2012 Respecting Differences Diversity Event Opening Remarks

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Good afternoon. My name is John Dunn and I am President of Western Michigan University. It is an honor to welcome all of you to the 14th annual diversity event titled *Respecting Differences 2012: Diversity is More Than Skin Deep.*

For those of you in the audience who are attending for the first time, the sponsors of the Respecting Differences series organize this program primarily for the benefit of their employees, as a component of diversity awareness training. If we, in turn, are able to share the wealth of this experience with the general public – all the better.

Many people worked many hours over the last 12 months to plan the details of this event. Thank you to all the members of the organizing committee who have shared their wisdom and counsel, and who have made certain the program is both helpful and meaningful.

Our sponsors provide a representative for the organizing committee, as well as funding to support this event. Sponsors include

- City of Kalamazoo
- City of Portage
- Kalamazoo County
- Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- Kalamazoo College
- Kalamazoo Human Resources Management Association
- And, I say with pride, Western Michigan University
I want to give a special acknowledgement to (insert Interpreter name) who is signing this presentation for the hearing-impaired.

Thanks to all of you who are taking the time to come here today to stretch your diversity awareness.

A few housekeeping items:

- Please turn your cell phones and pagers to the “silent” mode.
- Your feedback is valuable. Please take time to complete one of the feedback forms. If you were not handed one when you came into the auditorium, you can fill one out in the lobby before you leave.
- After Dr. Watkins’ presentation, we will open the floor to questions. I urge you to remain seated and take part or listen to the dialogue. There will be microphones stationed on both sides of the auditorium.
- If you do need to leave the auditorium and then come back in, please use the aisle nearest you so to minimize distractions to our speaker.
- KHRMA (CAR-ma) members: be sure to pick up your certification credit hour sheets in the lobby after the event.

Today, I am pleased to present our very special guest, Dr. Boyce Watkins. At this point, I’ll let Dr. Watkins speak for himself. It is my pleasure to introduce to you … Dr. Boyce Watkins.

[Leave stage]