4-29-2017

Western Michigan University Commencement Exercises-9am

John M. Dunn
Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn

Part of the Higher Education Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn/828

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of the President at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in WMU President John Dunn by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Saturday, April 29, 2017

John M. Dunn, President, Presiding

PROCSSIONAL
Western Brass Ensemble
Steve Wolfinbarger, Conductor

President Dunn: “Good morning, I am John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the entire University community I want to welcome you to our three hundred and nineteenth (319th) commencement ceremony.

Will the audience please stand, as able, for the National Anthem, sung by the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia conducted by Ethan Fegan [FAY-gun].”

(President steps away from the microphone)

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Ethan Fegan, Conductor
WELCOMING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

President Dunn:

“Commencement is a very special occasion - a time for celebration, a time for reflection, a time for closure, and a time for new beginnings.

Graduates, I applaud and thank you for meeting the standards of this great university. Your presence today allows us to recognize you and, equally important, to permit expressions of happiness, pride, and love which are so evident in the faces of those gathered here to observe you graduate.

Graduates, this is YOUR day! You have only two responsibilities: 1) to enjoy the day and allow us to honor you and; 2) to reflect and say thanks to those--- and you know best who they are--- who have contributed to your academic, professional and personal development.

The latter first---the THANKS part. Graduates, please stand as able and face the audience and remain standing. Would the Moms and Dads in the audience please stand? How about the Grandparents? And Great Grandparents? Spouses, special partners, and children? Brothers and Sisters? Aunts, Uncles and other Relatives? And, Friends?

We also realize that there are loved ones who cannot be with us today but who we remember now and thank for their support and affection.

This day is a very special day for you, our graduates, and it is my privilege and honor to preside at your commencement.

You will join alumni from all over Michigan and from around the world.

During the 4 ceremonies today, we will award more than 2,600 degrees.
2,028 of you will receive bachelor's degrees. 566 will receive master's degrees, and 34 of you will be receiving the University's most advanced degree—the doctoral degree.

Please join me as we turn our attention to our faculty. They are the very heart of this University. Their intellect, creativity and passion for teaching, scholarship and research inspire each of us. Their faith and confidence in your abilities throughout your college years have built the foundation for your professional future. Therefore, it is to our faculty that we express special appreciation today. I ask the faculty members to stand. Please join me in applauding them for the fine education they have provided to you!

Besides your professors, there have been many, many others on this campus who have protected, encouraged, facilitated, and brightened the academic journey that has led you to this moment of celebration. They are the cooks, the custodians, office personnel, medical staff, police officers, landscape crews...the list goes on and on. They give their all, every day, to make your educational experience at WMU what you deserve: the BEST. Although many of these dedicated people are not in attendance, I would like to recognize them with a round of applause.

Let me now turn to my other colleagues on the stage and I ask each of them to rise as I mention them by category.

They are the executive officers, deans and chairs of the University.

We also welcome representatives of the Faculty Senate; the University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors; the Administrative Professional Association; the Professional Support Staff Organization; and the Alumni Association.

Our University is governed by an autonomous Board of Trustees, appointed by the Governor of the State of Michigan. The trustees are private citizens who serve the University without remuneration and who set policy direction for the campus. The University is very grateful to these men and women. Representing the Board of Trustees at this ceremony are Chair Jeffrey
Rinvelt, Vice Chair James Bolger and Trustees William Johnston, Ronald Kitchens, Kenneth Miller and Shani Penn.

In the audience this morning are two very special guests. Please join me in offering a warm Bronco welcome to Western Michigan University’s ninth president, President-elect Edward B. Montgomery, and his lovely wife Kari. Will you both please stand? The will have the pleasure of watching their son E.J. walk across the stage today. Pay close attention, Dr. Montgomery. Soon you’ll stand on this very stage and experience the same pride and gratitude I feel today as I present the diploma to each Bronco graduate.

At this time, I would like to recognize those of you who are graduating with honors. Will those with honor cords, honorary society members, and those with recognition cords please rise so that we can acknowledge the special distinctions you have earned.

A very important group to acknowledge are our veterans. There are 62 veterans who will graduate today. We're so proud of the service these graduates and their fellow veterans have given our nation and enormously proud that they chose WMU to prepare for their futures. May I ask all veterans— both students and guests— in attendance to stand? Thank you.

- Graduating today are 201 members of the Lee Honors College. It is one of the nation’s oldest collegiate honors programs and boasts a student profile that is similar or even more impressive than that of students attending the most elite private colleges in the United States.

- Today's graduates include 36 members of Phi Beta Kappa. Phi Beta Kappa is the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the nation. Just 100 public universities in America have been authorized to host a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, and Western Michigan University is one of them.

Western Michigan University is truly an international institution. We enthusiastically welcome students from other lands and we encourage all other students to experience a portion of their learning in one of our many study abroad locations around the globe. Will those students who were
participants in one of our fine study abroad programs and all our international students please stand and be recognized.

INTRODUCTION – Gov. Rick Snyder

“World-class graduates, dedicated faculty, and distinguished guests, at this time I call to the podium a very special guest, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder.

Each year Gov. Snyder carefully selects and speaks at just one or two commencement ceremonies from the roster our Michigan’s outstanding institutions. His first-choice for 2017 was Western Michigan University... of course!.... in particular, this ceremony honoring the graduates of our College of Aviation and the Haworth College of Business.

Gov. Snyder is a native of Battle Creek. After earning a bachelor’s degree, MBA and JD from the University of Michigan, he joined what was then the accounting firm Coopers & Lybrand. Following a successful career as partner with that firm, he joined Gateway as president and COO. He later returned to Michigan as a venture capitalist and co-founded Ann Arbor’s Spark, spearheading an effort to combine higher education and economic development services to support business expansion and entrepreneurial ideas. In 2010, he ran successfully for Michigan’s top leadership role and was sworn into office in 2011.

Please join me welcoming to the podium Michigan’s 48th governor, a CPA and an “Honorary Bronco of the Day”, Governor Rick Snyder.”

(President Dunn to his seat; Gov. Snyder to the podium.)

Gov. Rick Snyder: REMARKS

(President Dunn to the podium)
President Dunn: “Graduates, we are proud of all of you. You have demonstrated the determination and commitment to achieve what we celebrate here today. Many of you held down jobs working long hours while being full- or part-time students. And what is important, you finished, you accomplished your goal.

A great number of you are international students who have studied far away from your home and family for many years. As you journey back to your home countries, you have our best wishes and the hope that you take fond memories of Michigan, Kalamazoo, and your University with you.

Many graduates are non-traditional students with spouses and job obligations and for whom being a student came after family and work. We have great admiration for your achievements.

We hope that the many friendships you have formed here will stand the test of time and that you will include among them associations that you have made with our faculty, staff and your president. For just as we have been an important part of your life, you too have become a part of ours. [PAUSE]

We have now reached the signature moment in today’s ceremony, the conferring of YOUR degree— the degree that you have worked so diligently to earn; the document that is sure to become one of your most important lifetime credentials. So, let us begin.”

CONFERRING OF DEGREES
President Dunn: “Provost Greene, please come forward for the conferring of degrees.”

(Provost joins President Dunn at podium.)

Provost Greene: “Will those receiving a Master’s Degree please rise, as able.

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all the requirements for a Master’s degree as prescribed by the graduate faculty of this University.”

President Dunn: “By the authority of the State of Michigan, vested in the Board of Trustees, I hereby confer upon you the appropriate degrees indicated in your programs with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

Please be seated.”

Provost Greene: “Will Dean David Powell, College of Aviation, please come forward.”

Dean Powell: “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the College of Aviation please rise.

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all requirements for the Bachelor's degree as prescribed by the faculty of this College.
Please be seated.”

(Provost introduces Interim Dean Deshpande and returns to his seat)

Provost Greene:  “Will Interim Dean Satish Deshpande, Haworth College of Business, please come forward.”

Dean Deshpande:  “Will those receiving a Bachelor's degree through the Haworth College of Business please rise.

President Dunn, it is my pleasure to present these candidates who have completed all requirements for the Bachelor's degree as prescribed by the faculty of this College.

Please be seated.”

President Dunn:  “Will those receiving a Bachelor’s degree rise once again please.

By the authority of the State of Michigan, vested in the Board of Trustees, I hereby confer upon you the appropriate degrees indicated in your programs with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.

Please be seated.”

[No Doctoral Degrees awarded in this ceremony]
PRESENTATION OF MASTER'S DIPLOMAS  
(NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Provost Greene: “Will the graduates receiving Master's degrees please come forward to receive their diplomas as Mr. David Little and Ms. Tammi Smith announce their names.”

(SHORT MUSICAL INTERLUDE AS GRADUATES COME TO STAGE)

(Mr. Little and Ms. Smith go to microphone. Dean Powell and Dean Deshpande will assist President Dunn with the presentation of diplomas.)

PRESENTATION OF UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMAS  
(NAMES ANNOUNCED)

Provost Greene: “Will the graduates receiving Bachelor's degrees please come forward to receive their diplomas as their names are announced.”

(SHORT MUSICAL INTERLUDE AS GRADUATES COME TO STAGE)

(Dean Powell and Dean Deshpande will assist President Dunn with the presentation of diplomas.)

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

President Dunn: “Will Jennifer Lentner, president of the WMU Alumni Association, please come forward. Ms. Lentner is Senior Director of Marketing Communications at Stryker Instruments in Kalamazoo, and a proud
graduate of our College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.”

(President returns to his seat and Ms. Lentner to the podium)

Ms. Lentner:

Thank you, President Dunn.  Good Morning.

I am honored to be a part of your commencement ceremony today, and it is with great pride that I officially welcome you as the newest members of the worldwide network of Western Michigan University alumni.

Congratulations!  I am proud of each of you for reaching this important milestone, and I hope you are as well.  I also hope it is some relief that at least for the time being, there is no more homework, no more papers to write and no more final exams!

I can tell you from first-hand experience that the sense of relief on Sunday evening when you realize you don’t have to study for a test lasts for decades!

I loved my experience at Western, and I hope you agree that this is a great place to go to school.  I hope you had some great experiences in and out of the classroom, and made some lifelong friends along the way.

Wherever life may take you, please remain connected with this fantastic University and with your fellow alumni.  A great way to do that is by visiting your new home on campus, Heritage Hall -- WMU's alumni center.  Widely recognized as the birthplace of the university, Heritage Hall offers the perfect backdrop for you to memorialize your first day as an alumna or alumnus of Western Michigan University.  Before you leave today, stop by for a visit with your family and friends to take some photographs.

The purpose of an education at WMU is to learn, to know, and to aspire. Now is the time for you to “aspire”, to do great things for others.  Today,
you become one of over 250,000 Bronco alumni, spread across all 50 states and more than 140 other countries.

Many of those alumni are with us in the audience today, and I’d like to take a moment to recognize them. If you are a graduate of Western Michigan University, would you please stand. [Pause] That is a lot of proud Broncos! How about a round of applause. Thank you - we’re glad you’re here to celebrate with us today.

While our alumni have many backgrounds and vocations, they all share two important things. First, they got their start at this great university. The second is that they are doing important work and making a difference in the world, each and every day. Graduates, you are in good company, and I have no doubt that one day you will find yourself and your successes featured among those of our very accomplished alumni. In fact, we are counting on it.

On behalf of the WMU Alumni Association Board of Directors, it is my honor to wish you the best of success in all of your future endeavors.

We hope you will visit, and visit often. This is a special place, and you will always have a home at Western Michigan University.

Congratulations. Continue to make us proud. And, above all... Go Broncos!!!

(Ms. Lentner returns to her seat and President returns to podium.)

President Dunn: “Thank you, Jennifer.”

CONCLUDING REMARKS

President Dunn:

“We are nearing the end of our commencement and, if you will permit me, I would like to share a few parting words. I promise to follow the counsel
of the great president and orator, Franklin D. Roosevelt – who advised that those giving speeches should “Be sincere, be brief, and be seated.” So here goes.

You are graduating at one of the most challenging times in the history of the world. We see forces and factions around the globe that are working against the peoples of the world-- all of the people. We have incredibly large, and growing, differentials between wealth and poverty. Some go to bed at night hungry and uncertain about where they will spend the next night. Many nations are struggling with sectarian conflict and wars that seem to have no end or reason. Our weather patterns are changing, and we're struggling to meet our responsibility to protect future generations.

That may sound like a dark message for you on a day of joy and accomplishment. I list these seemingly insurmountable challenges however, because I see part of the solution right before my eyes-- seated here in Miller Auditorium. Graduates, you give all of us hope and a reason to know the future will be better.

An odd poem went viral in 2016--a tumultuous year by any standard. "Good Bones" by Maggie Smith likened the world to a dismal house shown by a realtor, who keeps insisting that the home has "good bones."

"This place could be beautiful, right?" the realtor insists "You could make this place beautiful" The short poem struck a chord for reasons every one of us know.

YOU can and will make this "fixer-upper" with good bones, beautiful. In the middle of all this strife, outstanding young people-- you-- are rallying to remind all of us that as a people, we can and must do better. I am proud of you, your commitment to the larger issues of the world and the manner in which you conduct yourselves.

And graduates, your years as part of the Bronco learning community have left you with an approach to the world I hope remains a permanent part of your mantra and daily behavior.
Listen first, question with civility, and make judgments one person at a time, not one ideology or one nation at a time.

Our faculty has done a marvelous job of helping prepare you for the future. As an institution, we require all graduates to be grounded in the arts, social sciences and humanities as well as their chosen field of study. We need engineers and scientists who can embrace the challenges of the world from a broader perspective than technology alone. We also need social scientists and graduates of our professional schools who apply their skills to the problems confronting a technologically advanced marketplace. Graduates, you are those broadly educated professionals ready to embrace and yes, change, the world.

So where do you go from here. I have a few suggestions that I think may help.

First, solving global problems requires teamwork and you—Broncos-- have earned your position on the team! You can be the agent of change in your family, your community, at work and in reaches far beyond. Each small effort makes a difference.

Second, expect resistance. Allow others to disagree with you and remember always to be open and considerate, even when the dialogue is not going your way. Take time to listen, really listen. I sometimes think we would all be better off with bigger ears and smaller mouths. And remember when you are really “heated”, re-read your tweet or email message one more time. Give it a night’s rest, before you hit the send button.

Third, performing acts of kindness will serve you well throughout your life. Great inspirational leaders-- Mother Teresa and Albert Schweitzer, to name only two-- remind us that true happiness can be achieved only through giving. And giving is measured in many ways: by sharing time, your talents, your wealth, and being there to support others emotionally in time of need.

Finally, treat others with respect. Words that are not carefully chosen can hurt others deeply. Think before you speak and when you say something
hurtful – and you are human – you will, remember the power of a sincere “I’m sorry.”

You are Broncos, and Broncos have big hearts, boundless energy and a sense of being both independent and committed to the larger community. We’ll continue to watch your accomplishments with pride and hope for the better future you will build. You are well prepared. You have met the standard of this great university. What more can I say than "Consider it DUNN."

And now, please enjoy the slide presentation prepared for you and remember the good times, the people, places and things from your years here at Western Michigan University.”

(Platform party remains seated and views slide presentation from monitors on the stage)

(Slide Show- Music by Jeremy Siskind)

____________________________________

President Dunn: “In closing, I would like to thank the many people who work very hard to make this commencement ceremony meaningful and memorable for you.

Thank you to Ethan Fegan [FAY-gun] and the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia; Professor Steve Wolfinbarger and the Western Brass Ensemble; and Assistant Professor Jeremy Siskind, pianist for the slide production.

Thanks also to the commencement committee; and the many people who work behind the scenes and contribute so much to our commencement.
And finally, graduates, thank you for all that you have given to us and for all that you will be giving to society in the years to come. Make your mark on this world, fulfill your dreams and always remember those who helped to make this all possible for you!

May you always enjoy happiness, peace, and good health.

At this time the Brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia will present the Alma Mater of Western Michigan University. After their performance, the Alma Mater will be repeated, at which time, all of you are invited to sing. Please rise for the Alma Mater and remain standing until the platform party leaves the stage.”

ALMA MATER
Western, we sing to you Brown and Gold
Western, we bring to you faith untold,
You challenge and inspire,
Your hope is our desire,
We sing to you our Alma Mater, Brown and Gold

RECESSIONAL
Western Brass Ensemble

(President Dunn and Chair Rinvelt lead the procession from the stage.)