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Cesar Chavez Scholarship Dinner Welcome

John M. Dunn
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• Good evening. I'm John M. Dunn, president of Western Michigan University. It is my distinct pleasure to welcome all of you here this evening. This is the ninth time WMU has been privileged to act as host to the Cesar E. Chavez Scholarship Fundraising Dinner.

• This annual dinner, sponsored by the Southwest Michigan Cesar E. Chavez Committee, has three basic goals. First, it raises funds for the committee's need-based scholarship, which is available to Michigan college or college-bound students living in Allegan, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties.

• Second, it brings the Southwest Michigan community together to celebrate the life and work of Cesar Chavez and to do so around Cesar Chavez Day—the anniversary of his March 31 birth. Each year when we do this, we also celebrate the determination Cesar Chavez always showed with his achievements and signature perseverance and commitment to getting things done. As part of that celebration, this dinner is also a time to recognize people in the community who have made outstanding contributions. I am so pleased to note all three of this year's honorees are, or have been, deeply committed to helping young people attain their educational goals.

• And finally, this annual dinner is a chance to hear the views of a keynote speaker who has made a life's work of the kind determination and joyful spirit that Cesar Chavez practiced. Filling that role this evening will be JoAnn Chávez, vice president and chief tax officer at DTE Energy. JoAnn, we're so pleased you are here.
• I mentioned that this dinner serves as a scholarship fundraiser. This year, there are six students who have won the Chavez Scholarship. I want to congratulate all six--and extend a special Bronco welcome to five of the six who have chosen to attend Western Michigan University. A sixth is headed a bit further north for college--but Chavez, let's talk about that decision. I have warm Bronco welcomes to spare in case you change your mind. (Chavez Chavez of Battle Creek is headed for Michigan State.)

• As always, I'm so proud to be part of a community and region that is determined to nurture and support the goals our young people have set. Please join me in a round of applause for the work done by the Southwest Michigan Cesar E. Chavez Committee in partnership with WMU's Division of Multicultural Affairs. They continue to do a wonderful job of keeping Chavez's vision and hopes for the future alive.

• Enjoy the evening.

(3 minutes)