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## Distinguished Alumni Award Dinner

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Dr. John M. Dunn  
Distinguished Alumni Award Dinner  
Oct. 6, 2012

- Good evening. I'd like to welcome all of our visitors this evening to one of the signature events of our 89th Homecoming celebration. For alumni in attendance, Welcome home.
- This is truly a celebration of what Western Michigan University is all about-- success. You see it in every member of our University community represented here this evening--from Alumni Association President, Phil Chludzinski (Clu-GIN-ski), to our wonderful M.C. for the evening, Suzanne Geha (JEE hah).
- And most of all, success is embodied by the two alumni we are here to honor this evening.
- My favorite occasions on campus are those that give us the opportunity to celebrate the kind of impact we have as a University--not just on individual lives, significant as that impact is, but on our nation and world. Tonight's honorees exemplify the caliber of that impact. Dr. Jan Huston and C. Wesley Smith are alumni whose personal demeanor and professional accomplishment embody all the qualities we try to inculcate in our students.
- This evening's celebration comes at a time of particular accomplishment and recognition for what our university is accomplishing and the impact it is having. If you've walked around campus today, you've seen dramatic changes--most notably our beautiful new Sangren Hall and the new pedestrian mall at the center of campus. There are changes that go much deeper than bricks and mortar.

- We're well on our way, for instance in establishing, with our community's two world-class teaching hospitals, the Western Michigan University School of Medicine. Next week we'll be breaking ground on a \$68 million renovation of a science research facility that will be that school's home. We expect to welcome our first class of medical students in fall 2014.
- Our International Enrollment has grown by nearly 13% this fall and we now have new groups of students from nations like Iraq, Turkey, Brazil and Indonesia--in addition to some 90 other countries.
- The Lee Honors College is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. It has seen a better –than 60 % increase in enrollment over the past five years with more than 1,600 students enrolled this fall.
- We've just graduated our first class of air-traffic control candidates after being named by the FAA one of only 36 schools in the country that can offer such a credential.
- Our service to the nation's veterans has been recognized for the second consecutive year when WMU was named by Military Times' Edge magazine as one of the nation's select few colleges that are "Best for Vets."
- This past year, we saw the first four-year graduates from our Seita Scholars program for foster success walk across the Miller stage to receive their diplomas. There are now 15 Seita graduates and our program has been recognized by state

and federal lawmakers and with private funding as a program that is leading the way nationally in this important area of making sure everybody counts.

- And we've just been named, for the 22nd year in a row, one of America's top national universities by U.S. News & World Report. More significantly, Washington Monthly just ranked us as one the nation's top-100 universities--only 59 of them public universities. Their criteria were tailor made to what we do well. They based their assessment on how good universities are for their students and how good they are for the nation.

- Broncos on and off campus around the globe are proud of those accomplishments. They are accomplishments we work hard to achieve and accomplishments we work hard to convey.

- You'll hear more about her in a few moments, but I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge one of the people who has worked hardest for decades to burnish our reputation and honor the accomplishments of our alumni. Jamie Jeremy has guided our alumni efforts for 28 years (since 1984) through five presidents. She is going to retire next summer, so this is her last Distinguished Alumni Award ceremony--as a staff member at least. Jamie, "Thank You" doesn't even begin to suffice what we need to say to you. But it's where we will start this evening.

- Congratulations Jan and Wes. Enjoy your evening. We are so proud of you and all that you do to help make it a 'Great day to be a Bronco.'