

*Academic Freedom  
&  
Civic Responsibility*

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A STATEMENT TO THE MEMBERS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY AND TO THE PUBLIC  
ON THE HEIMLICH-FINLEY CASES  
ON JANUARY 24, 1953

Lewis Webster Jones

PRESIDENT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

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*"It goes without saying that the universities must themselves be free. And freedom always implies responsibility. The university is responsible for seeing that the men and women who teach are persons of competence and integrity. But good teachers are people of conviction, and they must teach with conviction. Scholarship divorced from concern degenerates into pedantry. . . .*

*"It would be a tragedy if the current mood of fear and distrust, expressed in the preoccupation with trying to fix the blame for past errors instead of tackling our present problems courageously, should cripple our schools and universities by making us afraid of ideas. The university must be a place where teachers and students are free to seek the truth, where they are free to question, explore, and disagree. We cannot, of course, allow academic freedom to be used as a cloak for incompetence; nor can we tolerate conspirators who claim its protection in order to destroy freedom. But we shall certainly destroy the vitality and strength of our own great tradition if we try to impose an orthodoxy of opinion, or to penalize criticism, dissent and with them creativeness."—from "Let Us Hold a Standard," an address made by Dr. Jones upon the occasion of his inauguration as fifteenth president of Rutgers University on May 8, 1952.*