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Address to Spring Lake Country Club, delivered on September 21, 1972

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As I was thinking about what to say today, I thought about the Avis Rent-A-Car Company. I believe that we can compare ourselves to Avis of a few years ago: as a college we try harder, and also we don't mind second place; let me explain what I mean by second place.

Most of you here have graduated from a college or you have children who have graduated from some college or university, and you have your loyalties. I'm always listening to arguments between Michigan and Michigan State graduates -- which football team is the better -- Harvard graduates and Yale graduates, Hope graduates and Calvin graduates, and I'm not really bothered by that very much. All we are asking from you is that we would like to be your second favorite college, if you have a first favorite college already, and we think we can make a claim on second place, and then in some respects second place isn't too bad -- at least you have a chance, perhaps, to move into first place sometime.

I am also pleased that you were willing to come and listen. We want to make this area of Michigan aware of Grand Valley -- more aware than it has been in the past. We are pleased with this particular area -- the Spring Lake/Grand Haven area and what it has meant to the development of our institution. As a matter of fact, this is the first of our Awareness luncheons, and that's partially by design. It's because the people here have really pitched in and helped and have probably been more loyal to us than people from any other section of the state. We think that you should know what's going on and what will go on.

First let's look at some national trends. If you've been reading the newspapers lately, you probably have seen that enrollments are levelling off -- going down. And you begin to wonder: "What's going on?" "Is higher education really necessary?" If we look at our institution, we can see that, in the last few years, we have conquered the trend. Last year we grew about 22 to 24% in enrollment; this year we be up, probably another 20%. People say "Why does this happen?" Well, the point of it all is that someone is doing something -- we hope someone is doing something right. But more than that, I think it justifies the fact that the college was established 10 years ago. It shows that this area did need the institution to provide the kind of instruction and training that a state institution can provide. And one of the reasons we have been going counter to the trend is because the need was for that kind of an institution -- it was greater in this area than it was in any other area where colleges were established in other states and have not been thriving quite to the degree that we have. Now the upward curve will end; there is always an end to it; you do reach a saturation point. And we don't expect this continued conquering of the trend. But for now at least, it's going that way, and as Paul said, we should have over 5,100 -- somewhere around 5,000 students at Grand Valley this fall.

Another interesting fact about college education today is that 60% of the high school graduates are going on for some training, some education beyond the high school, and the prediction by the Carnegie Commission and HEW is that by 1980 70%, 72%, will go on for some kinds of education beyond high school, a far cry from the time when most of us
were in college or in a university. Right after the second World War the boom began, but even then only 10% ... So American education, just like education throughout the world, has been somewhat elitist: a few people in the society are educated in the institutions of higher learning. The United States, in the last 10 years, in the decade of the sixties, has just blown that theory wide open. Very interesting, but while increasing numbers, or increasing percentages, of people who go on in higher education, the structures of our institutions have remained pretty much the same. And this is where we think -- at Grand Valley -- right in your area, because we are so new, something very different is taking place. Something that I think is unique to the country, and perhaps there are three or four other institutions that are doing something like it, and that is, we have a group of colleges or a cluster of colleges. And I believe you have a chart -- some charts were put on the tables -- very simple charts of the way we are organized. As a matter of fact we have a bill in the legislature right now that's passed the House changing our name from Grand Valley State College to Grand Valley State Colleges. And we're hoping that this will pass the Senate before they adjourn for the election, and we'll see how it goes.

And there are three colleges at Grand Valley right now: The College of Arts and Sciences, Thomas Jefferson College, William James College, and a fourth college being planned -- a dean has been appointed, it will be opened in the fall of 1973.

The reason that we are organized as we are organized is because 60% of the people, are going on for education. If you are educating an elitist group, and formalized education does not include great breadth of instruction -- that is, many different kinds of instruction -- I suppose it's possible to take people and fit them into a mold ... one style of education. And many people in education, many of us in fact, have been committed to a kind of education, a way of teaching, and we really haven't examined whether, perhaps, there is or there are more ways to educate ... more style of education.

Each one of these institutions ... CAS, Thomas Jefferson, William James College, has its own style of education, and it appeals to different kinds of people; in other words, we are attempting to offer several different tracks of education. We are attempting not to force people into one mold or one way of educating themselves.

Since Grand Valley was founded as a liberal arts college, and the College of Arts and Sciences was the original college, and as you see it has 4200 students and is by far the largest of our colleges, there have been some shifts in emphasis. The departments are still there, the history, the math, chemistry, biology, sociology, psychology, organized very much as you will understand the organization of an institution -- and they offer majors; many of the majors go on to graduate school in the typical liberal arts type of approach, and many go on into teaching. 35% of our graduates have gone into graduate school and in a recent survey of them, it looks like 40% of them will go on; that's quite typical of a good liberal arts college.
The teaching profession, however, is overcrowded and this becomes quite serious. And so the College of Arts and Sciences has taken a slightly different tack -- they've established within their college a School of Business, they've established a School of Health Sciences which is offering a Bachelor's degree in Nursing for the first time this fall, and they have established a School of Public Service. I'm sure for most of us, it's a little frightening, isn't it, to contemplate that right now one out of six employed Americans works for a governmental agency? That's a lot of people. Of course that includes all of us teachers. The prediction, by 1980 is, that one out of four-and-a-half to five will be working in a governmental agency, so look at your taxes, and whether we like it or not, it looks like that's going to happen. If there are going to be jobs in that field, the College of Arts and Sciences felt that the School of Public Service in preparing people for those jobs is quite important.

The second college -- Thomas Jefferson College -- that would be the college -- well I'm sure that many of you have heard, it would be the college that you might consider the radical college. As a matter of fact, in some of the literature it says the radical college. Now what do you mean by radical ... it's quite interesting. But it's a place where a person will go if he's unhappy -- if he doesn't like the traditional system. He can't buy it -- he wants to learn what he wants to learn on his own, in his own way. And so the students who come into Thomas Jefferson College design their program with their professors, and the professors see to it that they do it at a college level, and they can have some of the weirdest things going on, so far as coursework; some that I'm sure, many of us would not approve of, and some of them may be useless, and they'll be weeded out eventually; but that's a do your own thing college. And no promises are made to any student who comes in, except that, you want to do your own thing, you can do it here, with this faculty and they'll see that you do your own thing on a level that's worthy of college work, college credit, that's all. Remember 1968 with Kent State, its problems; we didn't have very many problems, we had some -- community meetings, resolutions were passed, and all of that -- but we didn't have the kinds of serious problems brought on by radical students that many campuses did; and one of the reasons -- because we had a Thomas Jefferson College -- because you remember the complaint? "The colleges are irrelevant, they're not giving us what we want; it's not the kind of open, free education we want." No one could make that complaint about Grand Valley. If you didn't like structured education, okay, there's your college, you do your own thing. And the interesting thing about it, I would say, in very practical terms, this year, of course the sample is very much smaller than it is in the College of Arts and Sciences and a bit larger than William James, which is just in its second year, but nearly all the graduates of Thomas Jefferson College -- this unstructured college -- found employment, which is rather interesting; it goes against everything that you would think would be normal; this is where the kooks are -- and here's a long-haired nutty kid who can't get a decent job or anything else -- you'd think that, except that they got the jobs! Very interesting; and it's something that's rather new and we're studying it and wondering why.
The third college -- William James College -- is a career-oriented college. Right now it has three career areas: one is in information management, administration, computers -- how the computer applies to administration, that type of thing; one is in the whole field of environment and ecology; another is in social relations, social work ... a field I think that some people are very upset about, but when we think of all the social demands and needs of the future, our government tells us that's where there's going to be jobs -- I suppose they're going to be government jobs, that's why they tell us that -- but these are the first three fields, and the next one is going to be in communications, in the media; and another one may be in building construction and the enclosure of space which will fit pretty much into the environmental program . . . the environmental program is "what do you do with the natural resources and the space, how do you enclose it" -- these are all parts of William James College, and what they're trying to do, how they're trying to solve problems; And it's kind of interesting: this year, they were given ten new faculty. And they decided to get five from an academic background, that is, like those of us like the ones sitting here, those of us who've been in education for a pretty long time; they would get five of our type; and then they would get five from the professions. In that college, they're not interested in a Ph.D. or even a Masters degree; they prefer to have the Ph.D. and Masters degree but with those who can teach well, relate to students in the fields they offer -- great! But they've gone out into the fields of business and social work and mental hospitals and they've brought that kind of faculty into this college. As a matter of fact, the sabbatical plan for William James College will be not to go to another university, or necessarily write a book when you're on your sabbatical; it will be find a job for a year in the industry or the government agency that you're trying to prepare the young people to enter. So you see it's a whole new thrust -- a whole career-oriented college.

And the fourth college -- I just want to say a word about the fourth college -- haven't picked a name for it. But it's going to be a college that will probably concentrate on continuing education; that is, any one of you, or members of your family, or acquaintances or people you work with who would like to take a course, or pick up some information, or update themselves -- will fit into this college, because the college calendar isn't going to make much difference at all. You can begin the course when you want to begin it; and much of the course will be on TV tape, audio-visual, microfilm, all kinds of different devices used. And the professors will work with you toward accomplishing the goal that you have set for yourself. With no time limit at all. You work at your own pace, no one is saying you have to finish this course by such and such a time, you finish it at your own pace. If you want to go fast, go fast; go slow? go slow! Take as much as you want. It's extremely flexible education, and it's designed to help people update themselves if they want to be updated in any given field or career.

Now before I close, I want to talk about a concept and an idea that I believe Grand Valley fits into for this area. If you look at American History, where do you find the energizing forces in our life? When the nation was settled -- frontier, early colonies -- then we see the development of cities like Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston S.C., and even Savanah Georgia at little bit later, Richmond Virginia -- and these areas began to be energizing -- full of energy. And then this tremendous outburst
into the frontier, and the settlement of the Northwest Territory in which we in Michigan are a part, and out into the great plains, and then into the California-Oregon area the frontier. And out in the frontier, again, we find a tremendous movement into the cities -- out of these rural hamlets and villages and farms -- the tremendous energy -- the moving into cities like Chicago and Detroit and St. Louis and New York and Boston and so on. So that, for a while, and particularly in this century and in the latter part of the last century, the energizing force of America really was in its cities, to a certain extent, or to a great extent. Now we find a kind of rot in the inner cities -- the decay of the cities. If some of you have been in Rome recently; it really struck me when I was in Rome -- here's a city built around this forum, and I just thought, well that's just the inner city ghetto, that finally rotted. And Rome had great problems in that decaying period. And we have decay that is almost beyond solution. Now it may be stopped -- and the deterioration of the cities may be reversed, but they are in serious condition and they will be in serious condition, I think, for at least a century, the verdict isn't going to be in. Well where then will the United States find its new energizing force? Where will the places to really live be? Where will people want to go? Where will life be so ordered that it isn't a struggle to get from one place to another -- and yet there are enough people and opportunities within that area to stimulate people, to keep them mentally active? I think it's going to be areas like this one in Western Michigan. Draw a triangle -- Muskegon, Grand Haven, Holland as a base, and then Grand Rapids as the apex -- that kind of a triangle -- I think areas like this are going to be energizing. To name a few more ... Nashville Tennessee, Des Moines Iowa, Charlotte North Carolina, these are the places that I think are going to be the places to live; there'll be some major cities, I think, like Minneapolis-St. Paul, Houston, Atlanta, San Francisco maybe -- it's so beautiful, I hate to see it rot, but I think that these areas are going to be significant. Now if these areas are really going to be the energizing force -- let's say there are 25 of them -- and these are the places where people want to live -- and our area's supposed to grow by about 26% in the next 20-25 years. If we're to be an energizing area, we need economic resources, we need cultural resources, we need recreational resources because of the leisure time, we need all kinds of educational resources. In this area we have two community colleges; Hope, Calvin, Aquinas, and Grand Valley. Here is a base of educational resource. And a thing that's very interesting right now, we're working with Calvin on training teachers for teachers to teach the handicapped -- special education. Calvin is coming in and entering into our program in nursing; Calvin can't afford to have nursing or special education, but there are a lot of people who want to go to Calvin who want that, so we're working with them. Hope will begin conversations with us. So that we have an opportunity in this area, not to work as separate institutions each going their own way; but we have to analyze the educational resources that are needed in this area. What do people need? Re-training, self-fulfillment -- what do they need, what do they want? We've got to provide it, and we've got to provide it in conjunction with the community colleges in Muskegon and Grand Rapids and with these other senior colleges. We don't have a vast monolithic
university here; they're great -- the University of Michigan, Michigan State, Western -- they're great, and that's fine -- I'm all for them. But we have an opportunity to do something different and to cooperate and to really make private and public education work well together. So that we have a new opportunity ... 

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