Remarks, delivered at the Annual Foundation Meeting on October 31, 1990

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REMARKS FOR ANNUAL FOUNDATION MEETING

October 31, 1990

As I read the names of our Foundation trustees, I was impressed again by the talent and good will that is pooled in the interest of building a University of high quality. I express my gratitude to you for making Grand Valley State University a significant priority on your agenda for west Michigan. Our appreciation in a large measure goes to those trustees who are retiring from the Board. We hope your interest in us will not abate, and that you will answer our call for assistance in the future. We welcome our new trustees to the Grand Valley adventure, and to all of you who are faithful in your stewardship we thank you and challenge you in the decade of the 90's to help us make it Grand Valley's finest.

Today is the day we report to you and lay before you the course we propose for the future. This year at our annual meeting time we are in mid-campaign, raising money for our Water Resources Institute, and Rich, as Chairman of the Water Resources Council, will report on that initiative next. Some of you are deeply involved and we thank you for the energy, time, and money you are expending to make west Michigan a center for water research.

Before I list for you the projects of the 90's, let me again state the mission of our University. Really, it is a dual mission. First, we seek to make the Allendale campus the place in Michigan for the highest quality of undergraduate education in a community where people care for one another, and where the development of
positive human values are a part of the educational and social program. The atmosphere and ethos of the campus is more that of a liberal arts college than a large university, even though the curriculum and research are more extensive and professional than that found in a college.

Second, we seek to make the Grand Rapids campus and our facilities on the lakeshore, centers where professional programs are offered and research conducted that contribute immediately and directly to the economic, civic, social, and medical health of our region. Employed, older adults have come to the L.V. Eberhard Center in numbers beyond our expectations. Our annual report shows what is happening. Our growth has taken place downtown while we have limited enrollments at Allendale because there is no more enclosed space for instruction.

To carry out our mission, we are not likely to add many more fields to the curriculum in the 90's; we will expand what we have. For instance, in engineering we have an emphasis in electrical and mechanical. We will probably add industrial and computer. In business we have all the traditional fields, but we will begin to emphasize international business, and assistance for entreprenuers. There will be more masters degrees in fields where we now offer the bachelors as the knowledge explosion continues.

We are beginning to take some of our curriculum from the Eberhard Center via satellite to locations throughout the state where students in nursing and education need the courses and have no other access to them. We will be doing the same for many
students in many fields throughout the 90's by fibre optic cable in the west Michigan area. It's exciting to contemplate. High quality and access to education for those who qualify are our major objectives.

What are we doing now and what needs to be done in the 90's to fulfill our mission? First, at Allendale. Yesterday the heavy equipment moved onto the campus to begin construction of the Cook-DeWitt Center, a $2,000,000 building that will accommodate the campus ministries and provide a worship and recital-lecture hall, a project that will be a major contributor to the quality of campus life we constantly seek to encourage.

Under construction is a half a million dollar building for the Water Resources Institute. Awaiting funding from the state is an approved $16,000,000 science building, and in various stages of planning are a building for student and academic services, art facilities, an addition to the field house, and a library expansion. I see all of these as important and possible for the 90's.

Second, in Grand Rapids and on the lakeshore. This afternoon I will participate with officials in Muskegon and our peripatetic Governor in breaking ground for a building on the Muskegon Community College campus to be used by Grand Valley, Western, and Ferris, bringing to that community an opportunity for four year and even masters degrees. In Grand Rapids I envision several facilities in the 90's so that we can adequately carry out our second mission, that of immediate and direct service to our region. First we must
acquire the remaining parcels of land west of the freeway, adding them to the Stow Davis property given to us by Steelcase and other property we purchased. Then our plans can move forward. Last year the Legislature approved planning for a Business School and Graduate School Library building for the Grand Rapids campus. With the Eberhard Center already unable to accommodate all of our professional programs, we could use this new facility immediately. Further along in the 90's, I see a student center, an engineering research building, and possibly an auditorium if the downtown needs such a facility.

These are the realities and the dreams, and I don't believe the dreams will fade. We live in a growing, dynamic region. A factor in keeping it that way is a dynamic indigenous university. If we limit the incoming freshman class to 1500 students, receive state funding for all qualified students at junior, senior and masters degree levels who want our programs, I believe the University will enroll about 16,000 students by the end of the 90's. To accommodate that enrollment, a number that will provide full service to the region and insure a high quality of education and research in line with our mission, I believe the buildings I have described will be needed.

What are the next steps that the Foundation trustees can take in assisting the University toward its goals?

The Foundation has always built the University's endowment. The drive for Water Resources funds includes $2,000,000 for endowment so active participation in reaching the goal Rich
will discuss should be top priority.

2) Participate with University staff in asking the Governor and Legislature for funds to start the science building and the business school, graduate library.

3) Take responsibility for the further development of the Grand Rapids campus, helping to acquire property west of the freeway, build first class Business and Engineering Schools.

I hope these challenges are neither too large or too small, but just right for you in the 90's. For 21 years I could smell the roses. Now the sweet aroma is powerful. What a beautiful garden of thought, creativity, wisdom, and service our University can be in the 21st century. To make that happen, we must successfully move through the 90's.