Van Cooley Memorial Service

John M. Dunn
Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

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• Good afternoon. Thank you for being here and for coming together to collectively remember, celebrate and reflect on the life of Dr. Van E. Cooley—a family member, teacher, friend, colleague, dean, researcher, mentor, role model and community treasure.

• Van Cooley's roles and relationships with those here today may have differed. The impact on the lives he touched, though, has been recounted in recent weeks in ways that are remarkably uniform. The words and phrases used have described a family man of great compassion, a consummate professional, talented researcher and a dedicated educator who reveled not only in his own 38 years of service in the educational arena, but also in the service that is to come from the students now preparing to teach. His role with his students changed over time. Once a mentor, he evolved into a professional colleague. But the depth of his caring remained constant.

• One of his former doctoral students who is now a faculty member at another institution put it well when he recounted how Van had "cussed him out" when he underperformed as a student but closed by saying, "I am still in shock that he won’t be here to tease, cajole, lead, and admonish me as I work to build a career in higher ed."

• Linda, I can only imagine the avalanche of such notes and words of tribute the Cooley family has received over these past difficult weeks. It is our hope that you
will be able to read them in the future in a way that allows the best and most joyful moments to rise to the surface and replace the more recent painful moments.

• My own favorite memories of Van will forever by triggered by simply walking into this beautiful building, the completion of which became the center of Van's professional attention during the final months of his life. He was ecstatic, triumphant over the fact his college and its faculty, staff and students would call Sangren Hall home. He would have loved the party we gave to open the building last month, sadly without him. But he would have loved even more knowing what will be taught for years to come in this building he helped create. What a fitting choice for today's celebration of an educator who will be long remembered.

• Thank you for being here to honor our friend and colleague.