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Comments at the Enrichment Fund Dinner, delivered on June 22, 1978

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We come together tonight to honor Richard Gillett who believes that Western Michigan is one of our nation's best places to live. His faith in our community, his capacity both for friendship and leadership make him a person who shapes the events in this area - events that provide a high quality of life. Each of us here has some personal or professional reason to be grateful to Dick Gillett. We who work at the Grand Valley State Colleges are aware of his role in the establishment of the colleges, but, perhaps of equal significance, has been his continuing goodwill toward this institution, his understanding of the value of the Grand Valley State Colleges to this area and to the state of Michigan, his advice and counsel, and his participation in raising money for the institution. Because of his service to Grand Valley and to the community, it is appropriate that we induct him into the Grand Valley State Colleges Hall of Fame and dedicate the endowment raised through this Enrichment Fund Dinner to him and to a cause in which he believes.

The Enrichment Fund was established two years ago as a part of the colleges' endowment. From the money earned by the fund, a program called "Walls and Windows" was established to break down walls of misunderstanding between business people and those who worked in the academic world, and to provide windows for each group to see and understand the value of the other. It had the further purpose of increasing knowledge about economics to any person or group in our community who was willing to learn.
Many of us at Grand Valley believe that the people of the United States must improve their understanding of the factors that determine the economic life of the United States and the world if our democracy is to survive. In our own way through Enrichment Fund dollars we are trying to assist in the improvement of that understanding in our area.

With Bob Pew's help, two ten-week economic education sessions were held at the Steelcase Company with 80 employees participating. Taught by Dr. John Bornhofen of the Seidman Graduate College faculty, such topics as "How does our economy fit together", and "How can we improve our standard of living" were discussed. A pre-test and post-test were given to students to test the effectiveness of the course.

Town and Gown luncheons bringing businessmen and professors together began last year, and will be a continuing part of the Walls and Windows program. Topics for discussion are determined in advance, but I am sure no one felt limited by the agenda. Several of you here tonight participated and I hope more of you will in the future.

A new course was designed for freshman students entitled Introduction to Business. The course will be organized and conducted by a professor from the School of Business in the College of Arts and Sciences. Many of the class sessions will be taught by business people from the community. This is another attempt to help students, early in their college careers, have a better understanding of what
COMPRISSES THE WORLD OF WORK SO THAT ANY JUDGMENTS THEY REACH ARE BASED ON ACCURATE INFORMATION.

THE PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC IGNORANCE SHOULD BE ATTACKED EARLY IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS. ONE APPROACH TO THAT PROBLEM OCCURRED TO OUR FRIENDS FROM GRAND HAVEN, THE JOHNSONS, SHERWOODS, JACOBSONS, AND OTHERS. THEY PROVIDED FUNDS TO PROFESSOR ANTHONY CATANESI E OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT TO DESIGN AND OFFER A SEMINAR IN ECONOMICS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS IN THE GRAND HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. THIS PILOT PROJECT WAS SO SUCCESSFUL THAT GRAND VALLEY IS MAKING ECONOMIC EDUCATION FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS A PART OF THE WALLS AND WINDOWS PROGRAM.

WE HAVE MOVED CAREFULLY INTO EACH OF THE WALLS AND WINDOWS PROGRAMS, TESTING THEIR SUCCESS, MAKING SURE THAT EDUCATION IS OUR OBJECTIVE, NOT PROPAGANDA. WE NOW BELIEVE WE ARE READY TO USE OUR OWN PUBLIC TELEVISION STATION WGVC-TV CHANNEL 35 TO BRING EDUCATION IN ECONOMICS TO A BROADER WEST MICHIGAN AUDIENCE. WITH THE INCREASE IN THE ENRICHMENT FUND GENERATED BY THIS DINNER, WE CAN PROCEED WITH THESE PLANS.

BEFORE I SURRENDER CENTER STAGE, I WANT TO TELL ALL OF YOU THAT THE COMMITTEE FOR THIS YEAR'S DINNER, CHAIRMED BY RICH DeVOS, WAS INSPIRING TO WATCH. YOU MIGHT EVEN THINK THE MEMBERS WERE PAID FOR THEIR EFFORTS, THEY WORKED SO HARD AND EFFECTIVELY. I AM SURE
many of you experienced their effectiveness. For Grand Valley, I thank you.

To Mr. Edwin Neuman I also express Grand Valley’s thanks. We are pleased that you accepted our invitation. Your reputation is not incidental to the success of this party.

To all of you who came tonight to honor Dick and to assist a new state institution serve society, thank you. When I indicated that this dinner was as tax deductible as a three martini lunch, one response was “The hamburger better be good. This is more than I pay for my usual lunch.” I hope you enjoyed the hamburger substitute. We are enjoying your company on campus, and the fact you paid the price.