



Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

WMU President John Dunn

Office of the President

12-17-2011

Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-12:30pm

John M. Dunn

Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn>



Part of the Higher Education Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Dunn, John M., "Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-12:30pm" (2011). *WMU President John Dunn*. 513.

<https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn/513>

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of the President at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in WMU President John Dunn by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, December 17, 2011

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 three hundred and third (303rd) 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 attending 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 enjoy the day and 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?

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

You will join more than **177,000** WMU alumni from all over Michigan and from around the world.

We shall award **1917** degrees today.

Over **1400** of you will receive bachelor's degrees.

422 will receive master's degrees.

And **38** 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 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 would like 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; 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 Trustee Mary Asmonga-Knapp, Trustee Ken Miller and Trustee Larry Tolbert.

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 in one of our fine study abroad programs and all our international students please stand and be recognized.

I now ask Trustee Mary Asmonga-Knapp 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 Asmonga-Knapp to the podium.)

Trustee Asmonga-Knapp: 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.

Today's graduates come from an array of backgrounds and they will go on to diverse post-graduate roles. The stories that brought our graduates here today are tales of personal accomplishment and proud supporting families and friends. I wish I could share hundreds of wonderful stories about all of today's grads, but there isn't time to do them justice. So instead, I'll take this time to relate 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 brag about whenever someone asks about your University.

Let's start with the basics. Graduates--and there are more than 1,900 of you 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 schools designated a research university by the Carnegie Foundation classification that is the nation's gold standard when it comes to defining higher education.

All of you graduating today will now take your place among a proud group of WMU alumni worldwide. More than 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. There are 35 veterans who will graduate today. As we honor them, I think it's important to note that Military Times ranks WMU 33rd on its list of the country's best schools for veterans. That's the highest rating for any Michigan school. We're proud of the service our graduates and their fellow veterans have given our nation and enormously proud that they chose WMU to prepare for their futures. All of our veterans graduating today have been awarded red, white and blue honor cords to signify their service to our country.
- Today we'll award 38 doctoral degrees in 19 different disciplines, putting us well on track to award some 100 doctoral degrees this academic year.

- Graduating today are 35 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 12 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.

- We're an international university with students from more than 90 nations. Many families have traveled from around the globe to be here to help their students celebrate. One particularly large group of today's graduates--42 of them--comes from the Dominican Republic.

- 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 when the Federal Aviation Administration 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 welcomed our first class of prospective air traffic controllers.

- If you're graduating from the **Haworth College of Business**, please remember that your college is among fewer than 5 percent of business schools in the world accredited at both the graduate and undergraduate levels by the American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business. And if you're earning your degree in Haworth's Integrated Supply Management program today, you have special reason to celebrate. Earlier this year, we learned your program earned an industry ranking of 12th in the nation for undergraduate supply management programs.

And let me add here that your college is the academic home to senior Bronco wide receiver Jordan White who has just been named a Consensus All American--the first in Bronco football history and only the sixth in the entire history of the Mid-American Conference. Go Broncos!

- If you're earning a degree today from the **College of Health and Human Services**, you have plenty to boast about as well. I hope when you describe your alma mater you mention your college's five graduate programs that rank among the top-50 such programs in the nation. You also should mention that the college is consistently ranked among the 10 top allied health schools receiving funding from the National Institutes of Health.

We pride ourselves on **being learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged**. Great 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 how incredibly valuable WMU and its graduates are 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 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: “Provost Greene, please 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, 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: "Will Dean Kay Palan of the College of Haworth College of Engineering, please come forward."

Dean Palan: "Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the Haworth College of Business 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 Associate Dean Long and returns to his seat.)

Provost Greene: "Will Associate Dean Richard Long, College of Health and Human Services, please come forward."

Assoc. Dean Long: "Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through College of Health and Human Services 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 Health and Human Services come forward as Dr. Gene Freudenburg, Interim Dean of the Graduate College, announces their names.

Trustees Asmonga-Knapp and Tolbert 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 Asmonga-Knapp 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 Tolbert and advisors will place hoods on shoulders of doctoral graduates.

College of Health and Human Services

Trustee Tolbert:

Carol Beard
Angelique Day
Richard Freedberg
Melissa Villarreal
Brandon Youker

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, Palan and Long [two at one time] will assist President Dunn and Trustees 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, Palan and Long will assist President Dunn and Trustees with the presentation of diplomas.)

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: "Will Mr. Philip Chludzinski [Clue-GIN-ski], President of the Alumni Association, please come forward. Mr. Chludzinski, C.P.A., is a partner in Brink, Key and Chludzinski, P.C."

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

Mr. Chludzinski: REMARKS

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

President Dunn: "Thank you, Phil."

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 yes, even change. For that, we are

deeply appreciative. You have made this a vibrant and intellectually healthy learning environment.

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.

As new graduates, I know you have dreams, aspirations and plans. It is very wise to plan, but keep in mind, not all plans work out. Not all days will be pleasant. When those tough days arise—and they will—remember Winston Churchill's advice: "If you are going through hell, keep going."

Count on a few challenging days ahead. While you will be praised for what you have accomplished, you will also face rejection and disappointment. When this happens, remember the words of Helen Keller who overcame being deaf and blind to lead a productive and inspirational life. She said, "When one door closes, another opens, but often we look so regretfully and long upon the closed door that we fail to see the new one that has opened."

Her words help us remember that success is more than prestige and money. It is about living—every single day—a life of integrity, courtesy, humility and compassion for others—a life that brings you personal satisfaction and pride. As Albert Einstein said, "try not to become a person of success, but a person of value."

We know you have the right stuff, the right ingredients to be a person of great service to our world. Let your conscience and core values guide you. Be tolerant and respectful of others and their opinions. Be kind. 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. Stay connected, stay tuned and stay in touch and remember...it's always a great day to be a Bronco! 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, 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 Trustee Asmonga-Knapp lead to march off stage.)