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## Haworth College of Business 20th Anniversary Celebration

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Haworth College of Business 20th Anniversary Celebration  
Remarks by John M. Dunn  
Feb. 23, 2011

- I'd like to welcome guests from the business community, students, faculty, and staff of the Haworth College of Business and other members of the University community. Thank you all for being here to mark a very special moment in this college and this university's history.
- Some 20 years ago, we named this University's business college in honor of a family that truly has come to symbolize both the entrepreneurial spirit so important to this state and nation AND an intense commitment to higher education. Let me note that decision 20 years ago marked the first time this University named one of its academic colleges. It was a carefully considered and altogether appropriate move.
- As a University, we have been blessed by the fact that the family's strongest ties were to Western Michigan University. Today, we're proud to celebrate those ties and add an additional layer of recognition to this college's namesake. We hope it honors the Haworth patriarch, his family and the company they built. We hope it also inspires our students to always be open to the possibilities for change and innovation. His story makes him a role model, and his story will always be a highlight when we recount the accomplishments of our alumni.
- Gerrard Wendell "G.W." Haworth was a 1937 alumnus of WMU who enjoyed a successful career as a high school teacher before he started a sideline enterprise--literally in his garage. He had some innovative ideas and in 1948

began making special-order wood products as a sideline enterprise. By the time of his death at age 95, the company he began grew to a \$1.4 billion global enterprise that ranks among the 400 largest private companies in the U.S. He was named a WMU Distinguished Alumnus in 1986.

- His innovative ideas were the base of that business success, but the strength of his company came just as much from the values he made his company's cornerstones--respect and kindness for the people he met and a desire to satisfy his customers. I want our students to take inspiration from those qualities as well as his entrepreneurial spirit.

- He became extraordinarily successful as an entrepreneur, but he always maintained his commitment to and love of learning. He recognized the importance of having an educated citizenry. He encouraged continuing education among his employees and made personal and corporate donations to promote higher education. He truly saw education as the key to unlocking human potential.

- In 1989, when this building was being built, the Haworth family and company gave \$5 million that helped us build and equip it. Rather than name the "bricks and mortar" component of the college, and because we knew the family's preference for naming an ongoing, living entity, we named the Haworth College of Business for them and 20 years ago, the college moved into this spectacular facility.

- His son Richard G. Haworth who is here with us today, is a 1964 WMU alumnus and served as a member of the WMU Board of Trustees from 1991 to 2001. He was chair of the board in 1997. Dick Haworth enhanced the family reputation and tradition. The holder of 13 patents, he led the company from a single product line to a world-leading designer, manufacturer and marketer of office furniture and seating. He was named a WMU Distinguished Alumni Award winner in 2004.

- It's our honor today to celebrate this college's namesake and unveil this new acknowledgement of the ties we enjoy.