7-16-2009

Make a Difference Awards Luncheon

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
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn/265

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.
• Good afternoon. I am honored to be here to honor four employees who have truly gone above and beyond what is expected to provide service to our University community and our students. Your exceptional efforts provide the kind of experience that we want for our students, and you truly set the tone on this campus for student success and collegial relationships among our staff and faculty.

• You know the Chronicle of Higher Education has just named Western Michigan University one of the nation's Great Colleges to Work For. I truly believe it is people like you who make the kind of contributions that make us all feel good about who we are as a University community and give our entire employee the desire to do more and continually find ways to better serve our students. You not only step up to the plate whenever you are needed--even without being asked---, but you also routinely hit the ball out of the park.

• Thank you for what you do every day. And thank you for raising the bar for all of us. As I look over the testimonials that brought the four of you to lunch today, I am grateful for the service you give and, frankly, in awe of the esteem in which you are held by your fellow employees and students.

(Story about the two cooks you worked with as a student?)

You know, I remember these two women and what they taught me so well. In many ways the lessons I learned from them were as important as what I learned in the classroom. The biggest lesson I learned from them and the one I've carried
with me in higher education administration is that every person on our staff plays a critical role in making our students successful. And today, we honor four people who go above and beyond the critical role they've been assigned.

• **Cheri Edgar**, office coordinator in the Department of Business Information Systems.

• **Deborah Goostrey**, building services coordinator in our beautiful and "green" College of Health and Human Services.

• **Stephan Keto**, a grounds supervisor in Physical Plant-Landscape Services

• **Mary Ramlow**, office coordinator with our celebrated Evaluation Center.

Before arriving on campus two years ago, I received a letter from the leadership of one of our employee organizations, the APA. One line in that letter really stood out and resonated with me. I've thought about it since then and as the months have passed, that line has been continually reinforced by what I've seen here.

"It's long been said that the faculty is the heart of the university," the letter noted. The writer then went on to argue that if that was indeed the case, then surely the staff is the university's soul.

I think that gets it exactly right. At WMU we're about heart and soul, and one truly does not function without the other. As I look at what the four of you have accomplished and how much you are admired, I'm happy to know you are here and glad that there are students on our campus, who, some day, will be telling someone
about the scheduler, carpenter, advisor or employment recruiter who made a
difference in their lives.

Thank you for your service and thank you for sharing your special day with all of
us.