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25 Year Club

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25 Year Club
Dr. John M. Dunn
11/27/12

- Good evening. Thank you, Dennis, for that kind introduction. It's comforting to know as well that should I falter in my remarks or be suddenly called away, there's a Dunn look-alike standing at the ready to fill in.
- It is my pleasure to be here this evening at an event I always consider one of the fall semester highlights. My message tonight is simple and sincere. Thank you. Thanks to each of you here this evening--for choosing to build your professional life around this great university, and thank you for committing your energy, intellect and passion to making Western Michigan University the vibrant institution it is today.
- And if you are here as the loved one of a 25 Year Club member, you deserve our thanks as well for so many things, but most for being a supportive part of the Western Michigan University family.
- All of you--past inductees and the new members we honor this evening--have built this University. You have built it through your teaching, through the support you have provided in keeping our physical plant sparkling, by keeping our academic enterprise humming, in building our technical assets and by providing top-notch and compassionate service to our students before, during and after their enrollment here.
- You have built this University's physical structure and, more important, its reputation. You have provided the credentials and structure that allow us to stake

our claim as a learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged national research university. In fact, many of you recognized those three traits as the pillars of our strength long ago. Some of you even helped build that language into our strategic plan.

- 1987 was a great year. It's the year, for instance, that Ben & Jerry introduced Cherry Garcia. For this University, 1987 was a spectacular year. It's the hiring year for 72 people who went on to build their careers here. Those 72 make up an enormous group of inductees. Over the past 10 years, we have averaged 46 people inducted into the 25 Year Club each year. This year, we welcome a group of 72 that increases the size of the club by more than 5 percent.

- There are now more than 1,100 faculty and staff members who have earned the right to be part of this august group. More precisely, there are now 1,141 members of the club--447 active employees and 694 retirees.

- It's a wonderful club--no regular meetings except this annual celebration. There are no committees to chair and there are no dues. We think you've already paid your dues in full.

- With 72 of you being inducted this evening, that means we are honoring a combined 1,800 years of service to Western Michigan University, our students and our community. I am particularly struck by the diverse roles you have played and the workplace changes you have adapted to, survived and even embraced. You represent

- Tonight's inductees have served through the terms of five of WMU's eight

presidents--including one who served twice. To say that you have institutional memory is something of an understatement.

- To say that you began your careers at WMU in a different era really understates the case as well. In 1987 when you were hired, Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg was a toddler and Apple's operating system had only made it to 4.0. Whiteout fluid could still be found on desks in most departmental offices, and cell phones--let alone SmartPhones and email--were virtually nonexistent.

- As life on campus changed to adapt to new technology, you adjusted, adapted, embraced and learned to innovate with every new development. But even as that change around the edges occurred, this University's core mission and goals remained the same. You celebrated those goals and rose to every occasion to keep each class of students and their success at the heart of what we do. This University thrived because of your willingness to both change and remain constant to our core.

Please enjoy the rest of your evening. You should revel in this moment and take great pride in your accomplishment. Your work has made our University and our world a better place to be.

Thank you.