Remarks, delivered at the Enrichment Dinner on May 18, 1992

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REMARKS FOR ENRICHMENT DINNER - MAY 18, 1992

Some of you remember the first Enrichment Dinner. 1976. We inducted Bill Seidman, Jim Zumberge and Phil Buchen as the first members of our Hall of Fame, and announced the establishment of the Grand Valley College Foundation. There were two major objectives for the Foundation: build an endowment and a college building downtown. My secret hope was to have a ten million dollar endowment by the time I retired. We now have an eleven million dollar endowment, and I haven’t thought about retirement. I have thought about a new endowment goal, however. Twenty-five million dollars sounds good to me. The recent help so many of you gave to raise two million dollars for a science equipment endowment to meet a Kresge Foundation challenge last summer pushed us over the ten million dollar level. The Faculty and Staff alone raised more than $100,000 this year - a record amount - and I am aware that those of you who so generously support us like to know what we do to help ourselves.

When you drive home tonight, whatever your intended direction, drive across the Pearl Street Bridge and look to the south at the L.V. Eberhard Center. The lights playing on it give it a warm glow. It is here
serving all those students, and through them our community, because the Grand Valley Foundation through its members willed it.

One of my friends, and friend also to many of you, said to me on Saturday, "Don, aren't you pleased with the progress at Grand Valley?" I had to answer, "I don't have time to be pleased." Really! If you and I don't get moving to the next phase of our university’s development, five years from now we won't have reason to be pleased with ourselves. That would be a shame, since we have come so far.

When you drive across the lighted bridge and look at the lighted building, remember what I tell you. There are 4,000 more students right now who want opportunities to advance themselves professionally. They want to teach children. They want to pursue business and commerce. They want to care for the sick. They want to help people. Beyond that lighted building, we must build another one for them, ultimately for us, and the strength of our community. The time has come for us to formulate our plans and act on them. The city is becoming infused with the excitement that accompanies a vision for the future and the plans that turn visions into realities. Our University is part of the vision and part of the reality. I see in the near future on the downtown campus a Business
School, International Trade Center, and Graduate School Library. If you see it too, it will be there.

The President of our Student Senate, Len Van Popering, is here tonight. Recently he and his colleagues took an unprecedented action. After discussions with their constituents, they voted to assess $600.00 per student over the course of a full collegiate career to build desperately needed classrooms, offices, laboratories, recreation facilities, and library. They did this because of their needs, but they also laid down a challenge. They went to Lansing and told the Legislators about the state’s responsibility to its citizens in higher education, and asked for their support. They didn’t let me "off the hook" either. According to them, I have to raise a few million. I may need a little help from you to keep out of trouble with the student body. theirs is the kind of challenge we can appreciate because it demonstrates they like the University they have inherited from the citizens of the state, the Faculty and Staff, the special friends of the University and the students who went before them.

All of our hopes for the future that I have set forward tonight and the accomplishments of the past to which I have referred are "wrapped up" in people. All of you have some part of your life and treasure invested
in Grand Valley and its students. You make the realities and so many of you keep coming back. You are not only part of our past, but part of our future and I thank you for it.

Peter Cook, William Beebe, Rich DeVos, Richard Gillette, Paul Johnson, Seymour Padnos, Ed Schalon, James Sebastian, Donna Brooks, Fred Keller, John Kennedy and Kate Wolters, former inductees into our Hall of Fame, are here tonight. They keep coming back and they continue to deserve our appreciation. They are not finished with us, nor we with them.

It is not often that Mark Russell doesn't have top billing, but tonight the stars of this show are Bob and Judy Hooker. Between them they get so much done that I wonder if they have a contest going. If they do, they're running "neck and neck." I have never known two people who do so much good and have so much fun. They are high achievers who are fun to be with. They have an uncomplicated, yet highly developed capacity to serve people and assist institutions that serve people. Hall of Fame members Peter Cook and Paul Johnson will present Bob and Judy to you.