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Introduction of William Ruckelshaus

Guest Speaker at GVSC

April 17, 1974

by Arend D. Lubbers

Throughout history there have been historic massacres. In our country the most recent is known as the Saturday Night Massacre. It occurred on October 20, 1973, and it involved a relatively small number of people. Fortunately, it was not literally bloody, it was historic. Our speaker was one of the victims. There is a difference between this massacre and others, however, as the dust settles and time passes, it appears that the victims "got the better part of the deal." Many of the world's massacred have gone to their fate because of values and principle. The same is true about our speaker, William D. Ruckelshaus. That is one of the reasons why he has earned the nation's respect.

There is another incongruity about Mr. Ruckelshaus' career, in addition to being a winner victim. His vita shows that he held three jobs within a three-year period, hardly a recommendation to a prospective employer. From 1970 to 1973, he was Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Acting Director of the FBI, and Deputy Attorney General, until he was fired from that position. Again, the apparent is not true. He brought intelligence, accomplishment, and dignity to all three positions, and in the first of these established an international reputation. One that will make a place for him in history as an early leader in the struggle to save the planet for life and beauty. In his last government job he performed well and its abrupt termination
reflects more unfavorably on the firee than the fireor.

In his home state of Indiana he was Deputy Attorney General, and majority leader in the Indiana House of Representatives. In an exciting, close, U.S. Senate race he lost to incumbent Birch Bayh. Before becoming EPA Administrator, he was Assistant Attorney General of the U.S., functioning as head of the Civil Division of the Department of Justice.

You can see that Mr. Ruckelshaus' successes and contributions to society are impressive and his few defeats dramatic to say the least. Even as an occasional loser he comes out a winner. We are pleased that William James College has brought Mr. Ruckelshaus to campus to address us and officially open the exciting Documerica Exhibit in this building. We are honored by his presence.