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25 Year Club

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25 Year Club
Dr. John M. Dunn
12/3/13

- Good evening. Thank you, Dennis, for that kind introduction. It's always comforting to know that when Dennis Simpson is nearby, there's a Dunn look-alike at the ready to fill in.
- It is my pleasure to be here this evening at an event I always consider one of the year's highlights. And this year, we've tried to make it even more festive by adding the element of song. The jury is still out on that one.
- This is a simple, uncomplicated, joyful event with just one goal--to say "Thank You" to each of you here this evening for choosing to build your professional life around this great university. Thank you for committing your energy, intellect and passion to making Western Michigan University the vibrant institution it is today.
- For those of you here with a loved one being honored this evening, I offer a note of thanks as well. It is a note of thanks every bit as heartfelt as the one I offer tonight's honorees. Thank you 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 to keep our physical plant sparkling and by keeping our academic enterprise humming. You've helped us build our technical assets and provided top-notch and compassionate service to our students before, during and after their enrollment here. In recent years, I've seen more and more of you

literally wrap your arms around the students who might need it most--our Seita Scholars, international students far from home and the veterans who populate our classrooms in ever-greater numbers.

- 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. Many of you, in fact recognized those three traits as our strengths before we formally identified them. Some of you even helped build that descriptive language into our strategic plan.
- 1988 was a great year. It's the hiring year for 52 people who went on to build their careers here. Those 52 make up a larger than average group of inductees. Over the past 10 years, we have averaged 48 people inducted into the 25 Year Club each year.
- There are now nearly 1,200 faculty and staff members who have earned the right to be part of this august group. More precisely, there are now 1,176 members of the club--468 active employees and 708 retirees.
- It's a wonderful club--no regular meetings except this annual celebration. There are no committees to chair, no reports to write and no follow-up tasks to undertake. And, of course, you have long since paid your dues in full, so your membership is guaranteed.
- With 52 of you being inducted this evening, that means we are honoring a combined 1,300 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.

- Tonight's inductees are on their fourth president--including one who served twice. That means you've gotten to know half of this University's eight presidents. To say that you have institutional memory is something of an understatement.

- You began your careers at WMU in a dramatically different era. Those of you who commute any distance were doing so with gas that cost \$.91 per gallon. A few of you who are true news junkies may have picked up back then on the first warning to Congress about global warming. It came from a NASA scientist. Your work and your home entertainment were made easier in 1988 by our growing access to the Internet--until that first major computer virus came along that year.

- Every year since then, you have adjusted, adapted, embraced and learned to innovate with every new development. But 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.

We celebrate your dedication and recognize you for your talent and long service to WMU. The success of any great university is directly related to faculty and staff who are focused, passionate and proud of their contributions to the University and its students. We salute them and your many years of service.

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.