a role in both those events. Abraham Lincoln released the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. Precisely one week later, on January 8, 1863, Central Pacific crews broke ground at Sacramento on the construction of the western leg of the transcontinental line. As war-time governor of California, Stanford helped to hold this distant Pacific state in the Union, with its wealth of gold and its large population of transplanted southerners, and his railroad project played no small part in that crucial drama.

Later, on October 1, 1891, as he welcomed his new university's first class, Governor Stanford explicitly wedded these themes of railroad-building and emancipation.

Governor Stanford heartily agreed with the sentiments of his eminent contemporary and fellow railroad man, Chauncey Depew, president of the New York Central Railroad, that the traditional colleges nurtured "the veneer of the quack, and finally the decoration of the dude The old education gave the intellectual a vast mass of information useful in the library and useless in the shop."

There were to be no uselessly ornamented dudes at Stanford. Governor Stanford admonished that first Stanford class to "Remember that life is, above all, practical; you are here to fit yourselves for a useful career."

Those words from that banner day are still invoked to ground Stanford's on-going commitment to applied knowledge, to solutions and results –and to getting a good job -- in the very essence of the founders' dreams and aspirations.

But less well remembered are some other things that Stanford said in that initial welcoming address. “The immediate object of this institution is the personal benefit and advancement of the students,” he said, “but we look beyond to the influence it will exert on the general welfare of humanity.”

And he went on: "The high condition of civilization to which man may attain in the future it is almost impossible for us to now appreciate," he said. "We can best obtain an idea of it by a comparison of our present condition with that of preceding generations. Nor have we to look very far back. A few years ago, within the memory of a majority of the adults here present... Over 4 millions of human beings were held in slavery by mere might...."

Now here was the great railroad builder, the living emblem of the taming of the West, the so-called "robber baron" who allegedly cared not a rap for the spiritual dimensions of human nature, or for the public weal, the rough frontiersman whose audacity offended many, the man

whose very person constituted a monument to material progress, and individual aggrandizement -- here he was unashamedly espousing his ebullient faith in *moral* progress and the general welfare.

And he said some other things that are well worth recollecting on this occasion. "Man's true happiness," he told those students, "is to be attained in the development of his intellectual, moral, and religious nature." I'll come back to that particular passage in just a moment.

Together, the completion of the railroad and the end of slavery provided unarguable proof to nineteenth-century Americans like Leland Stanford that the world was changing for the better. And how might that progress, both material and moral, be made to continue? Stanford knew the answer: "We believe," he told that first entering class, "that a wise system of *education* will develop a future civilization as much in advance of that of the present as ours is in advance of the condition of the savage. We may always advance toward the infinite."

So if Leland Stanford's railroad was the engine that pulled the West into the United States, and the nation into the crowning stages of

its Industrial Revolution, then in the century that followed, Leland Stanford's university would be a lead locomotive pulling the West – and the rest of the world -- into the modern, post-industrial era.

The future of university and region were indissolubly linked. Imagine what a different institution this university would be if Leland and Jane had decided to set it down in his birthplace, in Watervliet, New York. And try to imagine the West without the people and things that Stanford has nurtured – a West with no Herbert Hoover, no linear accelerator, no Silicon Valley, no Wallace Stegner – and with only an anemic Pac-11. University and region have grown up together, especially in the extraordinary historical episode of World War II and the post-war era, when the whole continent seemed to be tipped westward, and money and people and talent all poured into California, not least into Palo Alto.

Now imagine, if you will, that Governor Stanford and Robert Louis Stevenson returned today to the West they last saw more than a

century ago. Much would amaze them. Stevenson might remark on the prodigious peopling of the lifeless terrain he found so repellent, its booming economy, its throbbing cities, its embrace of all the artifacts of that "civilization" he had found so wanting. Some things they might find the same. Stevenson might remark that the entire West, including Governor Stanford's university -- just like the train he rode on in 1879 -- is teeming with a wondrous variety of peoples. He might note with special interest that this university, founded by the man along whose rails he rolled, was among the first such institutions to admit Native American students -- conspicuously including John Milton Oskison, a Cherokee born in what was then called Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), about the time Stevenson first met Fanny Osbourne, and a graduate in the class of 1898.

And Stevenson might concede, as he surveyed this twenty-first century spectacle, that he had those "gentlemen in frock coats" who caused the railroad to be built all wrong. They had toiled, he would have

to concede, not merely for a fortune and a visit to Paris. They had worked to build a region, to give birth to a distinctive society, one that, among other things, nourished and sustained a distinguished university.

And Governor Stanford and David Starr Jordan might note with some pride just how much their university has been the creature, as well as the creator, of this region. "Our university has no history to fall back upon," Jordan had said at that opening ceremony in 1891. "It is hollowed by no tradition, it is hampered by none. Its fingerposts all point forward." That sentiment echoed one of the most famous of all mythical invocations about the American West, Henry David Thoreau's, when he said: "Eastward I go only by force; but Westward I go free.... we go Westward into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure."

Wallace Stegner, a man who knew and loved the western region like few others, wrote, just shortly before he died, that "no place is a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments." By that definition, the American West is certainly a "place" -- and increasingly a place to be reckoned

with.

Stunning transformations have swept over this region in the last half-century, and they have all been inter-braided with the fortunes of this university. The trans-Mississippi West that Stevenson found so empty a century ago has been the fastest growing part of the country since World War II. If California were a separate country, it would have the world's sixth-largest national economy. The three Pacific Rim states, along with British Columbia, would rank as the world's fourth largest economy. The hypothetical "national center of population" moved across the Mississippi River sometime in the 1970s. One out of every three Americans now lives in the trans-Mississippi West. One out of five lives in either Texas or California, the two most populous states, both western. One out of eight lives in California alone. The seventeen western states now contain the nation's majority of Native Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanics. All four of the nation's majority-minority states, where no racial ethnic or racial group has a majority, are in the West -- Texas, New Mexico, California, and Hawaii. If

demography is destiny, then it is here, more than any place else, that the multicultural issues that will shape American society for the foreseeable future are most conspicuously being played out.

So Governor Stanford and President Jordan would surely concur that we have sustained their commitment to education as the indispensable agent of civilization. But how would they appraise that other mission that Stanford defined on that opening day --- to build a university that would be the means through which students could develop their “intellectual, moral, and religious nature[s].”

Among the people who understood the possibilities – and the problems -- of Stanford’s dual mission, was a man who I think would be particularly intrigued by what's happened in the last 125 years. I’m speaking about William James.

James was a Harvard professor, the founder of the discipline of psychology, the brother of America's most accomplished novelist, Henry James, and probably the most distinguished philosophical mind ever

nurtured in this culture. He spent much of an academic year here as a visiting professor until the earthquake of 1906 cut things short, enabling him to finish his most celebrated work, *Pragmatism*, published the following year, and generally hailed as the most influential work of philosophy ever written by an American.

James gave the Founders' Day address in 1906, just before the quake and his departure. As befitted the occasion, he waxed lyrical about Stanford's distinguishing attributes: "classic scenery... reminding one of Greece... the great city, near enough for convenience, too far ever to become invasive; the climate ... the noble architecture.... Eastern institutions look all dark and huddled and confused in comparison with this purity and serenity."

And then he issued a challenge to Stanford to shape a distinctive future, a challenge to which we are still summoned today: "The original foundation had something eccentric to it," he said. "[Let] Stanford not fear to be eccentric to the end.... Let her not imitate; let her lead, not follow. Can we not, as we sit here today, frame a vision of what it

may be a century hence, with the honors of the intervening years all rolled up in its traditions? Not vast, but intense; less a place for teaching youths and maidens than for training scholars; devoted to truth; radiating influence; setting standards; shedding abroad the fruits of learning; mediating between America and Asia, and helping ... both continents to understand each other better."

That spirit — ambitious, far-visioned, almost immodest in scope and drive — still pulses robustly at the core of this institution today. In that sense, we are still very much the legatees of the hyperenergetic, continent-taming generation that dominated the Gilded Age.

But another spirit abides here as well — and it, too, comes down to us intact from the earliest days of the University's history. James felt that spirit and hoped the university would remain committed to nurturing it. So did David Starr Jordan.

James struggled all his life with melancholia. He was once asked if life was worth living. "It depends on the liver," he puckishly answered,

obviously pleased with his bit of clever word-play, conflating the realms of physical health and personal character into the single word, “liver.” Then after a moment’s reflection, he added: “It’s even better in French: ‘ca depend de la foi(s),’” invoking an even more clever homophone that played on the French words for the liver organ and for “faith”.

Character. Faith. The general welfare of humanity. True happiness. Intellectual, moral, and religious development. The examined life – the only life worth living, according to Socrates. These too are words that echo down the decades from the founding moment.

But has their echo grown fainter over the years? Does Stanford today, with its urgent emphasis on careers and real-time solutions to the problems of the day, give equal or even proportional emphasis to the building of character and self-understanding and the capacity to think critically about the great questions that have stirred philosophers since the dawn of time?

By way of thinking about those questions, listen, if you will, to one last and very short story – this one about David Starr Jordan.

When Jordan first arrived in California, he took himself about the state to acquaint prospective students with the new institution arising in Palo Alto. As he talked to the young people whom one of his faculty colleagues described as "the boys and girls of the ranches of paradise," Jordan did not dwell particularly on the newness of the institution, or on its mission to promote the practical or to equip its students to take their productive place in the great hurly-burly building of modern America that was then reaching its climactic phase.

Instead, Jordan struck another kind of note entirely — a pure, clear note that sang not solely or even principally about the virtues of the active life, much as Jordan valued that life. He spoke, rather, about the value of the *contemplative* life — about the serene, satisfying pleasures of those very bookish precincts that people like Chauncy Depew — and at times even Leland Stanford -- had too rashly dismissed. Describing the course of study that the University had to offer, Jordan said:

To turn from the petty troubles of the day to the thoughts of the masters, is to go from the noise of the street through the door of a

cathedral. If you learn to unlock those portals, no power on earth can take from you the key. The whole of your life must be spent in your own company, and only the educated man is good company for himself.

I think it appropriate for us, 125 years later, to pay homage to the depth of conviction and certainty of purpose that enabled Jordan to strike such a serene note in that raucous age — and in the midst of all those rough-and-tumble frontier Californians. He was, in effect, inviting the young people of his day, at a formative moment in their lives, to step for a while off the alluring avenues of Gilded Age America into a tranquil sanctuary of repose and reflection, a place where they could dwell, at least for a season of their life's passage, with the “thoughts of the masters.” In this sense, Stanford constituted not only a product of the Gilded Age, but a counterpoint to its frenetic dynamism.

Our own age is still riotously active, urgent, insistent that we plunge daily into its all-absorbing agenda. Perhaps we are not today so crude a lot as those Gilded Age Californians, but we still live, especially here in the Santa Clara Valley, on the edge of a frontier. To be sure, it is

a frontier of technology, but one which nevertheless imparts to the character of our lives much of the same turbulent dynamism and kinetic social energy that was found in post-gold rush California.

Early and late, then and now, Stanford has been an engaged and integral part of the excitement of life on California's various frontiers. But Leland and Jane Stanford, along with David Starr Jordan, built not only a great institution that offered its students preparation for practical careers. Stanford was and is that kind of institution, and in that part of its mission lies much of its strength.

But the Stanfords and Jordan also erected a cathedral of sorts in the Palo Alto wheat fields, a place of refuge from the inevitable scramble of life, and thoughtful examination of self, nature, and society. The one as much as the other constitutes our legacy from the founding moments, and we should honor and treasure both.

It's that dual mission of preparing students for making a life, as well as for making a living, that accounts for the durability and value of this and all other great universities. It's no less true than it was in

Socrates' day that only the examined life is worth living, and there is no better path – indeed no other path – to that examination than engagement with the thoughts of the masters, which is, not to belabor the obvious, the special province of the humanities and human science disciplines.

So it is true that what the railroad represented in the nineteenth century, the university represents in the 21st century -- the engine of technological innovation and social change; the symbol and servant of progress; a powerful builder of region and nation; a link between East and West and even between Occident and Orient.

But, lest we forget, Stanford is also a place that can set young people on the path to their heart's desire -- just as the railroad did for Robert Louis Stevenson.

I hope you will indulge me if I close on a personal note. In the course of preparing these reflections, I came across David Starr Jordan's remarks at Stanford's 25th birthday celebration, in 1916. He had stepped down as the university's president just three years earlier, and now, at the age of

65, he used the occasion in part to reflect on his formal retirement from academic life. Having been affiliated with Stanford for almost half of the institution's 125-year life-span, since entering as a freshman in 1959, and having been a member of this faculty for 49 years, and having flunked retirement twice, I found that portion of his remarks of more than passing interest, and would like to quote a just slightly bowdlerized version here:

“Speaking for myself, who have been for forty-six years a teacher of college men and women, I shall not leave the fairest field of human effort without profound emotion.... I would rather be [a professor at] Stanford University than to be an emperor....and so would I again if I had my life to live over.”