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Remarks, delivered at the Annual Foundation Luncheon on May 25, 1995

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Rare is the public meeting when there is no expression of
gratitude for some personal or public act. So common is the
offering up of thanks that it often appears perfunctory and lacking
in sincerity. Upon consideration, do you agree with me that the
commonness of public expressions of gratitude reflects a society
for which there is much to be grateful? People constantly doing for
others; building, nurturing, educating and healing. And so today
we are gathered in the name of a University, a fairly new
University, that we, who are members of that University's
Foundation, are committed to building to enhance our economy,
our culture, our health, our life. You have given this past year, and
many times in the years past, and your commitment extends into
the future. When asked, as President of the University, how I
should respond to this pervasive and continuing support, in words
from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, "I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks."

You have been subjected to a video and watched nearly brick upon brick the continuing evolution of the Allendale campus propelled by your gifts and taxes from all our citizens.

In this western Michigan land, beautified by the majestic lake and a constellation of smaller lakes and flowing rivers, you have heard about our expanding Water Resources Program along the shoreline to teach, discover, and protect. Now my fellow Foundation members, I direct your attention once again, as I did in the 1980s, to the University's Grand Rapids campus. A year and a half ago I asked a few of you to help the University buy land to expand the Grand Rapids campus. With the 2.7 million dollars provided, the land has been purchased and by the end of summer it will be cleaned and cleared, ready for construction.

So we must now concentrate on the next flower in our garden of buildings, a building for the International Trade Center and
Seidman School of Business. Did you know that international trade in west Michigan increased by 81% in the last five years? When that happened, the University began to internationalize its total curriculum. In the coming months more will be revealed to you about this plan to build a place where the functions of the University can be made to serve more effectively the development of the region. And you will be asked to help build it. For like so many of the University’s projects, the contribution of private and public dollars will make it happen. Step by step we move toward our goal. Several have been taken - a program for the building, the purchase of land, the cleaning and clearing of land. The next one is so important, it must be taken, yet it is one that requires assistance, like taking someone’s arm so we can take it without faltering. We need the Governor to take us by one arm and the Legislature by the other, and when they say “yes” to our project and give us the planning money, we, the Foundation members, will swing into action like a mighty army of Grand Valley Lakers sweeping up the
resources we need on our march towards our objective. Our period of supplication in Lansing is beginning, so we as troops enlisted in the cause must hone our fighting skills for the time when the major offensive is launched. As the languid summer days move us toward autumn we should see more clearly when that day will come.

I have focused on the next event in the building of a University, and there is value in keeping the lens directed towards one object. But in concluding, let me widen the lens for a minute. We all love our region. Our roots are well watered here. We live in a place that makes us proud. We are not struggling to survive or maintain. We are engrossed in the problems of progress and growth. Such a place needs, yes demands, a University that helps to solve the problems, and nurtures the growth. I see very soon expanding the University’s programs in the health and medical field. I see engineering flourishing. We will be alert to what is
needed, not adding where unnecessary, but following where necessity leads us.

Help the University in the future and join in the celebration of what is accomplished. Come if you can on August 29th to dedicate the new computer, nursing, and physical therapy building named for former Congressman Paul Henry, who served us so well. Feel good about what you see so that you will feel good about what you are going to do.

Finally, let us narrow the focus again. In your dreams, in your conscious and subconscious thoughts, think International Trade Center-Business School Building; International Trade Center-Business School Building. With that thought indelibly imprinted on your mind, I leave you and thank you.