12-1-2015

25-Year Club

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• Good evening. Thank you, Sue, for that kind introduction. It is my pleasure to be here this evening at an event that honors a significant part of the Western Michigan University success story--you.

• This is a simple, uncomplicated, joyful event with just one goal--to say "Thank You" to each of you being honored 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.

• Welcome to each of tonight's honorees to the WMU 25-year Club. It's a wonderful club, with no regular meetings except this annual celebration. Your dues have been paid--perhaps many times over--by you. All we ask is that you enjoy being honored this evening and that you enjoy the company of your fellow club members.

• Many of this evening's attendees are here with a loved one being honored. I offer you a special note of thanks to you as well. Thank you for being a supportive part of the Western Michigan University family and for making tonight's celebration possible for those we are honoring.

• As Sue Stapleton just told you, 1990 was a great year. It was the hiring year for 48 people who went on to build their careers here. Once inducted, those 48 will be among 481 active employees and 745 retired employees, bringing the 25-Year Club total membership to 1,226.
• Before we acknowledge those 48 new members, we have an opportunity this evening to honor someone who did not stop at 25 years--or 30, or even 40 years. This year, Dr. Rudolph Siebert [SEE-bert] marked his 50th anniversary as a WMU faculty member. I'd like to ask him to come to the podium so we can recognize him with something that is a symbol of his extraordinary service.

• Since 1965, Rudolph Siebert has been an important part of the Department of Comparative Religion--the oldest comparative religion program in the state of Michigan and the only department with a graduate program in comparative religion. Such a department requires faculty members who have earned international reputations. Dr. Seibert''s focus is the critical theory of religion. He directs a Center for Humanistic Future Studies here at WMU, and since 1975, he has been director of the international course on the "Future of Religion" in the Inter-University Center for Post-Graduate Studies in Croatia. Since 1999, he has directed an international course on "Religion and Civil Society" in Yalta, Crimea, and Ukraine. He has mentored both graduate and undergraduate students, ensuring a legacy of scholarship and academic excellence that will continue well into the future.

• Rudolph Siebert is the third person I've had the privilege of honoring for 50 years of service. I know we have here the beginnings of the WMU 50-Year Club. This is, I always like to say, a great day to be a Bronco. We have a token to remind Dr. Siebert of that fact. (Present crystal Bronco). Ladies and gentlemen please join me in a round of applause for a truly great Bronco.

• All of you--Rudolph Siebert, past inductees and the new members being honored this evening--have built this University. You have built this institution'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.

- 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 your years of service and the opportunity to be your colleagues.

Thank you.