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Remarks, delivered at the Foundation Luncheon on June 2, 1993

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FOUNDATION LUNCHEON REMARKS

In 1962, as a new college President of a private, church-related college, I attended a seminar for new Presidents at the Harvard Business School. One of our first speakers was Harvard President Nathan Pusey. I will never forget one surprising fact he shared with us. He told us that Harvard, the leader of private universities, received 74% of its funds from public tax sources, and went on to say that MIT, another leader among the private institutions, secured more than 90% of its funds from the public treasury.

I was not surprised then when I left Iowa to assume the Presidency of Grand Valley to find that it was a public college established by private initiative and fund raising. If private universities were dependent on public dollars, it was not inconsistent that public universities needed private funds to flourish. That is how it has been for our university, and the principal force for private fund raising has been, is, and will be the Grand Valley University Foundation.

The leadership of Paul Johnson and Rich DeVos and the participation of all of you have built an endowment of 12 million dollars, purchased the land for the Allendale campus, with lead gifts from Cooks and DeWitts built the beautiful Cook-DeWitt chapel, combined private giving with state appropriations to build Loutit Science Center, the Eberhard Center, the stadium-track, and established a Water

Resources Center that is distinguishing itself in the study and research of our state's most precious natural resource. Without private support, our television and radio broadcasting would not be here to serve our two million people in west Michigan. What a record!

The educator, George Peabody, said, "Education is a debt due from present to future generations." As we build a university in our region of west Michigan, we are paying that debt. You who support Grand Valley understand that a strong university is necessary for a good economy, good health care, good education, and good public services to exist in our region. You have the will and the generous heart to make it happen. As you build, the future becomes more secure.

West Michigan has momentum. The Van Andel Public Museum is taking form. The Muskegon Higher Education Center is ready for bids, plans for the Arena and Convention Center in Grand Rapids are ready for implementation, professional baseball is coming to west Michigan, a 40 million dollar science center is approved and funded for Grand Valley's Allendale Campus, and through Fred Meijer's effort, a beautiful botanical and sculpture garden will appear before us one of these days. Community College projects and local community projects throughout the region add to the enhancement of our living place. But there is more to come and it should not be postponed too long.

We are bringing back Rich DeVos with our final item for today's luncheon -

only this time on video tape. Some of you may have heard something about the future plans for our Grand Rapids Campus. The video represents a short presentation about these plans which Rich and I made to your Foundation trustees. We hope it will illustrate why we are enthusiastic for Grand Valley's future downtown...and for west Michigan's future in the new world economy. It will, we hope, set the agenda for the Grand Valley University Foundation.