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Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-9am

John M. Dunn
Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, June 27, 2009 - 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.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire University community I want to welcome you to our two hundred ninety-sixth (296th) commencement ceremony.

Will the audience please stand, as able, for the National Anthem, sung by the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia conducted by Zechariah Shrum.”

(President Dunn steps away from the microphone)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Zechariah Shrum, 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, 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 170,000 WMU alumni from all over Michigan and from around the world.

Today we shall award more than 1500 degrees.

Over 1000 of you will receive bachelor's degrees.

526 will receive master's degrees.
And 29 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, scholarship, 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.

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 at this ceremony is Chair Ken Miller.
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 in one of our fine study abroad programs and all our international students 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’d like to talk for a few moments about what our graduates should take with them as they start their careers, head for graduate school or plan for the next step into the future. Too often, we take it for granted that you all know the truly special points of pride about your university. So, one last time before you graduate, I’ll remind you of some of things that you can proudly share whenever someone asks about your University.

Let's start with the basics. Graduates, 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 a research
university. The Carnegie Foundation classification is the nation's gold standard when it comes to defining higher education.

This is the final commencement ceremony of the 2008-09 academic year, and I'd like to point out that today we will award 29 doctoral degrees, bringing to 102 the number of doctoral degrees we've awarded this year. This is the second year in a row that we have awarded more than 100 doctoral degrees in a single year.

All of you graduating today will take your place among a proud group of WMU alumni living around the globe. Nearly 113,000 WMU graduates live in Michigan, but there's not a state or territory in the nation that is missing the Bronco touch. And no matter where you travel in the world, 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 42 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--almost 400 of them. We're proud of the service they and the rest of our veterans have given our nation and enormously proud that they chose WMU to prepare for their futures.

• Graduating today are nine 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 five members of Phi Beta Kappa. That's the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the nation. Only 100 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 Education, please remember that your college is consistently ranked among the top 10 producers of educational personnel in the nation. You'll want to remember a few critical pieces of information.

-First, you are about to become alumni of WMU's oldest college and one that graduated its first class of teachers in 1905.

-If you've just completed a teaching internship, you probably want to remember to tell prospective employers that WMU's School/University Partnership Team, through which your internship was coordinated, was named the 2004 Distinguished Program in Teacher Education by the Association of Teacher Educators.

Some of you have completed your degrees through our Extended University Programs at one of our regional campuses. Did you know that WMU began offering extension classes in 1905, just two years after its founding. Today, the University is home to seven branch campuses across Michigan, all of which provide primarily graduate and professional education.

Today's College of Fine Arts graduates leave us with the knowledge that their degrees were earned at one of only eight fine arts colleges in the nation and the only one in Michigan to have all of its programs fully accredited by their disciplines' professional organizations. Just how highly regarded are our fine arts programs? Here is one example.

-Since 1984, music students and ensembles at WMU have won more than 100 Student Music Awards from DownBeat magazine, with those highly coveted awards earned for the past 14 consecutive years. That puts this University in the top three among colleges and universities nationwide.

Many of you are earning degrees from the Haworth College of Business. You'll enter the work force able to say you graduated from one of the 20 largest undergraduate business programs in the United States.
I hope you don't forget to tell people that your alma mater's Haworth College of Business is among just 25 percent of U.S. business schools that hold accreditations at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and it is among a select 10 percent of U.S. business schools that have additional specialized accreditation for their accounting programs.

Such points of pride 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 have earned will only increase. We intend to share these Points of Pride every chance we get because the more people hear 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 faculty, staff and students descended again on Lansing in May for the second annual WMU Day at the Capitol. Without a doubt, 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 boasting about your success in life for many years to come. Congratulations. You already make us proud.”

(President Dunn to the podium)

President Dunn: “Graduates, we are indeed 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 spouses 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. 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."

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

President Dunn: “It is now time to call upon Provost Greene to come forward for the conferring of degrees.”
Provost Greene: “Will those receiving a Doctoral or Master's Degree please rise, as able.

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.”

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 Greene: “Will Associate Dean Ajay Samant, Haworth College of Business, please come forward.”

Assoc. Dean Samant: “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the Haworth College of Business please rise.

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 Greene: "Will Dean Gary Wegenke, College of Education, please come forward."

Dean Wegenke: "Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree or a teaching certificate through the College of Education please rise. 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 Greene: "Representing Extended University Programs, I ask Ms. Sharon Seabrook Russell, Director of the Battle Creek and Lansing Regional Centers, to please come forward."

Ms. Seabrook Russell: "Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through Extended University Programs please rise. 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 University.

Please be seated."

Provost Greene: "Will Dean Margaret Merrion, College of Fine Arts, please come forward."

(Provost Greene introduces Dean Merrion and returns to his seat.)
Dean Merrion: “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through College of Fine Arts please rise.

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.”

President Dunn: “Will all those receiving a Bachelor’s degree rise once again please.

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.”

PRESENTATION OF DOCTORAL DIPLOMAS
(NAMES ANNOUNCED)

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

Trustee Miller 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. Trustee Miller and advisors will place hoods on shoulders of doctoral graduates.)

Trustee Miller and Education Advisors:

- Robert Biggins
- Gregory Gray
- Anne-Marie Guidy-Oulai
- Mary-Catherine Kane
- Denise Ludwig
- Lisa Jo Ryan
- Kathleen VanTol

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PRESENTATION OF MASTER’S DIPLOMAS
(NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Provost Greene: “Will the graduates receiving Specialist’s or 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 rear of platform. Drs. Samant, Wegenke, Merrion, and Ms. Seabrook Russell will assist President Dunn and Trustee Miller with presentation of diplomas.)
PRESENTATION OF UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMAS
(NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Provost Greene: “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.”

(Short musical interlude as graduates come to stage)

(Mr. Williams joins Ms. McLaughlin at microphones. Drs. Samant, Wegenke, Merrion, and Ms. Seabrook Russell (two at a time) will assist President Dunn and Trustee Miller with presentation of diplomas.)

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: “I now would like to ask Mr. Christopher Womack, president of our alumni association, to come forward. Mr. Womack is Executive Vice President and President of External Affairs, of Southern Company, Atlanta, Georgia, and a 1979 graduate of WMU.”

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

Mr. Womack: REMARKS

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

President Dunn: “Thank you, Chris.”
CONCLUDING REMARKS

President Dunn:
“We are at the end of our ceremony. By this point, you will have noted that there is not a traditional commencement address. We wanted to keep the focus where it belongs---on you.

Graduates, we are proud of you all. 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 today.

One of my predecessors, President Haenicke, used to pause at this point in the ceremony, look out into the audience and say--"Businessmen and women, hire these graduates! This graduating class compares very favorably with that of any other Michigan university, as well as those universities from borders beyond."

I want to add to that message. Parents, business people, citizens--take a close look at the impressive group of graduates seated before you today. You are looking at our nation's true stimulus package.

These graduates have the ability to make our economy soar to unprecedented heights and chart a future of unimaginable creativity and promise. And yes, you should hire them! Do not wait. As with any golden opportunity--make that Brown and Golden opportunity--you need to move quickly. These graduates are very well prepared and eager to make a difference in your business and your community.

Students, you join an elite group of men and women who have successfully earned degrees here. As you make your way in the world, I promise you will be struck by how often you encounter a fellow WMU alum. They are literally everywhere, playing significant roles in their professions and world affairs.
We'll be watching proudly as you carve out your own career niche and make your contributions to society. 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. Never lose faith in your dreams and never underestimate the power of the dreams of others.

Graduates, your value or worth is not determined by external appearance. Nor is your capacity for achievement measured by the diploma you now hold in your hand. True virtue and potential for greatness are found deep within the core, the essential fabric of an individual's composition, their make up, or for the scientists in the crowd, their real DNA.

As graduates of this great university, you have learned much about your discipline and yourself. I hope the most important lesson you have learned is to value and respect the talents and contributions of others—not only those who agree with you but also those who hold differing views. As you leave Western Michigan University, resolve to practice the good judgment and critical thinking you have polished here to find your place, to identify your heroes and to bolster your ethics and values.

Every human counts, and as we are fond of saying on this campus, all WMU employees—faculty, advisers, cooks, and landscapers—have been united in one mission, preparing our graduates (you) for success. I think we have done a pretty good job!

You are now alumni of this great University, and we want you to stay connected. 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.

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 Zechariah Schrum 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 Trustee Miller lead to march off stage.)