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COMMENCEMENTS

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Under picture-perfect skies, Dr. Leonard Lief delivered his farewell commencement address yesterday at Herbert H. Lehman College, where he has been president since 1968. That was the year the school was established in the western Bronx.

Bachelor's degrees were awarded to 877 students and master's to 401.

Harking back to the decades when the City University, of which Lehman is a part, was regarded as an intellectual bastion, Dr. Lief said:

"There are those in the audience and outside these gates who look with some suspicion on the graduates of this or any public institution, wondering where the greatness has gone and wondering whether the old days can ever return."

"Well, I am here to tell you the greatness is not gone. But there is no looking to a golden age that probably never was realized."

After the ceremony, he predicted that his successor would face serious financial problems. "Our share of projected budget cuts will be \$1.5 million to \$2 million, and you can't simply make cuts without having serious effects on programs," he said. "There must also be greater awareness on the part of the public of the importance of this university. We appear to be unsure of our own identity."

Dr. Lief singled out five graduating students who, he said, "have done something extraordinary to symbolize the entire class." They included Caridad Cruz, Eric Wolsky and Janna Sweenie, the first alumni of a program for the hearing impaired; Elizabeth Marry, who started school in 1980 and worked full-time to help put four children through college; Vito Roman, an honors student, charity organizer and debater who paid his way through school by working as a stripper, and Martha Kelly, 81, a great-grandmother who had last been enrolled in school in 1923.

No successor has been named for Dr. Lief, who will be director of the City University Press, which is being organized to specialize in urban affairs.