12-15-2007

Commencement Exercises - 3:00pm

John M. Dunn
Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn
Part of the Higher Education Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation
Dunn, John M., "Commencement Exercises - 3:00pm" (2007). WMU President John Dunn. 366.
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn/366

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of the President at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in WMU President John Dunn by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, December 15, 2007, 3 p.m.
John M. Dunn, President, Presiding

PROCESSIONAL
The Western Brass Ensemble
Steve Wolfinbarger, Conductor

President Dunn: “Good afternoon, I am John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University. This is my first commencement at WMU and I am delighted to be part of this great university.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire University community I want to welcome you to our two hundred ninety-first (291st) commencement ceremony.

Will the audience please stand, as able, for the National Anthem, sung by the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia conducted by Nicholas Michiels (MI-kels).”

(President Dunn steps away from the microphone)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Nicholas Michiels, Conductor
WELCOMING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

President Dunn:

“Commencement is a very special occasion - a time for celebration, a time for reflection, a time for closure, and a time for new beginnings.

Graduates, I applaud and thank you for choosing to participate in today’s event. Your presence allows us to recognize you and, equally important, to permit expressions of happiness, pride, and love which is so evident in the faces of those gathered here to observe you graduate.

This is YOUR day! You have only two responsibilities: 1) to allow us to honor you and; 2) to reflect and say thanks to those---and you know best who they are---who have contributed to your academic, professional and personal development.

The latter first---the THANKS part. Graduates, please stand and those in front of me, turn and face the audience and remain standing. Would the Moms and Dads in the audience please stand? (PAUSE) How about the Grandparents? And Great Grandparents? (PAUSE) Spouses, those special partners, and children? (PAUSE) Brothers and Sisters? (PAUSE) Aunts, Uncles and other Relatives? (PAUSE) And, Friends? (PAUSE)

This day is a very special day for you, our graduates, and it is my privilege and honor to preside at your commencement ceremony.

You will join more than 165,000 WMU alumni from all over Michigan and from around the world.

We shall award over 2000 degrees today.

More than 1500 of you will receive bachelor's degrees.
Almost 450 will receive master's degrees.

And 44 of you will be receiving doctoral degrees today.

The next group that deserves recognition is our faculty. They are the very heart of this University. Their intellect, creativity and passion for teaching inspire each of us. Their faith and confidence in your abilities throughout your college years has built the foundation for your professional future. Without them this institution would not exist. Therefore, it is to our faculty that we express special appreciation today. I ask the faculty members to stand and all of you to please join me in applauding them for the fine education they have provided to you! (PAUSE)

Let me now turn to my other colleagues on the stage and I ask each of them to rise as I mention them by category.

They are the executive officers, deans and chairs of the University, and representatives of the Faculty Senate, the University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, the Administrative Professional Association, the Professional Support Staff Organization, and the Alumni Association. (PAUSE)

Our University is governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees, appointed by the governor of the State of Michigan. The trustees are private citizens who serve the University without remuneration and who set policy direction for the campus. The University is very grateful to these men and women. Representing the Board of Trustees are Trustees Emeritae Lana Boldi and Carol Waszkiewicz, Trustee Bill Johnston and Trustee Larry Tolbert.

At this time, I would like to recognize those of you who are graduating with honors. Will those with honor cords, McNair Scholars and all honorary society members, please rise so that we can recognize the special distinctions you have earned. (PAUSE)

We also wish to acknowledge participants of our "Study Abroad Programs." These graduates participated in study programs around the globe. (PAUSE)
All of our graduates have their own stories of the determination, commitment and sacrifice that go into achieving what we celebrate today. I now ask Provost Bassam Harik to share a few stories that reflect the spirit each of you and your families have brought to today's commencement and to remind you of how special the class of 2007 truly is.”

(President Dunn to his seat and Provost Harik to the podium.)

Provost Harik: STUDENT STORIES

“All of our graduates have inspiring stories to tell about the dedication, hard work and support that it took for them to get here for this important occasion. There isn't time to tell everyone's story, so I'll just share a little information about a few of the wonderful people we're graduating today.

But before I do, I'd like to mention that WMU enrolls about 300 military veterans, and 29 of them are receiving their degrees today. Many of these students have served in Afghanistan or Iraq, and some will be redeployed once they graduate.

In addition, five of the students graduating today have been participating in the Army ROTC program offered through our Department of Military Science and are slated to be commissioned as second lieutenants.

We're immensely proud of these cadets, as we are of everyone who participates in ROTC and everyone who has served in the military. We're enormously grateful for your dedication and the sacrifices you've made on our behalf.

Today's graduates also include Ashley Mattis of Thompsonville, Michigan, who is earning a bachelor's degree in psychology through the College of Arts and Sciences. Ashley is a member of the TRIO Student Success Program, and as such, is the first in her family to earn a college degree. Ashley has a huge heart and a passion for helping those with disabilities.
After completing her psychology practicum last spring, she was hired by the agency where she worked as a WMU intern. Now, she has been accepted into WMU's master's program in blindness and low vision studies and is excited to begin her new program.

Among those who have already finished a master's degree is Qingmei Qing (SHING-may SHING) of China. (Shing-may) passed her comprehensive exams with distinction in her specialty area of telecommunications policy. She has focused her research on mass communication and telecommunication and collaborated with two of her professors on a lead article for a top communication journal. (Shing-may) also completed field research experiences with Community Access Television and WWMT-TV, and hopes to work at NBC Universal for the summer 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

Another graduate student, Hedy Habra (HEAD-ee HAH-bra) of Kalamazoo, is the first student to complete the doctoral program now offered by our Department of Spanish. Hedy, who is teaching Spanish in the same department, already has earned a master's degree in English literature and two master's degrees in Spanish literature, all from WMU. Born in Egypt of Lebanese origin, she's a well-established writer whose poetry and fiction have appeared in numerous magazines and whose many critical essays on Spanish and Latin American authors have been published in a variety of scholarly journals.

We also have numerous College of Health and Human Services students in the auditorium today. They include Michelle Magalski of Saginaw, Michigan, who is earning a bachelor's degree with highest honors. A speech pathology and audiology major, Michelle came to WMU after winning a Medallion Scholarship. She joined the Lee Honors College and this year, was named her department's Presidential Scholar, which is the highest honor the University can bestow on a senior. During her studies, Michelle served as a volunteer Reading Buddy to a struggling third grader. Now, Michelle plans to obtain a master's degree and pursue her dream of teaching children who have communication disorders.
Also graduating today are Deborah Bower of Oil City, Pennsylvania, and Deborah Nore (NORR-ee) of Tucson, Arizona. Both of these students took advantage of our distance education capabilities and completed their master's degrees in rehabilitation education from their hometowns.

Deborah Bower was born with childhood eye cancer. She spent nearly a decade as a totally blind person during which time she received rehabilitation training from professionals, some of whom were WMU graduates. Her remarkable story continued when she had experimental treatment that restored her sight.

Deborah Nore (NORR-ee) is a former graphic and jewelry artist who was diagnosed with a degenerative eye condition. She received her training in Arizona, also being assisted by WMU graduates. The two Deborahs ultimately registered for some of the same courses, ended up pursuing the same research topic and became fast friends. So far, though, they haven't actually met. Neither student was able to attend today's commencement. But you'll be happy to know that this intrepid duo has made plans to meet for the first time later this winter.

Another graduate student, Lieutenant Rebecca Meloy of Albion, Michigan, has shown similar perseverance on the way to earning her master's degree in occupational therapy. Most recently, Rebecca completed the U.S. Army Occupational Therapy Fieldwork training program at Brooke Army Medical Center. She subsequently had the opportunity to treat and rehabilitate wounded soldiers with traumatic brain injuries, amputations, burns, orthopedic complications and post-traumatic stress disorder. Now, with her WMU diploma in hand, Rebecca is poised to continue her contributions to the this worthwhile profession.

Lastly, Diane Jones of Ypsilanti, Michigan, is earning a doctoral degree today in interdisciplinary health studies. Diane received the John W. Kirklin MD Award for Professional Excellence--a premier national award for the health profession that has only been given 15 times in its 20 years of existence. As a recipient of this award, Diane is nationally recognized for
her professional excellence and has helped promote the surgical physician assistant field.

Congratulations and the best of luck to all of you.”

(Provost Harik to his seat and President Dunn to the podium.)

President Dunn: “There are many more stories that could be told. Many of you held down jobs working long hours while being full- or part-time students.

Some finished your studies in record time while others enjoyed the University so much that you extended your stay and became what has become affectionately known as "super seniors."(PAUSE)

A great number of you are international students who have studied far away from your home and family for many years. Some of your parents have traveled half way around the world to be here with you today. As you journey back to your home countries, you have our best wishes and the hope that you take fond memories of Michigan and your University with you. (PAUSE)

And many of our graduates are non-traditional students who have family and job obligations and for whom being a student came after family and work. We have great admiration for your achievements. (PAUSE)

While you have worked hard we hope that you have also enjoyed your time here at the University. For many of you, this has been your first experience away from home and family. So while you have learned much from your course work, we are sure
that you have also learned much about life and living. (PAUSE)

We hope that the many friendships you have formed will stand the test of time and that you will include among them associations that you have made with our faculty and staff. For just as we have been an important part of your life, you too have become a part of ours. (PAUSE)

Trustee Larry Tolbert will now extend a welcome to you on behalf of the Board.”

(President Dunn to his seat and Trustee Tolbert to podium)

Trustee Tolbert: “Good afternoon!

This is a great day for all of us because Western Michigan University--its governing board, faculty and staff--and your families, friends and peers are all very proud of your academic achievements. Congratulations to the members of the Class of 2007. Please accept our best wishes for your continued success. We hope that you will keep in contact with our alma mater and that you will come back to visit us from time to time. Again, congratulations, and good luck!”

(President Dunn goes to podium)

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

President Dunn: “It is now time to call upon Provost Harik to come forward for the conferring of degrees.”

(Provost Harik joins President Dunn at podium.)
Provost Harik: “Will those receiving a Doctoral or Master's Degree please rise, as able. (PAUSE)

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all the requirements for a Doctoral or Master's Degree as prescribed by the graduate faculty of this University.” (PAUSE)

President Dunn: “By the authority of the State of Michigan, vested in the Board of Trustees, I hereby confer upon you the appropriate degrees indicated in your programs with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

Please be seated.”

(Provost Harik will introduce the Deans as they come forward.)

Provost Harik: “Will Dean Thomas Kent of the College of Arts and Sciences, please come forward.”

Dean Kent: “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Arts and Sciences, please rise. (PAUSE)

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all requirements for the Bachelor’s degree as prescribed by the faculty of this College.

Please be seated.”

(After introducing Dean Washington, Provost Harik returns to his seat.)
Provost Harik: “Will Dean Earlie Washington of the College of Health and Human Services, please come forward.”

Dean Washington: “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Health and Human Services, please rise. (PAUSE)

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present to you these candidates who have completed all the requirements for the Bachelor's degree as prescribed by the faculty of this College.

Please be seated.”

President Dunn: “Will all those receiving a Bachelor's degree rise once again please. (PAUSE)

By the authority of the State of Michigan, vested in the Board of Trustees, I hereby confer upon you the appropriate degrees indicated in your programs with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

Please be seated.” (PAUSE)

_________________________________________________________

PRESENTATION OF DOCTORAL DIPLOMAS
(NO MUSIC - NAMES ANNOUNCED)

President Dunn: “Will the doctoral candidates please come forward as Dr. Lewis Pyenson, Dean of the Graduate College announces their names.
Trustees Johnston and Tolbert and the graduates' advisors will place the hoods on the shoulders of the doctoral graduates.’ (PAUSE)

(President Dunn and Trustees Johnston and Tolbert to diploma table and Dean Pyenson to podium. The doctoral candidates will rise and proceed to the stage. Guides will assist in directing the candidates. Dean Pyenson will call candidates/advisors forward. He will indicate the candidates by name and announce their degrees. President Dunn will present labeled diplomas on diploma table. Trustee Johnston and Trustee Tolbert (on at a time) and advisors will place hoods on shoulders of doctoral graduates.)

Trustee Johnston and Advisors:
   Alemayehu Ambel
   David Ayer
   Nesrin Cengiz
   Barbara Cliff
   Jeane Clore - August graduate
   Marway Daoud
   Soumya Das
   Dawn Dore-Stiles - August graduate
   Anna Filipova
   Jessica Fischer
   Laura Ford

Trustee Tolbert and Advisors:
   Venkat Gurduru
   Hedy Habra - August graduate
   Diane Jones
   Ruvie Martinex
   Nathan Peplinski - August graduate
   Mark Reece
   Dawit Senbet
   Ken Smallwood
Bien Solomon
Chun Wang
Xue Wang

PRESENTATION OF MASTER'S DIPLOMAS
(NO MUSIC – NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Provost Harik: “Will the graduates receiving Master's degrees please come forward to receive their diplomas as Ms. Michele McLaughlin announces their names.” (PAUSE)

(Ms. McLaughlin will go to microphone at right of platform. Dean Kent and Dean Earlie Washington will assist President Dunn with presentation of diplomas.)

PRESENTATION OF UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMAS
(NO MUSIC – NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Provost Harik: “Will the graduates receiving Bachelor's degrees please come forward to receive their diplomas as their names are announced by Ms. McLaughlin and Mr. James Williams.” (PAUSE)

(Mr. Williams joins Ms. McLaughlin at microphones. Deans assist President Dunn with presentation of diplomas.)

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: “Will Mr. Kirk Hoffman, president of the Western Michigan University Alumni Association, please
come forward. Mr. Hoffman is vice president of the
King Trust Company, Spring Arbor.

(President Dunn returns to his seat and Mr. Hoffman to the podium)

Mr. Hoffman: REMARKS

(Mr. Hoffman returns to his seat and President Dunn returns to podium.)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

President Dunn: “Congratulations, Class of 2007!

We are at the end of our ceremony. Please permit me a few minutes to
share a final thought or two. I intend to heed the words of Franklin
Roosevelt who, in giving advice about speech making, quipped “Be sincere,
be brief, be seated.

Graduates, we are proud of you. The receiving of this degree is a
significant accomplishment; an honor of which you should be justifiably
proud. You are the recipient of a first-class education at a world-class
university, provided by an outstanding faculty and made possible through
the support and affection of family and friends—many of whom are
gathered here.

You join an elite group of men and women who have successfully achieved
an undergraduate or graduate degree. You have accomplished this in a
challenging time in the history of the world. Domestic and international
crisis consume much of our media attention and thought.

Yet, we see positive signs that inspire and motivate us to even greater
heights. As you make your way in the world, I promise you will be struck
by how often you learn about or meet a fellow WMU alum. They are
literally everywhere and playing significant roles in their professions and world affairs.

You'll find our nearly 165,000 alumni in some surprising places.

- You might meet or hear of James Leisenring (LIE-zen-ring), a 1964 alumnus who is in London as part of the International Accounting Standards Board that is developing a single set of understandable and enforceable global accounting standards.

- If accounting is your field, you might also want to know about 1974 alumnus Dennis Nally, who is the chairman and senior partner of the US firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers.

- As you watch news reports next year about the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk, one of America's 11 aircraft carriers, and learn of its final journey home from the Middle East for decommissioning, take note of the commander in charge of that warship and its 5,000-sailor crew and full complement of aircraft. He's Capt. Todd Zecchin, a 1980 WMU alumnus.

- Should you head to the University of Minnesota for graduate school, you might want to know that the Big Ten university's president, Dr. Robert Bruininks, is a fellow alum. He graduated from WMU in 1964.

- If you're a radio fan and fond of listening to ABC Radio's national news correspondent Jim Hickey, please know, he's a 1969 alumnus.

- If you're addicted to the wonderfully successful Television Food Network--the Food Channel--it will interest you to know it was founded by 1956 alumnus Jack Clifford.

- And the opera fans in the audience, will enjoy knowing that internationally known Susan B. Anthony, a 1975 WMU alumna, is a favorite in the leading opera houses of Paris, Tokyo, Madrid and Vienna.
That's just a snapshot--information about a few WMU alumni who, like you, left WMU determined to do great things. Doing great things requires dedication of one's chosen profession. It also means committing to serve others--your family, friends and those less fortunate. Be generous with your time, talent and resources, and if you do, the rewards--extrinsically and intrinsically--will be plentiful. Albert Schweitzer, a brilliant philosopher, theologian, musician and physician, in addressing a gathering similar to this one said, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."

Your faculty and all of our honored guests join with me in wishing you a life filled with service, success and happiness.

Finally, although you have graduated from this University, we invite you to stay connected to us. We need your help in preparing the next generation of professionals. You are partners in this endeavor and we, the faculty and I want you to know that you will always be a part of us. Stay connected, stay tuned and stay in touch. We wish you the very best.

As Capt. Zecchin (ZECK-in), said a few weeks ago during an ESPN interview from the U.S.S Kitty Hawk on the other side of the world, "Go Broncos!"

And now, please enjoy the slide presentation prepared for you and remember the good times, the people, places and things from your years here at Western Michigan University."

(Slide Show - Music by Professor Steve Zegree)

President Dunn: "In closing, there are many people who work very hard to make this commencement ceremony meaningful and memorable for you.

Thank you to Nicholas Michiels and the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Professor Steve Wolfinbarger
and the Western Brass Ensemble, Professor Steve Zegree, pianist for the slide production, the commencement committee, and the many people who work behind the scenes and contribute so much to our commencement. (PAUSE)

And finally graduates, thank you for all that you have given to us and for all that you will be giving to society in the years to come. Make your mark on this world, fulfill your dreams and always remember those who helped to make this all possible for you!

May you enjoy happiness, peace, and health.

At this time the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia will present the Alma Mater of Western Michigan University. After their performance, the Alma Mater will be repeated, at which time, all of you are invited to sing. Please rise for the Alma Mater and remain standing until the platform party leaves the stage.”

**ALMA MATER**
Western, we sing to you Brown and Gold
Western, we bring to you faith untold,
You challenge and inspire,
Your hope is our desire,
We sing to you our Alma Mater, Brown and Gold

**RECESSIONAL**
Western Brass Ensemble
Steve Wolfinbarger, Conductor

(President Dunn and Trustee Tolbert lead to march off stage.)