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Louis Zamperini Introduction

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Dr. John M. Dunn
Louis Zamperini Introduction
Bernhard Center Ballroom
Oct. 23, 2012

• Thank you, Dean Andreadis. Good evening. I'd like to add my welcome to all of you here for this very special evening.

• I cannot think of no more fitting combination than the partnership that brings a World War II hero to campus under the sponsorship of our Honors College. The tradition of welcoming veterans into the campus community really began after World War II with the GI Bill.

• Today, Western Michigan University follows in that tradition by welcoming today's veterans to our campus with a host of services and financial aid packages that has made WMU Michigan's university of choice. More veterans attend WMU than any other four-year college or university in the state. Military Times' Edge magazine has identified this university as one of the nation's "Best for Vets" colleges.

• It's a tradition that we will certainly reaffirm this evening as we welcome a veteran who is one of the worlds greatest examples of bravery and perseverance. The story of our guest this evening has been documented in Pulitzer Prize-winning author Laura Hillenbrand’s latest book, "Unbroken: Louis Zamperini’s Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption.

• Despite the psychological and physical torture that Louis endured during his time in a Japanese POW camps, Louis returned to Japan to preach the gospel of
forgiveness to the very guards who had tormented him during the war. Years later Louis was invited to carry the Olympic flame, just outside the town where he had been held captive.

• His experiences gave him what some would perceive as a license to be bitter, but he chose to forgive and find the worth and dignity of the people who mistreated him. What you’re about to see is the 35-minute video about Louis Zamperini produced by CBS Sports for the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan.

….after the video plays

• Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Mr. Louis Zamperini