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Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-3pm

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, December 19, 2009 – 3 p.m.

John M. Dunn, President, Presiding

PROCESSIONAL
The Western Brass Ensemble, Deanna Swoboda, Conductor

President Dunn: “Good afternoon, 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-seventh (297th) 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, 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 170,000 WMU alumni from all over Michigan and from around the world.

We shall award more than 1850 degrees today.

Almost 1400 of you will receive bachelor's degrees.

457 will receive master's degrees--one specialist’s degree will be awarded.
And 33 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.

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 are Vice Chair Larry Tolbert, Trustees Jim Hettinger and Bill Johnston, and Trustee Emerita Lana Boldi.
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 Vice Chair Larry Tolbert 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 Vice Chair Tolbert to the podium.)

Vice Chair Tolbert: 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 wish I could share the hundreds of wonderful stories about today's grads, but there isn't time to tell everyone's story. So today, I thought I'd talk for a few moments about the kind of information our graduates can share as they start their careers, head for graduate school or take a short break to reconnoiter the terrain and plan for the next step. 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 that you can boast about 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 research universities. The Carnegie Foundation classification is the nation's gold standard when it comes to defining higher education.

This is the first of three commencements during the 2009-10 academic year and, as mentioned earlier, today we will award 33 doctoral degrees. During 2008-09 we awarded a total of 102 doctoral degrees, making it the second year in a row that we have awarded more than 100 doctoral degrees in a single year. We're well on track to match or exceed that number this year.

All of you graduating today will now take your place among a proud group of WMU alumni worldwide. 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 39 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 -- some 450 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 32 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 nine members of Phi Beta Kappa. That's the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the nation. Only 101 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, Spanish, and medieval studies. And those are just a few of the many highly regarded programs in this college.

Two graduate disciplines in the College of Arts and Sciences--science education and economics--were named last year as among the top-10 graduate programs of their kind for faculty research productivity.

• 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 18 consecutive years.

• 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.

-Students from the Department of Theatre have been selected 11 times to compete in the American College Theatre Festival's regional events. Twice, that regional competition led to WMU actors being honored with an invitation to perform at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Next month, our theatre students will compete in ACTF's regional event with their original production of "Good Death" and they'll try for a third trip to the Kennedy Center.
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 hold will only increase. We intend to share these Points of Pride 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 the past two springs 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've been 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 joins President Dunn at podium.)

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 introduces Dean Kent.)

Provost Greene: “Will Dean Tom 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 Greene introduces Professor Patrick Benton)
Provost Greene: “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 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 Merrion, the Provost returns to his seat.)

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

Dean Merrion: “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 University.

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 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 Hettinger 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 Hettinger and advisors will place hoods on shoulders of doctoral graduates.)
Trustee Hettinger and College of Arts and Sciences Doctoral Advisors:

Rebecca Arvans         Kristian O’Hare (August)
Anne Cullen             Ronald Pimentel
Laura Grow              Gretchen Rumohr-Viskuil
Breanne Hartley         Annie Tordilla
Angela Hatcher          Lori Wingate
Shannon Mortimore (August)  Mina Zadeh

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PRESENTATION OF MASTER'S DIPLOMAS
(NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Provost Greene: “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 rear of platform to announce the college as graduates come forward. Dean Kent, Professor Benton and Dean Merrion will assist President Dunn and Trustees with presentation of diplomas.)

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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. (Announce the college as graduates come forward.) Dean Kent, Professor Benton and Dean Merrion will assist President Dunn and Trustees with presentation of diplomas.)

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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: “Will Mr. Richard Bailey, president of our alumni association, please come forward. Mr. Bailey, from Dewitt, Michigan, received an M.B.A. from WMU in 1985 and has had a long and successful career in banking.”

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

Mr. Bailey: REMARKS

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

President Dunn: “Thank you, Rick.”

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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. You have earned a degree at one of the nation's truly outstanding universities. You have done so under the guidance and tutelage of an outstanding faculty and helped along the way by WMU staff who have had but one goal - to help you succeed and move forward.

You are leaving the University at a challenging time in the history of the world. Our economy is struggling, unemployment is much too high and funding for basic, essential services such as education threatened. And yet we are filled with great hope because we know that you, our graduates, our future, have the talent and tools to tackle today's problems and make a difference.

I am fond of saying that you - our graduates - represent the nation's best economic stimulus! As you continue your journey in life, no matter where you go or what you do, remember that your success is a direct reflection on others who have sacrificed much for you. Remember to take a little time each and every day to pause, reflect and remember to always say thank you.

Albert Schweitzer, theologian, physician, and humanitarian, in a setting similar to this said to an assembled group, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."

And, quoting another historic giant, Winston Churchill, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Remember to give. Be generous with your knowledge, with your gratitude, and with your time and compassion to others who need a helping hand.
New alumni, 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 in world affairs.

Just to illustrate that point, let me note that one of today’s graduates, Daing Sophian Nasir (Dang soFEEahn NAHsir) is from Malaysia and he grew up in that East Asian nation quite accustomed to hearing tales of Bronco lore. You see both his parents are WMU alumni and Daing was born here in Kalamazoo while his parents lived here. Today, his father, Dr. Daing Mohammed Nasir is the new vice chancellor of the University of Malaysia Pahang (PAH HAHNG). Daing’s father and mother (Fazia Ali (FahZEEah AHlee) traveled here today from Malaysia to see him graduate. (Ask them to stand and be acknowledged.)

Also with us today from that university are Professor Mashita Yusof (mah SHEE tah YOUsaht) also a WMU alumna, dean of the faculty of industrial sciences and technology, and Professor Shamsudin Baharin (ShamSOUdihn bahHAHrin), director of the University-Industry Centre. Welcome to you all.

And, earlier today in our noon ceremony, Tererai (Terror-EYE) Trent of Zimbabwe received her doctoral degree. She earned the title of Dr. Trent in an educational journey that has taken her from life as an impoverished child bride in a rural African village to a career as an international scholar who holds a Ph.D. and has extensive expertise on the evaluation of AIDS-prevention efforts.

Dr. Trent has been called the woman who "buried her dreams" because she recorded her life’s dreams on paper and buried them in the field where she herded cattle. As she accomplished each goal--travel to America, earn a bachelor's degree, and then a master's degree-- she dug up the list, crossed off the achieved goal, and returned the list to the earth with a renewed determination to achieve her next dream.

Dr. Trent's accomplishments have been featured on the pages of the New York Times, on the Oprah Winfrey Show last fall and in a new book, “Half the Sky”. This mother of five is now deputy director for planning,
monitoring and evaluation at Heifer International, an Arkansas-based aid agency that she first encountered years ago in her village.

Dr. Trent recently said, "I believed in myself and I had many people who encouraged me. Hence, the motto for me is to believe in my dreams." That's a motto for us all to take to heart.

Graduates, we'll be watching all of you 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.

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 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, Professor Deanna Swoboda 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.

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
The Western Brass Ensemble

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