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Champion Club Reception Remarks

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• Good evening. Thank you all for being here and for providing your generous support to our athletic programs.

• I've always been a firm believer that intercollegiate athletics, done right, is an important part of university life. I think this university is one that gets it right. Because of your support, it's clear you share that view.

• Intercollegiate athletics at WMU is about the success of the student-athlete. Our competitors are students first and stronger athletes because of it.

- We're proud that three of our athletic teams were honored by the NCAA this year for posting Academic Progress Rates in the top 10 percent in the nation for their respective sports. For all three teams--baseball, gymnastics and volleyball--this is the second consecutive year for such honors. I should point out that among all Michigan schools, WMU was second only to the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, which had four teams recognized.

- We're enormously proud of such top student athletes as the six student gymnasts who were named to the National Association of Collegiate Gymnastics Coaches All-Academic Team. Their team had the second highest GPA in the MAC and the 26th highest in the nation.

- We were delighted to learn that WMU basketball standout and arguably one of our most interesting student athletes, Joe Reitz, earned Academic All American honors for the second straight year in 2008, joining a list of only
two other Broncos who have earned such honors twice. Here's some stats on Joe. For his career, Joe ranked fifth in all time scoring at WMU with more than 1,600 points, first in free throws attempted and made and earned a 3.72 GPA as a finance major. Right now (Updated 8/21), Joe is a rookie offensive lineman for the NFL's Baltimore Ravens.

• Those are just a few brag points. It's been a good year for student athletes.
  -We had two track athletes--Becky Horn and Danielle Brown--do well in the NCAA national championships. Becky Horn went on to the final round of the Olympic trials.
  -The men's tennis team won its 20th MAC title.
  -The women's tennis team won its fourth consecutive and 11th overall MAC title.
  -Our basketball team won the MAC West division title
  -Our volleyball won its MAC West title

• One of the biggest WMU sports stories of the past year was made possible by donors like you. Thanks to a $1 million challenge gift by Robert Bobb, along with the response of our major donors, we were able to launch the renovation of historic Hyames Field.

• There are great things happening in Bronco athletics, due in no small part, to the assistance you provide. I have one central message for each of you. Thank you. You make us proud to be Broncos.