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Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-3pm

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, April 26, 2008, 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. I am completing my first academic year as your president and I am delighted and honored to be associated with such an outstanding institution.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire University community I want to welcome you to our two hundred ninety-second (292nd) commencement ceremony.

Will the audience please stand, as able, for the National Anthem, sung by the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia conducted by Marcus Jordan."

(President Dunn steps away from the microphone)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Marcus Jordan, Conductor
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 are 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 2600 degrees today.

More than 2100 of you will receive bachelor's degrees.
455 will receive master's degrees.

And 17 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 have 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 is 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 Vice President for Student Affairs Diane Anderson 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 how special the class of 2008 truly is.”

(President Dunn to his seat and Vice President Anderson to the podium.)

Vice President Anderson: 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 some 230 veterans who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan since 2001. This is the highest number of these veterans at a four-year institution in Michigan.

In all, more than 350 military veterans are attending college here. A total of 46 of them are graduating today, and several will be redeployed once they receive their diplomas. In addition, four of today's graduates have been participating in the Army ROTC program offered through our Department of Military Science and will be commissioned as second lieutenants.

We're immensely proud of those 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 Nicholas Horsmon of Three Rivers, Michigan, who's earning a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Nik has stayed busy during his WMU career, serving as vice president of the University's chapter of the Society of Automotive Engineers and as a
member of His House Christian Fellowship. Keeping up with his studies hasn't been easy. Nik faced a life-threatening challenge early on, but turned it into a new focus for his future career. During his freshman year, a serious health problem led to a hip replacement. After that experience, Nik took a close look at focusing on the manufacturing of medical devices. Ultimately, he landed a co-op position with the company that made his new hip, Biomet Incorporated in Indiana. Now, he will be working for this company after graduation.

Another College of Engineering and Applied Sciences graduate with a job on tap is Trisha Ann Janicki of Houghton, Michigan, who's earning a bachelor's degree with honors in chemical engineering with an energy management option. Trisha will start her professional career in June in the Marathon Petroleum Company's Supply, Distribution and Planning group after she backpack's through Europe for a month. Trisha is one of three 2008 Presidential Scholars from the engineering college who are graduating today. Being named the presidential scholar for a student's academic unit is the highest honor WMU can bestow on an undergraduate. The other two students receiving this designation are Benjamin Smith of Athens, Michigan, who's earning his degree in industrial and entrepreneurial engineering, and William Rizor of Battle Creek, Michigan, who's earning his degree in civil engineering with high honors.

We also have three Presidential Scholars from the College of Fine Arts who are graduating today. Casey Riddle of Ada, Michigan represents the theatre program and is earning her degree in theatre performance. Jacquelyn Nowicki of Clarendon Hills, Illinois represents the dance department and Jana Debusk of Kendallville, Indiana represents the musical theatre performance program and is earning her degree in that field. Each of these exceptional students has her sights set on a career in the arts, and we have no doubt they will be as exceptional in their professions as they have been here at WMU.

Some of our fine arts graduates are already making waves in their respective disciplines. One such student is Marissa Staniec (STAN-ek) of Sterling Heights, Michigan, who's earning a bachelor's degree in dance as well as in film, video and media studies. An outstanding talent during her WMU career, Marissa was chosen to perform two "Great Works" dances
created by internationally acclaimed choreographers George Faison and Doug Verone. She performed Faison's work at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and she also performed there in a dance by faculty member David Curwen.

Another fine arts student already achieving notoriety is Patrick Newton of Owosso, Michigan, our very own "Blue Man." A regular on the WMU theatre scene and most recently star of the acclaimed University Theatre production of "Dracula," Patrick has parlayed his experience here at WMU into a full-time job. The musical theatre performance major will begin training in New York on May 19 to become a member of the famous Blue Man Group.

Yet another example of the fine work going on in the College of Fine Arts is Gordon van Gent of Kalamazoo, who's earning a bachelor's degree in music. Gordon has been a special student in our School of Music over the years, and this year, he pulled off a major event on campus. Gordon wrote a Mass that was performed on April 4 by our 70-member Collegiate Singers—with orchestra and even rock-band accompaniment. A rousing success, the concert was presented to a standing-room-only crowd. In addition to making a name for himself, Gordon is what we call a legacy student. His mother, Wendy, earned a music degree from WMU in 1980.

Our College of Health and Human Services also enrolls numerous students who have distinguished themselves during their college careers. Among them is Candyce Peterson, who is earning a master's degree in speech pathology. Candyce has proved to be not only an outstanding and conscientious student, but also a gifted clinician. She had a successful career as an accountant, but things changed when she became the parent of a child with Down syndrome. Her interest in speech pathology blossomed, and she applied to WMU's nationally ranked program in 2005. Now, she's completed all her course work with a 4.0 grade point average while attending school full time, balancing family responsibilities and commuting from Grand Rapids.

Candyce exemplifies the caring attitude of students in our speech pathology program. People are sometimes criticized today for their self-interest. However, a deep commitment to others came shining through
recently when our speech pathology graduate students studied the Hippocratic Oath as part of their ethics course work. In what may be a first for their profession, those students followed up a class discussion by crafting their own oaths—outside of class—to show their deep commitment to the patients they serve. The students said their public oaths will forever guide them in their future careers, and knowing our students, we have no doubt that will hold true.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I'd like to acknowledge the Presidential Scholars from the College of Health and Human Services who are graduating today. They are Laura Koop of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in Speech Pathology and Audiology and Amanda Albert of Ypsilanti, Michigan, who is in Nursing. Laura plans to obtain her master's degree and eventually work in a hospital or rehabilitation setting, while Amanda is looking forward to working in pediatrics or maternal health.

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

(Vice President Anderson to her 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 we affectionately call our "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 with 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 2008. 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 Vice Provost Keith Hearit to come forward for the conferring of degrees.”

(Vice Provost Hearit joins President Dunn at podium.)

Vice Provost Hearit: “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.”

(Vice Provost Hearit will introduce the Deans as they come forward.)
Vice Provost Hearit: “Will Dean Tim Greene of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, please come forward.”

Dean Greene: “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Engineering and Applied 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.”

Vice Provost Hearit: “Will Dean James Hopfensperger of the College of Fine Arts, please come forward.”

Dean Hopfensperger: “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Fine Arts, 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, Vice Provost Hearit returns to seat.)

Vice Provost Hearit: “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 candidate please come forward as Dr. Lewis Pyenson, Dean of the Graduate College announces his name.

Trustee Tolbert and the graduate’s advisor will place the hood on the shoulders of the doctoral graduate.” (PAUSE)
(President Dunn and Trustee Tolbert to diploma table and Dean Pyenson to podium. The doctoral candidate will rise and proceed to the stage. Guides will assist in directing the candidate. Dean Pyenson will call candidate/advisor forward. He will indicate the candidate by name and announce his degree. President Dunn will present labeled diploma on diploma table. Trustee Tolbert and advisor will place hood on shoulders of doctoral graduate.)

Trustee Tolbert and Advisor:

Zill-e-Huma Kamal

_________________________________________________________

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

Vice Provost Hearit: “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. Deans Greene, Hopfensperger and Washington (two at a time) will assist President Dunn and Trustee Tolbert with presentation of diplomas.)

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PRESENTATION OF UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMAS
(NO MUSIC – NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Vice Provost Hearit: “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 and Trustee Tolbert 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 2008!

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 Thomas Jefferson who said never use two words when one will do. Therefore, I intend to be brief.

This is the end of my first academic year as president. You are the first class I have been able to know and follow throughout the year. It has been my privilege to do so. Thank you for the warm reception and for
your support! And, special thanks to those of you who have accepted me as one of your Facebook Friends!

There are two students graduating today to whom, in particular, I owe a debt of gratitude for making this year so memorable: Rosana Alsaoud, who served this year as chair of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee, and Chris Praedel, who served as president of the Western Student Association. I could not have asked for the assistance of a better set of student leaders. Their counsel, input, friendship and commitment to you--our students--and to the University have been commendable. They have been responsive, enterprising, helpful and a joy to know. I will miss them both.

Graduates, we are proud of you. Earning a degree is a significant accomplishment; an honor for 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 earned undergraduate or graduate degrees here. You have accomplished this in a very challenging time in the history of the world. Domestic and international crises consume much of our media attention and thoughts.

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.

• If accounting is your field, you might want to know about 1974 alumnus Dennis Nally, who is the chairman and senior partner of the US firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers. He visited campus this semester and told our business students that his WMU education “served him incredibly well” during his celebrated career.
• As you watch news reports this weekend about the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk making a high-profile and diplomatically tricky port call in Hong Kong, take note of the commander in charge of that warship, its 5,000-sailor crew, and its full complement of aircraft. He's Capt. Todd Zecchin (ZECH-in), 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 assigned to help your company or organization improve its use of information technology, you may work with Matthew Male, a 1998 alumnus in business administration and computer information systems who is president and CEO of BlueGranite. His company, which is headquartered in our Business Technology and Research Park, was part of Michigan's inaugural list of "50 Companies to Watch," and has been named one of West Michigan's "101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work For."

• If you're a fan of television's "The Shield," you're already familiar with L. Michael Burt, a 2003 alum in organizational communication. He's just finished his second season as the actor in the role of Moses for the FX show that's been called the best police drama on TV.

• Laura Stemmler earned her BA in Broadcast/Cable Production in 1999. Today, she's in Bristol, Conn., as an associate director for ESPN and she has two Emmy's sitting on her mantle for her work on the SportsCenter post game show.

• And for all of us so concerned about the health of our environment, it's comforting to know there's a Bronco playing a significant role. Cara Mroczek (ROE-zak), who earned her B.A. in political science and environmental studies at WMU in 2002, is a trial attorney in the Environmental Enforcement Section of the Environmental and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice. Her responsibilities include litigation on behalf of the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water acts, as well as the Superfund law.
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. Some of the world’s most brilliant humanists--Albert Schweitzer, Mother Teresa to name just two--remind us time and time again that true happiness is gained only when we give generously to others. George Carver Washington may have said it best, “How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because, someday in your life, you will have been all of these.”

Your faculty and all of our honored guests join with me in wishing you a life filled with service, success and happiness. Here on campus, we’ll be watching proudly as you move forward with your careers. We ask only that you remain true to yourself and the values you cherish, and that you live each day in a way that makes you proud of who you are.

As Robert F. Kennedy put it, “Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.”

Continue to challenge and nurture your mind. Remember, too, that good health is essential throughout your life. Take time daily to exercise. We all know that physical activity is good for your heart. Experts now agree that activity is equally good for your mind--giving you clearer thinking and a better memory. I believe that activity and discipline also nurture a person’s soul. So, please, make your total health a top priority in your life.

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. Keep active, keep learning, and keep in touch!

And, finally, what a great day to be a BRONCO!!

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 Marcus Jordan 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.)