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Haenicke Garden Dedication

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Haenicke Garden Dedication
Dr. John M. Dunn
10 a.m.
May 25, 2010

- Cicero once said “If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.”

Today's dedication of a garden in the shadow of a library that was dramatically expanded by Diether Haenicke is a tribute to the great loves of the man we honor.

- He clearly shared Cicero's views and would be pleased by both the location of this garden and the fact it was conceived by those on campus who worked so closely with him for so many years to beautify the campus--our landscape services and facilities management staff.

- I'm told that the University's photo files from the Haenicke years include photos of Diether working in the garden at 1201 Short Road. I suspect those are the only photos of a WMU president tending that garden. But Diether clearly loved gardening and recognized in it a deeper connection to the world.

- It's an interesting note that one of his last published works was a review he wrote and published last fall--eight months after his death--in an international poetry publication. Diether reviewed the newly translated book "The Passionate Gardener" by Rudolph Borchardt, who was a German scholar, cultural historian and popular speaker during the first half of the 20th century.

- Diether found much to admire in the cultural history laid out in the book, but it was the deeper philosophy the book displayed that interested Diether most. His description gives us a glimpse of Diether's own feelings about gardening. "The
book," Diether said, "is a philosophical treatise about the garden where human and
nature meet on a personal level, and where a man may find his full humanity in his
encounter with flowers, beauty, creativity, and creation."

  • There's a Greek proverb that says a society grows great when old men plant trees
whose shade they know they shall never sit in.

  I would expand that to say a society grows even greater when it plants trees for
future generations to sit under, and when it plants them in the memory of one whose
existence was consumed by building for a future he might never see.

  Thank you for being here to help us celebrate our own "passionate gardener,"
Diether H. Haenicke.