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Celebration of Life of Charles Warfield

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John M. Dunn
Welcome
Celebration of Life of Charles Warfield
June 17, 2016 in Miller Auditorium

- Good evening, campus and community members, alumni, distinguished guests and friends. Welcome to Western Michigan University and to the campus that was Charles Warfield's home as an undergraduate, graduate student and faculty member. This was his academic home for nearly 60 years. Tonight's program is a celebration of that life he shared with us for all those years. And, while we gather with sadness for his absence, the word "celebration" is exactly the right one to use. I know he would have loved seeing you all here in his familiar surroundings this evening. If there was one thing Charles Warfield loved, it was bringing people together.

As I look out at this gathering, it is a testament to the power of Charles Warfield to do just that. My own introduction and first few meetings with Charles nine years ago left me convinced that Charles was just about the most gracious civic leader one could envision. He always kept an eye out for me as I was getting to know the community, making sure I was comfortable, informed and meeting people across the spectrum. Early on, he made sure I had the opportunity sit down and talk with the leadership of the NAACP--an opportunity I was grateful to have.

Chuck Warfield also had a very nice sense of humor. He earned his doctoral degree at the University of Oregon, which meant he was a "Duck". Chuck knew that I had spent 20 years at Oregon State University, which meant I'm a "Beaver". Given that the Ducks and Beavers are arch rivals, we used to poke one another about the rivalry. Long story short – guess what appeared in the President's pool last Sunday – a Duck. I laughed and thought "yep" Chuck you have and will continue to send signs and signals that will allow all of us to remember you and your positive impact on our lives.

WMU played a critical part in Charles Warfield's life. He was part of a remarkable group of young men who met on our campus and went on to accomplish great things. You'll hear more about that part of his life from speakers who know the stories far better than I. But I can assure you at every step along the remarkable Warfield career path, the friendships and connections that he began as a very young man on this campus stayed with him and were reflected in his every decision.

He was a campus treasure who enjoyed a lifetime partnership with someone who was another campus treasure and lifelong Bronco, his wife, Dr. Martha Warfield. Martha, thank you for reaching out to us all and allowing us to share with you and your family just how important a part of this community Chuck was. He was part of our family, and our family will always regard him with honor and tremendous affection.

Thank you.