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Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-9am

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, April 30, 2011

John M. Dunn, President, Presiding

PROCESSIONAL

The Western Brass Ensemble, Deanna Swoboda, Conductor

A TRIBUTE TO PARENTS

RECORDED INTRODUCTION

Prof. Steve Zegree: "Hello Graduates, Friends and Family Members and welcome to Miller Auditorium. My name is Steve Zegree and I am a Professor in the School of Music here at WMU. We begin today's festivities with a song composed by WMU alumnus Johnny Rodgers, and performed by the WMU Gold Company Sextet and Gold Company Band. Johnny wrote this song "The Best of You In Me" as a tribute to his parents, so we hope you enjoy this performance as you might reflect about parents, teachers, and anyone who may have had a role in your being here today. Here is "The Best of You In Me."

"THE BEST OF YOU IN ME"

Composed by Johnny Rodgers

Arranged by Steve Zegree

Performed by the WMU Gold Company Sextet (Recording)

President Dunn: "Good morning, 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 three hundred and first (301st) commencement ceremony.

Will the audience please stand, as able, for the National Anthem, sung by the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia conducted by Keith Kelsey."

(President Dunn steps away from the microphone)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Keith Kelsey, 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, special partners, and children?

Brothers and Sisters? Aunts, Uncles and other Relatives? And, Friends?

We also know that some loved ones may live too far or circumstances preclude their presence today. I am confident, however, that they are proud of your accomplishments and are here in thought.

This day is a very special day for you, our graduates, and it is my privilege and honor to preside at your commencement.

We shall award more than 2600 degrees today.

2,130 of you will receive bachelor's degrees.

490 will receive master's degrees.

And 34 of you will be receiving doctoral degrees.

Besides the honored graduates, another group that deserves recognition is our faculty. They are the heart of this University. Their intellect, creativity and passion for teaching and research inspire each of us. Their faith and confidence in your abilities throughout your college years have built the foundation for your professional future. 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 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. Although many of these fine people are not in attendance, I ask you to recognize them with a round of applause.

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 our partners in shared governance: 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 newly-appointed Trustee Dana Debel from Ann Arbor and Trustee Jim Hettinger of Fennville.

At this time, I would like to recognize those of you who are graduating with honors. Will those with honor cords, 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 our international students and those students who were participants in one of our fine study abroad programs please stand and be recognized.

I now ask Trustee Jim Hettinger 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 Trustee Hettinger to the podium.)

Trustee Hettinger: WMU POINTS OF PRIDE

"Graduates, you and your families should be proud of what you've accomplished. You've successfully completed your degree programs and will leave this auditorium today as WMU alumni. All of us here on the stage share your families' pride and look forward to seeing you succeed as you move on to the next passages in your lives.

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 brag 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 140 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.

All of you graduating today will take your place among a proud group of some 176,000 living WMU alumni worldwide. Some 117,000 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. Of all of Michigan's four-year colleges and universities, WMU has one of, and perhaps, THE largest population of veterans--some 500 of them. 50 veterans are graduating today. 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. The veterans graduating today have been awarded red, white and blue honor cords to signify their service to our country.
- Graduating today are 72 members of the Lee Honors College. That is one of the nation's oldest honors colleges and boasts a student profile as impressive as that of the most elite private colleges in the United States.
- Today's graduates include 44 members of Phi Beta Kappa. That's the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the nation. Fewer than 100 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 Education and Human Development**, please remember that your college is consistently ranked among the top 10 producers of educational personnel in the nation, and that school districts from around the nation come here to recruit our graduates. You'll want to remember a few critical pieces of information.

-First, you are about to become alumni of WMU's oldest college and one that graduated its first class of teachers in 1905.

-Second, when national funding organizations are looking for research assistance in critical education issues such as developing effective school principals and identifying language and literacy problems in young children, they turn to WMU's College of Education and Human Development. Those two topics are the subject of new research grants totaling more than \$5 million awarded to WMU this fall by the U.S. Department of Education.

- 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 three in national competition for 16 of the past 19 years, winning the national championship twice in that time.

-You can also tell people that when the Federal Aviation Authority came looking for new schools that could train air traffic controllers, they added WMU's College of Aviation to the select list of 36 schools nationally that fill that role, and this fall we'll see our first class of prospective air traffic controllers studying on campus.

Such people and programs--our 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.

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--one of our new points of pride. 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 families 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.

For me, today’s ceremony is very special. Like many of you, I began my life as a Bronco in 2007, just four, short years ago. It has been one wild ride for me, as I’m sure it has been for you. Together, we have discovered what an amazing university this is. We have asked questions, done our homework, and we’ve learned a ton! And while I won’t receive a degree today, I will thoroughly enjoy the honor of presenting a diploma to each one of you. So, let’s begin.”

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 Deans)

Provost Greene: "Will Dean David Powell of the College of Aviation, please come forward."

Dean Powell: "Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Aviation please rise.

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 Dean Wheeler and returns to his seat.)

Provost Greene: "Will Dean John Wheeler, College of Education and Human Development, please come forward."

Dean Wheeler: "Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree or a teaching certificate through the College of Education and Human Development please rise.

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."

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 from the College of Education and Human Development come forward as Dr. Gene Freudenburg, Interim Dean of the Graduate College, announces their names.

Trustees Debel and Hettinger and the graduates' advisors will place the hoods on the shoulders of these doctoral graduates." (PAUSE)

(SHORT MUSICAL INTERLUDE AS GRADUATES COME TO STAGE)
(President Dunn and Trustee Hettinger to diploma table and Dean Freudenburg to podium. Dean Freudenburg 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 (first 9) and Trustee Debel (remaining 10) and advisors will place hoods on shoulders of doctoral graduates.

College of Education and Human Development

Trustee Hettinger:

- Margaret Ajayi-Nabors
- Maria Anderson
- Fatma Ayyad
- Jerry Gergsma
- Rosalee Billingslea Rush
- Kymberli Cotton-Flanagan
- Kristin Gillen
- Katherine Homer
- Carmen Jonaitis

Trustee Debel:

Duane Kiley

Tiffany Lee

Sara Norton-Ejnik

Kelley Peatross

Darryl Steele

Janee Steele

Alandra Washington

Patrick Weil

Margaret Wiedenhoeft

Jinhai Zhang

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. Deans Powell and Wheeler will assist President Dunn with the presentation of diplomas.)

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. Deans Powell and Wheeler will assist President Dunn and Trustees with the presentation of diplomas.)

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: “Will Ms. Margean Gladysz, President of the Alumni Association, please come forward. Ms. Gladysz is the Senior Vice President and Regional Director of National Executive Service Corps.

(President Dunn returns to his seat and Ms. Gladysz to the podium)

Ms. Gladysz: REMARKS

(Ms. Gladysz returns to her seat and President Dunn returns to podium.)

President Dunn: “Thank you, Margean.”

CONCLUDING REMARKS

President Dunn:

"We are nearing the end of our ceremony. You might have noticed that our ceremony--our celebration--does not include a commencement speaker. We do that purposefully. We believe the day belongs to you, and the spotlight should shine only on you, our graduates. However, I would be remiss if I did not offer a few final words of reflection.

First, thank you for choosing to study at Western Michigan University. You have shared with us your gifts--your inquisitive minds, your creative perspectives, and your uncanny ability to question principles in a way that has made us reflect, respond and reaffirm. For that, we are deeply appreciative. You have made this a vibrant and intellectually healthy institution in which to study and learn.

Your presence here, in turn, has given us the opportunity to enrich your lives by providing you with a top-notch education at one of the nation's finest public research universities.

During your time here, you have learned much. First and foremost, your education here has equipped you with a thorough knowledge of your chosen area of study--your academic major. You have developed practical skills through internships and other experiences that also equip you for a career and the world of work. I trust, too, that you have had out-of-the classroom experiences that have added immensely to the richness of your personal development. And of course, you have made many friends here who you will cherish throughout your life.

We--the faculty and I--believe that you are ready to lead a productive life--a life that will add immeasurably to the betterment of our society. Through work, you will contribute to our economy and help create opportunities and jobs for others. You will create and nurture families, and in turn, build communities that will enrich and enhance civilization and our democratic way of life.

We'll be watching proudly as you step into the world that awaits you. As you carve out your role in society, there are still many lessons about life that you will confront. Not all days will be pleasant. When those tough days arise, remember Winston Churchill's advice: "If you are going through hell, keep going."

Life is a bit of a roller coaster with lots of ups and downs. The best advice I have for you is Hold on Tight. Strive each day to achieve the kind of balance that allows you to remain true to yourself and your core values. Nothing is more important than being able to sleep at night, realizing that you have conducted yourself with integrity, civility, courtesy, humility and tolerance, as well as respect for and kindness to others.

Maya Angelou, the great poet, reminds us that "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

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 Keith Kelsey and the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia; Professor Deanna Swoboda and

the Western Brass Ensemble; Professor Steve Zegree, director of WMU's Gold Company and 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!

And finally, in the words of Charles Dickens my wish for you is that you "Have a heart that never hardens, a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts."

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 Trustee Hettinger lead to march off stage.)