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State of the City: Mayor Hopewell Introduction

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• Good evening. It's my pleasure to welcome you to the campus of Western Michigan University to hear about the State of the City--our city--from our mayor, Bobby Hopewell.

• Mayor Hopewell was born and raised in this city. He is a graduate of Kalamazoo Central High School, Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Sienna Heights College. Currently, he is pursuing a master's degree in human resource development from Western Michigan University. He has enjoyed a long career in the health care industry, and today serves as the director of hospitality services at Borgess Medical Center. He has spent his career in service to others professionally, as a volunteer and as an elected official.

• It's been my privilege and pleasure to get to know Bobby. He became Kalamazoo's mayor at about the same time I became president of Western Michigan University. As the newer leaders in the area, we were sometimes invited to speak or be part of an event as a duo. I'm thinking back to one memorable instance in which a couple of new Kalamazoo leaders donned 10-gallon cowboy hats to serve as horsemanship judges at the Kalamazoo County Fair. It was our first--and last--invitation to serve in a judicial capacity. It will be some time before I am able to attend a county fair without reflecting on that memorable experience.

• Bobby Hopewell has been Kalamazoo's mayor and its biggest booster for the past four years. I cannot think of a time when he has been too busy to attend a campus
or community event. He accepts invitations to meet with this University's students on a regular basis, and they hold him in high regard. Our new faculty members come to Kalamazoo feeling like they already know the community because they've seen our mayor on Fox News or American Idol. He is a high-energy, high-profile ambassador for our city, and he exudes enthusiasm for this community and its potential.

• I ran into Bobby Hopewell on Sunday and offered him a bit of unsolicited advice about his speech this evening. "Keep it short, Bobby," I said. "That's what everyone tells me." Rest assured, Mayor Hopewell isn't likely to take that advice either.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Mayor Bobby Hopewell.