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Betty Kocher Luncheon
Dr. John M. Dunn
Dec. 8, 2015

- Good afternoon, and thank you all for being here to celebrate the extraordinary service of Betty Kocher to this university over a 42-year period.
- A number of people have referenced the presidential searches--four of them--that she has been involved in. Let me give you a bit different perspective. I'm one of those people who met Betty first during an airport interview. (Maybe recount the story about you being the last candidate in a long series of prospects.) We hit it off and it seems to have worked out well. First impressions were good--and accurate. It was apparent to me right away that Betty was one of those individuals who everyone counts on and always delivers.
- For the past eight-plus years, Betty has had a seat at the table of this University's Senior Leadership Team. Her role is part board representation and part institutional memory--with a dose of old-school grace and humor thrown in to carry us through.
- And of course her role on board meeting days like this one are legend. I have never in my years in higher education encountered a board secretary held in the kind of esteem in which our current and emeriti board members hold her. She is their friend, confidant, dinner and lunch companion and window into this University. She remains all of that to them long after their terms have ended. It is her genuine interest and care we all appreciate.
- But I don't think anyone has truly seen Betty in action unless they've had the pleasure of spending a commencement Saturday with her and sometimes the rest of the Kocher family. She is the first one on site at 7:30 a.m. and one of the last to leave 12 hours later after four ceremonies. She spends the day managing guest members of the platform party and helping their families find their seating. She makes sure everyone on the stage has their script, their regalia and a water bottle to fortify them against the heat of the stage lights. While we're on the stage, she manages the switch from a backstage buffet breakfast to lunch and then dinner. And through it all, we are frequently graced with drop-in visits from Bruce Kocher, her husband and a retired KVCC vice president, and sometimes her visiting grandchildren. Those long but celebratory Saturdays will always be my strongest memories of Betty.

- Through all these years (combined years of service to higher ed of 88 years), Betty and Bruce have been a higher ed team who happened to be very good at multi-tasking and managed to raise two accomplished sons--Kalamazoo Realtor Tom Kocher and International Aid executive Michael Kocher. Michael just happens to live in one of the world's most beautiful cities with his wife, Soraya and the Kocher grandchildren Ryan and Nate.

- I say all that to note that in the future, it is likely that our communication with Betty and Bruce may have more of a long-distance quality about it, as they take advantage of the opportunities that come with having family in exotic locales.

- Betty, we will miss you in the roles we've come to know as yours. I'd like to note that the late Steve Jobs once said:

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do."

You clearly have loved your years at WMU, and we have all been the beneficiaries of that love and that dedicated work. Thank you.