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hours within their gift - lumindful of the future and made the metries of avarier they could do to the flattering promises of the suppliant office - Seeker the protection of the most unalicable of their prosessions - This do ine dee manifested the hangul effects of republican ingrabled, Though perhaps allended with the pleasure of present gratification receives in the end to just reward of No our undescrition - We need only look to the postory of the past to confirm the bruth of this assertion_ The provid fabric of the Altreman republic whose arms and valor repelled with shameful disgrace the meleons of Person, whose of leets rode trumphant In eur sea, whose glory and greatness were ma-Ring traped strades to the subjugation of the . Then couldged world mes her fall to her own ingratilide - Her people blinded by pregudice and prompted to deeds of infarmy of the dicloses of untridled passion, whose degraded minds had closed the authoritative jurisdiction of the moral principle and buried the operations of reason beneath the superior power of eng of jealousy of briles reaped the abundant fruits of have our ingratitude - The mobile services of estis = traces one of the most honorable and just of the Greecean have was awarded for his florious services len

years banishment - The extraustless and eloquens geners of themestreles. The patriotic services of Multiades - The mishaken and undefiled virtue of a socrates with a list of other great and immortal names whose fame whose fame so correl and co deline extensive with that of their country received in prison, barrishment, ostra cram or the possonous TI cup of hundrek do Briles the tente of the another time the provid fales of the Allendon Sufferthis before water and rator refugich with about to despress they miles of fleeres where of leste rede him pied to see her where you and greekey person They hape to should be the will proportion of the The wille being of home four out open.

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Commencement Oration of Joseph Blake Wilson, Class of 1852 Transcribed by Tristan Deveney, May 2008 Edited by Sarah-Hazel Jennings, June 2008

The Instability of Popular Favor

No age perhaps has presented a more convenient opportunity for the investigation of the human character than the present. The garb that has for centuries obscured the actuating principles of man has in the progressive strides of intelligence been torn assunder and exposed the concealed motives of men both in their individual and collective capacity to the scrutiny of those who have the will and the desire to know them – an innumerable variety of governments are not wanting by which to obtain an illustration of a particular tendency to develope some of the wisest and most ennobling traits together with the most egregious errors in their practical operations. Observation and experience combine to supply the deficiencies of theory in giving birth to model institutions to subserve the ends of government. But it cannot be doubted even with all this data no matter how well constructed or how much improved by the mortifications of experience the proper execution of every system depends upon the inherent justice of its subjects – and the only immutable basis is confined to those pure and equitable principles that inspire the patriots bosom. – Every age from remote antiquity to the present has

furnished its examples of the still surviving spirit of democracy, but in comparison with other institutions their existence has been but the ephemira of a day— Free governments such as promise permanence are emphatically the product of modern genius and the invention of our own country – taking warning from the melancholy wrecks of antiquity we have sought by correcting their errors to steer clear of the yawning whirlpool that precipitated their ruin. But in abolishing their abuses and substituting in their stead such antidotes as might counteract their self producing maladies, there are still other diseases common to all republics which never can be eradicated without the requisite advancement in the moral and intellectual condition of the subject – Of the many evils thus arising may be enumerated the want of a just appreciation of those whose well tried abilities and unsullied integrity qualify them in every respect to hold the helm of state. Men too often made the [dupes?] of factious and ambitious demagogues and seduced from the path of patriotism by the momentary rewards of selfishness or the temporary gratification of the baser [one word illegible] award to the reckless and undeserving politician the highest

honors within their gift – Unmindful of the future and made the victims of avarice they confide to the flattering promises of the suppliant office – Seeking the protection of the most invaluable of their possessions – Thus do we see manifested the baneful effects of republican ingratitude, though perhaps attended with the pleasure of present gratification receives in the end the just reward of its own indiscretion – We need only look to the history of the past to confirm the truth of this assertion – the proud fabric of the Athenian republic whose arms and valor repelled with shameful disgrace the millions of Persia,

whose fleets road triumphant in every sea, whose glory and greatness were making rapid strides to the subjugation of the then civilized world owes her fall to her own ingratitude – her people blinded by prejudice and prompted to deeds of infamy by the dictates of unbridled passion, whose degraded minds had closed the authoritative jurisdiction of the moral principle and buried the operations of reason beneath the superior power of envy of jealousy of bribes reaped the abundant fruits of their own ingratitude – the noble services of Aristides one of the most honorable and just of the Grecian name was awarded for his glorious services ten

years banishment – the exhaustless and eloquent genius of Themistocles — the patriotic services of Miltiades – the unshaken and undefiled virtue of a Socrates with a host of other great and immortal names whose fame whose fame is coequal and co-extensive with that of their country – received in token of their eminent services the abode of the prison, eternal banishment, ostracism or the poisonous cup of Hemlock.

Jos. B. Wilson