Opening Remarks, delivered at the Convocation of the F. E. Seidman Graduate College of Business on September 25, 1973

Arend D. Lubbers

Grand Valley State University
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Convocation of the F. E. Seidman Graduate College of Business
by Arend D. Lubbers
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September 25, 1973

This evening we are here to celebrate. To celebrate and honor

the memory of F. E. Seidman whose achievements are recognized and

perpetuated in the establishment of the F. E. Seidman Graduate College

of Business, and to celebrate the beginning of a new educational

opportunity for the people of this area.

As we begin this evening together, we pause in gratitude for the ideas,

commitment, energy, and human concern that motivate lives and ennoble

human life. For, in the naming and opening of this new graduate college

of business, there is evidence of what these qualities achieve.
Our area of western Michigan has the characteristics that portend a prosperous future and one that holds the prospect of a fine quality of life for the people who live here. One characteristic that affects the quality and prosperity of any area over a long period of time is education. The Grand Valley State Colleges see their role as assessing what an area needs in educational programs, ascertaining what is already being provided adequately by all the colleges, and making up the difference. Where we can cooperate with sister institutions we will, where new programs are needed we hope resources will be available for us to initiate them.

It is significant that our first graduate offering is in the field of business management and accounting. The time has come, in fact is overdue, for a population center consisting of Ottawa, Muskegon, and Kent Counties, with its diverse business and commercial interests, to have a place where bright, energetic people can advance themselves through graduate education.
As the F. E. Seidman College develops and grows, we hope it will become a source of well educated men and women and an economic resource center for this area.

The man whose achievement we honor in naming the college had a commitment to the area that he made his home for over fifty years. He was an economist, he was a leading accountant and manager, but his broad interest in his home area was reflected in the Grand Rapids Press headlined story in February 1972, "Civic Leader F.E. Seidman dies." I find it interesting that his home town newspaper emphasized his civic-mindedness. Though the Graduate College is in a field of Mr. Seidman's professional interest, it is here today as a civic project more than anything else. As such, it reflects Mr. Seidman's belief that institutions exist to help people; they do not exist for themselves.

As an institution, our Graduate College of Business will do well to emulate the qualities of F. E. Seidman as a person. Neither civic-mindedness nor professional development was limited to this area. His firm became
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national and international. He served as an economic advisor to the federal
government and to several governors of Michigan. One time he stated, "If
the ordinary businessman ran his affairs as efficiently as government
administrators, with all the problems that beset them, business generally
would be a lot better off than it is." The F. E. Seidman Graduate College
of Business, as a state operated institution, should be one of those well run
operations, and its commitment to the local area should not limit its scope
of interest, but become a base for broader interests and service.

There was no imbalance between Mr. Seidman as a scholar and his
concern for the daily lives of people. He was the author of three significant
books in his field, and he wrote a column on economics and finance for the
Grand Rapids Herald. But that and his firm were not enough. Through the
Thomas Erler Seidman Foundation, named for a deceased son, he and Mrs.
Seidman provided recreational opportunities, companionship, and leadership
for underprivileged children.
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I hope the graduate college will be worthy of his name in the field of scholarship and also remain a graduate college with compassion, a relatively uncommon breed of institution. A combination of high professional standards with human concern and service are not incompatible in a person or an institution.

Mr. Seidman liked to reduce unmanageable topics to manageable proportions, another goal for any graduate college. In a lecture on how the capitalist system worked, he once declared, "If you put all of the people on an island, designated coconuts as the accepted currency on the island, and divided the coconut supply equally among all of the persons on the island, a few of the people would ultimately end up holding all or most of the coconuts."

It was his way of expressing his idea of the acquisitive personality.

Dean DeVries, I trust that a large share of coconuts will fall on the F. E. Seidman Graduate College of Business.

The Seidman family interest from the beginning -- the organization of the college, the Seidman House, a student center, Bill's trusteeship,
Nancy's work as an administrator and teacher, Mrs. Seidman's continuing involvement in fine arts at GVSC, Sally's work on ETV -- reveal what it takes to make a new institution work. Many of you here -- legislators, board members, friends from the business community -- have also shared in the GVSC dream and made it come true. All of us are involved in a partnership, a partnership to make Grand Valley succeed, but, more than that, to make other institutions here succeed as well, to make business and education flourish together.

Tonight we officially take in our newest partner, the F. E. Seidman Graduate College of Business. We are proud that this new venture can be named for someone who came out of a humble beginning, lived and worked amongst the people of this area, developed intelligence, discipline, compassion, a catholicity of interests, and achieved.