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Stryker Cup of Joe Community Leader Talk

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Opening (title slide)

Good afternoon. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak here today. I am honored to be here, and that honor is certainly heightened because I am mindful of the deep and strong connections between Stryker Corp. and Western Michigan University. Those connections, of course, have been in the spotlight lately, and I'll spend a bit of my time talking about those developments.

The University

• One of the first things I always like to do is share just the basics about Western Michigan University. I know you are all area residents and some of you are alumni of our wonderful University, but I also know how fast time flies and how easy it is to lose track of new information--to lose track of change and its implications.

• (Slide #2) As an institution, Western Michigan University is best described as learner centered, discovery driven and globally engaged. Those are the three tenets of our strategic plan. Nearly all that we do falls under one of those three qualities.

• (Slide #3) And I always like to share the basic stats:
  • We have nearly 24,000 students
    - 19,000 undergrads
    - 5,000 graduate students
  • We're one of just 207 research universities in the United States--and one of only five in Michigan--according to the Carnegie Foundation rating system, the gold standard in higher education.
• We offer more than 250 degree programs. 100 of those are at the graduate level, including 30 that lead to a doctoral degree.

And we're internationally known in an enormous range of disciplines--from graph theory and supply chain management to aviation, jazz performance, evaluation and medieval studies. Here's a good example. Each spring, we host more than 3,000 of the world's leading experts on the Middle Ages. They'll come from London, Rome, Tokyo and Melbourne and from other places around the globe where the name Kalamazoo means just one thing--WMU's annual International Congress on Medieval Studies.

• Members of the WMU community have been honored in recent years with such diverse awards as the National Book Award, a MacArthur Foundation 'Genius' Grant and several Grammy awards. And our programs have, in some cases, served as foundations internationally for such disciplines as blind rehabilitation and speech pathology.

• (Slide 4) That international reputation has made WMU a desirable education destination for students from around the world. This fall, we have 1,854 international students from 100 nations.

Our community connection
• This community has been home to an amazing institution for years, but this year has been one unlike any other in our history. Our constant is our connection to this community. Here are two images that have great meaning to me and, I think, are symbolic of Western Michigan University's relationship with the Kalamazoo. (Slide 5)

These are two similar images representing a time span of 110 years. The image on top is the oldest image we have of East Hall--just after it was opened in 1904. The image on
the bottom is what East Hall will look like at this time next year when we are through renovating the building that is the birthplace of WMU.

Though strikingly similar, the images represent commitment to core principals. But it is commitment infused with a staggering amount of change. Change is what we as a University and we as a community are all about.

In 1903, (Slide 6) members of the business community came together and mounted a campaign to convince the Legislature to locate a college for teachers--a Normal School--here in Kalamazoo. The group organized, fundraised and committed a 20-acre site atop Prospect Hill as a location for the new school. They also committed funding to build this building--East Hall--as the first home to the new school.

Those business leaders made that effort because they wanted, in their beloved city, an institution that could be a change agent, an institution that would be good for business as an economic development asset, and a school that could showcase Kalamazoo's commitment to education.

The group of business leaders evolved into the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce. The school they worked so hard to establish became Western Michigan University. Ever since then, this community and its University have been allied to bring about change, economic development and world-class educational commitment.

These two building images represent that timeless alliance. On the outside, we're still the same--a college town and its University. But on the inside, there's been 110 years of change and growth. And you'll be heartened to know that the image on the bottom represents what East Hall will look like next year at this time when it returns to service and an active role in the daily life of WMU.

A Year of Change
Change, growth and commitment--those are the constants. I'd like to review a year full of change that has left Western Michigan University a fundamentally changed institution as a result of initiatives that have come to fruition over the past year.

One of those changes, of course, is the one that ties the Stryker name to the University. A few weeks ago, several of the members of the inaugural class of the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine were having dinner in a downtown Kalamazoo restaurant. I can imagine it was a lively group, and the young people attracted some attention. They struck up a conversation with their waitperson, who asked them what brought them to town. Their reply was a simple one. "We're students at the new medical school," they said. At that point, the startled young people--the students--were treated to an ovation by the rest of the patrons in the restaurant. It was a marvelous moment because everyone in that restaurant "got it."

That moment is reflective of what this community, this University and all of us have accomplished together.

• (Slide 7) The past year has seen us move from a comprehensive research university to one of only 90 universities in the nation with both a medical school and a law school under its aegis and the opportunity to offer legal and medical education to its students now and for many years to come. The Western Michigan University name is now firmly attached to the Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine as well as the Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Those affiliations have come with new physical resources in our community and new linkages in four other communities--one of them in Florida.

• The addition of a medical school has taken us from being a respected national research university, to one that also attracts, as it has in the past four weeks, visits by such luminaries as the head of the National Institutes of Health, a director from the Food and
Drug Administration, and the chair of the board of directors for the Association of American Medical Colleges.

In this era of state budget difficulties and cuts to higher education appropriations, how were we able to add graduate professional education to our offerings? We did it by tapping the private sector and moving to the unusual model of private professional schools within a public university. For the medical school, of course, that meant securing the incredibly generous support of individuals and corporations whose roots are with the names that are synonymous with innovative life sciences--Stryker and Upjohn. We will always be extraordinarily grateful for that support.

For the law school we have formally affiliated with a private school that has a similar commitment to the same basic educational values we hold. We are now able to offer the two-signature professional graduate programs--law and medicine--that are characteristic of great national universities.

**Stryker School of Medicine**

- *(Slide 8)* I suspect many of you were among the nearly 2,500 people who took part in the grand opening of the WMU Stryker School of Medicine a few weeks ago, but in case you weren't, I'll happily share a few images and pertinent facts about this initiative that was seven years in the making. It was late 2007 when, as a community, we talked about the possibility of a medical school in purely speculative terms. It seems like a century ago, but today, just seven years later, we have a medical school that Dean Jenson happily points out has the best name for any medical school in the nation.

- *(Slide 9)* This partnership involving Borgess Health, Bronson Healthcare, WMU and the entire community was launched this fall with 54 students from 14 states who earned their undergrad degrees at 35 colleges and universities around the country. Its
curriculum is based on team-based medical care--literally preparing doctors for the way they'll work in the 21st century.

• And the new medical school is based on innovation. It is named for Dr. Stryker, (Slide 10) and the school is at home on the W.E. Upjohn M.D. Campus that bears the names of the person who launched Kalamazoo's involvement in the pharmaceutical industry.

(Slide 11) Their innovative spirit is celebrated and inculcated into the medical school, informing the curriculum that was developed and influencing the building renovated around that curriculum. Innovation, research, discovery and new economic development tools are all part of the future here.

As a community, we'll benefit by having top-notch medical care opportunities, a pipeline of young physicians eager to start their careers nearby and the likelihood of a plethora of spinoff firms, as the discovery focus of the medical school takes off and leads to the commercialization of new products.

Cooley Law School
Our second monumental change in 2014 (Slide 12) was completion of a formal affiliation that created the Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School--with campuses in Lansing, Auburn Hills, Grand Rapids and Tampa Bay.

The affiliation grew out of a decade-long relationship with the Lansing-based law school that is the nation's largest and most diverse law school. We share a common mission and vision with Cooley--both WMU and Cooley are committed to access, diversity and adding value to the lives of the students we serve.

(Slide 13) The formal affiliation is only two months old at this point, but we're already on a path that will bring the beginnings of legal education to Kalamazoo and
dramatically expand opportunities for students through such programs as a 3+3 initiative that will allow students to shave a year off earning both a bachelor's and law degree. We're just beginning to explore some additional benefits of joining legal education and the assets of a research university. Look for new developments and joint programs in areas like accountancy, intellectual property, the foster care arena and health care.

**Transformative opportunity in Kalamazoo**

- I hope you noticed that there's a continuous theme running through this narrative. It's a theme of change not just for the sake of change, but change that enhances opportunity, improves access to higher education and transforms lives and communities.

- One of the things I was invited here to talk about is my personal philosophy and what drew me here to Kalamazoo and WMU. The attraction and the qualities that drew me here are those I just laid out—the ability to enhance opportunity, improve access to higher education and transform lives. The belief that higher education can do that and that some places do it better than others. The opportunity to lead a university that uses access and opportunity to change lives has proven a great privilege—even more than I had hoped for.

- My roots were in a tiny Illinois town--Pinckneyville. It wasn't quite as small as Athens, Michigan, where Dr. Stryker grew up, but even at five times that size (Athens 1,024; Pinckneyville, 5,464), it was not conducive to the kind of personal growth and exploration that higher education can produce.

- My own life was literally **transformed** by the opportunity to study at a large public university. For the first time in my life, I had the opportunity to live, study and work with people from around the world. That time and opportunity set the direction for my
life's work. It left me permanently committed to the idea that access to education and a diverse student body are the greatest gifts we can give to young people.

The importance of such opportunity and access is slowly emerging as a prime consideration in how we evaluate quality in higher education. National assessments of quality in higher education are changing to recognize what institutions like Western Michigan University do to add value to individual lives--and our nation.

My favorite assessment, for example, comes from Washington Monthly magazine, which assesses universities on the good they are doing for students and the nation when it comes to producing Ph.Ds. and new knowledge, encouraging service, and adding value and success to the lives of individual students. They get it. Value-added quality and commitment to the larger community have long been our hallmarks from the beginning. This is the second year WMU has appeared on Washington Monthly's list of top-100 national universities and its second appearance in the magazine's more recent "best bang for the buck" category. They got it right. We're a value-added institution. We're an opportunity university. We roll up our sleeves, and we get the job done here.

So much more to tell...

Access and opportunity are and will continue to be at the heart of what we do as a University. It has been built into our recruitment at the WMU Stryker School of Medicine, and it is at the heart of our affiliation with WMU Cooley Law School.

If you look closely, you'll find those qualities are features for so many other initiatives we've undertaken. (Slide 13):

• Our growing interdisciplinary research initiatives in areas that range from transportation and manufacturing technology to developing best practices to keep high risk students on the path to a degree
• Our training and advocacy work for families dealing with autism--just funded with $4 million from the Legislature, and
• Our Seita Scholars program that has become the nation's most comprehensive program for offering higher education opportunity to youth who have aged out of foster care.

All of these items and the ones I described earlier have a profound impact on the lives of everyone in our community--offering each of us social, cultural and economic opportunities to experience and take advantage of change. These are the kinds of changes and opportunities those Kalamazoo business leaders had in mind back in 1903. Together, this University and this community have lived up to their vision.

**Tools from a personal belief system**

Again, I'm trying to be mindful of the topic I was asked to explore in my remarks. I do believe education is a change agent. That conviction has been a guiding principle of my career. *(Slide 15)* Let me also briefly outline some of my beliefs about how we best take advantage of the opportunity for change. I share these tools and beliefs with you because they are personally meaningful, have served me well and, I think, have given me the power to help create change.

1) I've already tried to act on one of those beliefs in today's remarks, when I acknowledged those who have made our successes possible. We do not achieve success alone. For every triumph we celebrate, there are people around us who helped make it possible. The bigger the achievement, the more people helped make it happen. Those people need to be acknowledged, thanked, honored and praised. Expanding on that a bit further, I would tell you that success is almost always the product of teamwork, and every member of an organization plays a role that is critical to the success of that organization. That's been a central tenet in every leadership opportunity I've enjoyed.
2) Here's another personal operating principle. I believe in the power and meaning of words. Some people believe, as Lily Tomlin once said, that we developed language because of our deep inner need to complain. I don't believe that. I believe words have meaning, and good word choices can build bridges between people and between points of view. Words poorly chosen can erect barriers. They can cause immediate pain and lasting resentment.

Words well chosen can have a wonderful healing affect as well. (Tell the "That'll happen" story).

Those two well-chosen words turned my horror and fear at that moment to the realization that mistakes happen and I would get past this one--even if it was a humdinger. I've remembered that moment of extreme kindness for a lifetime. Those words had power I could not have imagined.

My belief in the importance of choosing words carefully developed quickly when, as a young man, I worked with people with developmental disabilities. I learned very quickly the importance of being clear and using words that have a specific meaning, words that will not be misunderstood.

3) And finally, my core beliefs include the conviction that we are happiest and most successful when we are serving others. We have been given so much and we have so much that we can give back. Albert Schweitzer, when reflecting on the future, once commented that the only truly happy and productive people in the world would be those who learn to give. That's a discovery that many of you have already made.

We do not achieve success alone. Words have power and meaning. We need to serve others. These are simple, personal beliefs that are part of my philosophy for living. Because I think about them often and have articulated them so many times, they give me
a wonderful platform to start from when someone says, "Tell me why this is important" or "Tell my how you think we should handle that." There is, quite simply, incredible value in thinking about what you believe and putting your beliefs into words and, of course, putting your beliefs into action.

In closing, I'd like to invite you to campus. This weekend is Homecoming 2014 and Family Weekend. I can think of no better population to call WMU "home" and be considered part of the family than this group of people who support and celebrate the WMU/community connection on a daily basis. There's a football game, two hockey games, volleyball and men's soccer, a 5K run, tailgate celebrations and a pancake breakfast.

I want to be respectful of your time constraints and provide the opportunity for any questions you may have.

Thank you for your attention and interest. I'd like to open the floor to any questions.

(Slide 16)