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Medallion Reception

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John M. Dunn Remarks  
Nov. 8, 2013

• Good afternoon, Broncos. Thank you for being here. This is truly an event designed to warm the heart of a University president--generous donors, incredibly bright and focused students and doting parents--what's not to love.

• To our donors, thank you for making the Medallion Scholarships possible. You have chosen to provide opportunity for a truly remarkable group of young people. For 27 years, these wonderful scholarships have, with your help, attracted the very brightest students in Michigan and beyond. Since its inception in 1984, more than 500 students, including the 20 new 2013 Medallion Scholars, have won this award.

• To our new Medallion Scholars, let me congratulate you on making a wonderful decision. When you chose Western Michigan University you made the decision to come to a university that offers all the resources of the national research institution it is. You also became a member of a University community committed to ensuring your success. That is what WMU is all about. It is a place where you will be empowered to Grab the Reins and take charge of your future.

• Previous recipients have gone on to accomplish great things, and we expect nothing less from our newest award winners. Just to give you an idea of some of those "great things" previous WMU Medallion Scholars are doing, let me point to an Oct. 15 profile in the Wall Street Journal that explored the profile of 41-year-old John Bursch, a Medallion Scholar who graduated from WMU in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in music and a mathematics minor. John Bursch is now Michigan's Solicitor General. Next month, he will argue his eighth case before the U.S. Supreme Court--an astonishing degree of top-level litigation for any attorney. In fact, his cases represent
more than 6 percent of the cases heard by the Supreme Court over the past three years.

- For the parents here today, let me just say thank you for entrusting your student's next few years to us. You've obviously done a spectacular job over the past 18 years. We hold you in great esteem and pledge to make the next four years everything your students have dreamed of and everything you have worked so hard together to achieve.

- I have the privilege of leading Western Michigan University--a university I have known of and admired all of my professional life. Since becoming a member of the WMU community more than six years ago, my appreciation for the caliber of the institution and the quality of the people who work here has grown exponentially.

- Everywhere I go, I share a few critical pieces of information about this University that I think everyone should know. These days, I find myself often talking about our new medical school, our award-winning faculty and staff, our growing international ties, our new affiliation with the nation's largest law school and the economic development activities we're supporting.

- One of the things I always like to tout is our Lee Honors College, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year and is one of the oldest and most prestigious collegiate honors programs in the nation. I take enormous pleasure in noting that the credentials for our entering honors college class meet or surpass the credentials of students entering the most elite public and private colleges in the nation. And I always note the kind of welcoming and supportive academic environment we have built to make sure our students find success as students and prosper in the future as alumni. We want our students--you--to find success in the very broadest sense of the word. We want you to
find professional success, of course, but we want you to explore, discover and develop all the personal skills as well that will make every part of your lives happy and successful.

• 2013 Medallions, you are part of this year's class. Thank you for giving me a fresh round of statistics to share. Even more important, thank you for entrusting us with your educational goals, personal development dreams and future success. Welcome to WMU, Broncos! We're proud to be your university. Enjoy your years here as a member of our University family.

Thank you.