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Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-9am

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, June 28, 2008 - 9 a.m.

John M. Dunn, President, Presiding

PROCESSIONAL
Karl Schrock, Organist

President Dunn: "Good morning, I am John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University. I am completing my first 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-third (293rd) 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."

(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 are so evident in the faces of those gathered here to observe you graduate.

Graduates, 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 as able and those in front of me, turn and face the audience and remain standing.

Would the Moms and Dads in the audience please stand?

How about the Grandparents? And Great Grandparents?

Spouses, those special partners, and children?

Brothers and Sisters? Aunts, Uncles and other Relatives? And, Friends?

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 nearly 1500 degrees today.

More than 900 of you will receive bachelor's degrees.

498 will receive master's degrees.

And 23 of you will be receiving doctoral degrees.

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!

Besides your professors, there have been many, many others on this terrific campus who have protected, encouraged, facilitated, and brightened the academic journey that has led you to this moment of celebration. They are the cooks, the custodians, office personnel, medical staff, police officers, landscape crews...the list goes on and on. They give their all, every day, to make your educational experience at WMU what you deserve: the BEST.

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 Chair Ken Miller, Trustee Sarah DeNooyer 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.

Western Michigan University is truly an international institution. We enthusiastically welcome students from other lands and we encourage all other students to experience a portion of their learning in one of our many study abroad locations around the globe. Will those students who were participants of our fine study abroad programs please stand and be recognized.

I now ask Board Chair Ken Miller to share with you some Western Michigan University "Points of Pride" that will remind you of how special this university truly is.

(President Dunn to his seat and Trustee Miller to the podium.)

Trustee Miller: WMU POINTS OF PRIDE

Graduates, you and your families should be proud of what you've accomplished. All of us here on the stage share that pride and look forward to seeing you succeed as you move on to the next passages in your lives.

I would like to talk for a few moments about the kind of stories you will now be able to share as you head out into the job market or on to graduate school or as you talk with friends and family members who are considering what a college degree can mean in their future. Too often, we take it for granted that you all know the truly special points of pride about your university. I want to take a few moments, one last time before you graduate, to remind you of some of things you can brag about whenever someone asks about Western Michigan University.

Let's start with the basics. Today you become alumni of one of the nation's top public universities. In a nation that has more than 4,000 colleges and universities, your alma mater is one of fewer than 200 public universities designated by the Carnegie Foundation as research universities. The Carnegie Foundation classification is the nation's gold standard when it comes to defining higher education.

There is not a state or territory in the nation that is missing the Bronco touch. And no matter where you travel, you should not be surprised to encounter a fellow alum. So who else will be joining our alumni base today? I'm going to describe just some of them in a way that tells you something I hope you remember about your university.

- Let's start with an important group we always need to acknowledge--our veterans. There are 32 veterans who will graduate today. As we honor them, I think it's important to note that of all of Michigan's four-year colleges and universities, WMU has the largest population of veterans who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan--about 230 of them. We're proud of the service they and the rest of our veterans have given our nation and we are enormously proud that they chose WMU to prepare for their futures.
- Graduating today are 14 members of the Lee Honors College. That is one of the nation's oldest honors colleges and boasts a student profile that is similar or even more impressive than that of students attending the most elite private colleges in the United States.
- Today's graduates include members of Phi Beta Kappa. That's the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the nation. Only 97 public universities in America have been authorized to shelter a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, and Western Michigan University is one of them.
- If you're graduating from the College of Arts and Sciences, please remember that your college is WMU's largest and is the academic home to nationally and internationally known programs that range from atomic physics, creative writing and psychology to geosciences, science and math education, and medieval studies. And those are just a few of the many highly regarded programs in this college.

- Many of you are earning degrees from the College of Aviation. You'll enter the work force able to say you graduated from one of the top aviation schools in the nation. You can tell those you meet that your school's flight team, the Sky Broncos, has placed in the top four in national competition for 17 consecutive years.
- Today's College of Fine Arts graduates leave us with the knowledge that their degrees were earned at one of only six fine arts colleges in the nation to have all of its programs fully accredited by their disciplines' professional organizations. Just how highly regarded are our fine arts programs? Here are just two examples.

-First, last month, one of our premier musical groups, Gold Company, opened for Johnny Mathis in a Chicago concert and garnered rave reviews for their concert performance.

-The Department of Theatre is my second example. It is widely recognized as among the best theatre programs in the nation, and next month, a group of WMU theatre students will travel to Canterbury, England, to perform one of the department's latest productions for the Lambeth Conference, a worldwide conclave of Anglican bishops who meet once every 10 years,

- If you're earning a degree today from the College of Health and Human Services, you have bragging rights as well. I hope when you describe your alma mater, you mention that:

- The college's Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies is the oldest and largest—and is considered the best program of its kind—*in the world*.

- The Physician Assistant program, the *second* to be established in Michigan, has one of the highest pass rates *in the country* for its national licensure exam. A WMU-educated PA holds the record for the highest score *ever* in the history of the exam.

Brag point, points of pride--call them what you will. Such facts define Western Michigan University. We'll keep adding to them in the coming years, and with each new quality marker, the value of the already-valuable

degree you hold will only increase. We intend to share these brag points every chance we get, because we know that the more people know about Western Michigan University, the more likely they are to recognize what an incredibly valuable asset WMU is for the state and nation. That's one of the reasons why more than 700 of us--faculty, staff and students--descended on Lansing last month for WMU Day at the Capitol. We were the first public university to make this kind of statement with a daylong public presence on the grounds of the Michigan Capitol. We were noticed and we started some conversations that have yet to stop.

Telling our story works. I invite you to remember and share all of these facts liberally as you move into your professional life. I also ask that you remember that these facts were made possible through the work of our faculty and through your efforts as well. I urge you to continue building WMU's reputation in your chosen field.

Starting today, you're a Bronco alum, and what you accomplish will reflect positively on your family, your community and your university. We look forward to following your progress, and we plan on bragging about your success in life for many years to come. Congratulations.

(Trustee Miller to his seat and President Dunn to the podium)

President Dunn: "Graduates, we are so proud of all of you. You have demonstrated the determination and commitment to achieve what we celebrate here today. Many of you held down jobs working long hours while being full- or part-time students. And what is important, you finished, you accomplished your goal.

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.

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.

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.

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)

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, 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."

Provost Harik: "Will Professor Patrick Benton, College of Aviation, please come forward."

Professor Benton: "Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Aviation, 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."

Provost Harik: "Will Chair Nina Nelson, Dance Department in the College of Fine Arts please come forward."

Chair Nelson: Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Fine Arts 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."

Provost Harik: "Will Dean Earlie Washington, College of Health and Human Services, please come forward."

(After introducing Dean Washington, Provost Harik returns to his seat)

Dr. 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 of 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 (NAMES ANNOUNCED)

President Dunn: "Will the doctoral candidates please come forward as Dr. Lewis Pyenson, Dean of the Graduate College announces their names.

The Trustees and the graduates' advisors will place the hoods on the shoulders of the doctoral graduates.' (PAUSE)

(Short musical interlude as graduates come to stage)

(President Dunn and Trustee Miller 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. Trustees Miller, DeNooyer and Tolbert and advisors will place hoods on shoulders of doctoral graduates.)

Trustee Miller and Advisors:

Lindsay Ciletti
Melissa Collard
Margaret Larsen
Erica Mandrick
Elizabeth Ogren

Trustee DeNooyer and Advisors:

Jeni Wares
Shannon Young
Brenda Bratton
Rhiannon Fante
Junhyung Kim

Trustee Tolbert and Advisors:

Adam Milewski
Kineta Morgan-Paisley
Nathanel O'Reilly
Julie Slowiak
Jaclyn West-Frazier

PRESENTATION OF MASTER'S DIPLOMAS (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)

(Short musical interlude as graduates come to stage)

(Ms. McLaughlin will go to microphone at right of platform. Dean Kent, Professor Benton, Chair Nelson and Dean Washington(two at one time) will assist President Dunn and Trustees with presentation of diplomas.)

PRESENTATION OF UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMAS (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)

(Short musical interlude as graduates come to stage)

(Mr. Williams joins Ms. McLaughlin at microphones. Dean Kent, Professor Benton, Chair Nelson and Dean Washington will assist President Dunn and Trustees with presentation of diplomas.)

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: "Will Ms. Jamie Jeremy, Executive Director of our office of Alumni Relations, please come forward.

(President Dunn returns to his seat and Ms. Jeremy to the podium)

Ms. Jeremy: REMARKS

(Ms. Jeremy returns to her seat and President Dunn returns to podium.)

President Dunn: "Thank you, Jamie.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

President Dunn:

"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 year as president. It has been my privilege to know and follow your class throughout the year. 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!

It has been my delight to learn about some of today's graduates and realize how deep the connections to campus and community run among our students. For instance, one young man graduating today, Jacob Della Pia (PI-yah) from Manistee, Mich., will receive his degree and be commissioned a second lieutenant in the Michigan Army National Guard.

He will also be honored with the ROTC Cadet Medal for Heroism. While a student here, Jacob served as a volunteer fireman in Oshtemo Township, and last year risked his own life to enter a burning home--twice--in search of occupants. He ended up saving the life of the homeowner, who turned out to be a former fire chief with his department. Jacob, we're so proud of you and what you contributed to the community during your time here.

Another of today's graduates is part of a very small, but growing group of alumni with longstanding ties to WMU. Steve Knapp, who has earned his master's degree in philosophy, is a fourth-generation Bronco. Steve's great grandmother Bessie Ives Rumble graduated from Western State Normal School in 1915. His grandparents Marion and Stanley Rumble, and his parents Nancy and Lowell Knapp all are proud Broncos. Today, Steve becomes a proud Bronco as well. Steve, your mission is to keep 'em coming!

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 alumni in some surprising places.

- As you watch news reports this summer about the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Kitty Hawk heading home from Asia on its last journey before being

decommissioned, 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.
- 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 Emmys sitting on her mantel for her work on the SportsCenter post game shows.

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 Washington Carver 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 Nicholas Michiels and the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Dr. Karl Schrock, organist, 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.

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
Karl Schrock, Organist

(President Dunn and Chair Miller lead to march off stage.)