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## 50th Anniversary Celebration of Behavior Analysis at WMU

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Bullet points  
50th Anniversary Celebration of Behavior Analysis at WMU  
President John M. Dunn  
Aug. 26, 2016

- Thank you all so much for being here today to celebrate what has long been one of Western Michigan University's premier academic strengths--the study of, research into and application of behavior analysis. For 50 years now, this has been a signature program that has paid its dues by making lives better in our community, our state, our nation and the world.
- There are nearly 200 of us here today to celebrate, but the lives impacted by what began here I suspect is in the tens of thousands--or more.
- What started in 1966 has become recognized as the leading behavior analysis center for academic training and research. And this department was a key player, or perhaps *the* key player in launching your discipline's international professional association--the Association of Behavior Analysis International. I understand that august group was initially housed right here on campus in Wood Hall.
- A bit of digging into campus history makes it very clear that although we've identified 1966 as the beginning of this work, it was a relatively short time before Western Michigan University was regarded as one of the leading locations in the world for behavior analysis scholarship and practice.
- In 1972--just six short years later--a major feature ran in *Psychology Today*, called "Shapers at Work." It focused on professionals who "take Skinnerian principles out of the pigeon cage and put them into practice, out where people live and work and play and suffer and learn." The piece went on to say that "The University of Kansas and Western

Michigan University in Kalamazoo now lead the field." And that same piece identified our University's pioneers in the discipline: Drs. Paul Fuller, Robert Hawkins, Fred Keller, Richard Malott, Jack Michael and Roger Ulrich. (ask them to stand and be recognized if they are in attendance?)

- That same campus history I just mentioned is filled with evidence of the rich academic focus WMU brought to the discipline in those early years. One can find:

- Details on a Kalamazoo publishing company established by Richard Malott called Behaviordelia as well as copies of a regular newsletter called "Notes from a Radical Behaviorist (also by Malott.);

- Information about the 40 WMU faculty members and graduate students who traveled to Chicago for the very first convention in 1975 of the Midwestern Association of Behavior Analysis.

- News stories announcing the launch in 1974 of a Ph.D. degree program in applied behavior analysis, with the first of its many graduates earning his degree in 1977;

- Accounts of a visit to campus by B.F. Skinner, himself, in 1981.

- For 50 years, the Department of Psychology has been ground zero for reaching out to the community that is its home and achieving and documenting results that have laid the groundwork for professional colleagues worldwide.

- It has been my privilege over the past few years to celebrate with you, as your expertise has been heralded and your knowledge has been applied to the issues of autism,

traditional mental health concerns, health psychology, safety, performance management and applied animal learning.

- "Celebrate" is exactly the right word here. And we're nowhere near done celebrating yet. All of those years of work and reputation building led to funding from the State of Michigan for our Autism Center for Excellence. Next month we'll shine a spotlight on that work with the fourth annual Michigan Autism Conference and the opening of our Kalamazoo Autism Center. And of course, we're still celebrating Alan Poling's International Humanitarian Award, which he received early this month at the American Psychological Association's annual convention in Denver.
- You all make us very proud and eager to see what the next 50 years of behavior analysis brings. Thank you for your work, commitment and the absolute joy you bring to all that you do. It's a privilege to be celebrating here with you today.

Thank you.