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# Jack Luderer Retirement Reception

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Jack Luderer Retirement Reception  
John M. Dunn  
March 16, 2012

- Good afternoon and thank you all for being here to celebrate the campus career of one of Western Michigan University's unusually accomplished individuals--Dr. Jack Luderer.

- **(If Hal is late)**

*Dr. Hal Jenson, the founding dean of the School of Medicine was scheduled to be here and make the initial set of remarks. He may still make it. He's racing back from Chicago and an important accreditation meeting with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. I should note that had Jack not announced his decision to retire, he would have been in Chicago today for that meeting. It makes me wonder at the lengths some people will go to get out of a long and high-stakes meeting.*

- You know I've often talked about my pleasure in moving to this community--five years ago now--and discovering an amazing set of resources and infrastructure in place that would make Kalamazoo an ideal city for a medical school. We've talked about a fine research university, great teaching hospitals, a legacy of entrepreneurial development in the life sciences, an enormously generous citizenry and an involved medical community. There is one community asset on that list I have not mentioned a lot, but it--or rather he--has been a critical resource every step along the way as we explored and finally committed to the idea of a new School of Medicine.

- I was delighted to find such a partner who had so much experience with and insight into medical education. As valuable as that experience has been along the journey, I think an even more valuable trait of Jack's is this incredible desire he has and

enthusiasm he brings to the idea of starting something--starting something big and meaningful and something that can have an impact.

- Before he worked on the School of Medicine startup, he had a few other startups under his belt. There was the WMU Research Foundation he helped launch in 2003 and there was the Biosciences Research and Commercialization Center for which he led the charge in 2003 when the state awarded WMU \$10 million to help former Pharmacia scientists turn their great ideas into viable companies. And these are the things he's started just since coming to WMU a dozen years ago. He had a lengthy record of accomplishment at the Upjohn Co. and Pharmacia before that.

- Jack has confessed he loves to start things. He apparently agrees with Plato that "The Beginning is the most important part of the work." But he doesn't just start things--he starts them well and imbues them with life and structure and energy. I think he leaves a piece of Jack Luderer with every vital organization he builds.

- There are people in the room this afternoon who will tell you Jack Luderer will seem like he relishes spending a Sunday evening at Kinkos to ensure a dozen business plans are printed and ready for Monday morning shipment to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. There are others who will recount the 1 a.m. emails they received in which he laid out his latest brainstorm for overcoming a seemingly insurmountable roadblock.

- He doesn't just start things for the thrill of it. He starts things he knows will make a difference. And when he moves on to a new effort he does so only when he knows the latest startup is on a sound footing and under strong leadership. I know I just suggested Jack shares Plato's philosophy about beginnings. The more I think about

it, the more I believe Jack's world view is a bit more like that of baseball great Sparky Anderson, who often said, "Good seasons start with good beginnings."

- We're not sure what Jack's next startup will be, but we're pretty sure he's not done yet, and we're watching with great anticipation. As he leaves WMU, we'd like to make sure he has an opportunity to continue to wear his heart--his creativity--on his sleeve, so we have something to help him remember his most recent successful startup. Jack, this comes with all good wishes for many more beginnings.

(Presentation--This is the first clothing item ever to bear the official new logo of the Western Michigan University School of Medicine.)

Close by inviting Jack to make remarks.