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GVSU and the Academy of Economics, delivered in Krakow, Poland in June 1995

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Anniversary Celebration

Grand Valley State University and the Academy of Economics

Krakow, Poland
June, 1995

Twenty years is a long time to remember. But I do remember the first times that Rector Fajferek and I met to formally establish the relationship between our two institutions. Many Polish and American lives and careers have been enriched because of that relationship. In the years ahead I hope circumstances and finances will permit us to continue to work together, and that this first twenty years will be a short period in a long history of cooperation.

The world is never without troubles, and those troubles sometimes interfere with the normal, positive exchange between individuals and institutions. Today Grand Valley’s long-standing cooperation with the University of Sarajevo is affected by the war in Bosnia, yet we continue to have students from Sarajevo and remain in contact. Where there is a strong will to remain connected, there is often a way. We hope there will never be such interference in our relationship, but together we can affirm our determination to be faithful in our commitments to one another in good times and in times of difficulty.

Today we come together at a good time for your Academy. To observe your progress warms our hearts, and we take pleasure in the success of a friend. I am aware of a long tradition of good leadership during the terms of Rector Fajferek, Rector Altkorn and now Rector Mikulowski Pomorski, and the able assistance of several Pro-Rectors. You have so much to celebrate on the 70th anniversary of the Academy.
I remember the years when your library project was interrupted, and because of that unwanted interregnum, I am sure that opening the completed building now gives you even more satisfaction. Surely it is a beacon of hope for the future. And your progress continues. When I return I will see a new sports facility, and I am excited to be here as you break ground for it as part of your 70th Jubilee. These are days when you appropriately celebrate what you have become during the 70 years of life as a center of higher education. What you are is significant for it demonstrates you have the capacity to serve your region and nation effectively in the future.

We from Grand Valley State University want to show you how pleased we are with your success, and in a way more lasting than the words we speak and then are forgotten, celebrate that success at your 70th birthday party. Our present to you is the addition of _______ books to your library. As you use them I hope you will be reminded of the importance of our cooperation to the quality of life at both our institutions.

As I reflect on our years exchanging students and faculty, I know that the academic discourse has been important. Ideas and technologies were shared. Papers and books co-authored. These are the reasons for exchange between two institutions of higher learning. Yet the friendships that develop are equally enriching. To have friends who live and work in another culture adds a dimension to life unlike any other. I know personally how much more interesting and enriched my life is because of my friendship with the Rectors, Pro-Rectors and several Professors from this Academy. These kind of relationships will continue and others in the future will benefit from them. I can see generations of Academy and Grand Valley people joining their lives for a short time and being better scholars, students and persons because of it.
I thank you Rector Mikulowski-Pomorski for nurturing the cooperation between our institutions during your tenure in office. I compliment you for the dynamic leadership you have provided the Academy of Economics. We at Grand Valley State University are proud to be associated with an institution that is dynamic and forward looking as it seeks to assist in building the modern Polish nation.

As both of our institutions deal with problems and forge successes, we are caught up in a continuum of daily activities and decision making. It is fitting that we should pause from these activities at anniversary time and appreciate those who share our objectives and work with us in achieving them. One of the objectives we share is our determination to give our students and faculty the opportunity to work together in Krakow and Grand Rapids. As we pause after 20 years of continuous cooperation, the faculty and students of Grand Valley State University present to you, in appreciation for your friendship and scholarly collaboration, this plaque commemorating the anniversary.