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Remarks, delivered at the Memorial Service for Tom Seykora on January 22, 1993

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Memorial Service for Tom Seykora
January 22, 1993
Remarks by President Lubbers

He came from Minnesota. Minnesota is a place where strong character thrives, where people are honest, where they know their neighbors and care for them. Strong people, good people come from Minnesota. Tom Seykora came from Minnesota. So did my mother. I know about people from Minnesota, and Tom proves all I have said about the people from Minnesota.

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Tom came to us. He had been working at the University of Iowa. His roots transplanted from the heartland, from one state to another. And they took hold in this water wonderland of the upper midwest, and he served amongst us for 20 years. He nurtured his family here. Three sons raised to adulthood, loved as a father and mother should love, respected as a father and mother should respect. A love and respect given because the father and mother shared it with one another.

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The miracle of the family took place here close to us, the miracle of their family, something enduring even in death, always to be thought about, always to be felt, a heritage for the sons and for their mother. And all this happened while he was working amongst us, forming relationships outside the family, growing into friendships. I ask you, is this not the way a man should live his life?

He lived it on our campus and in his profession with a kind of gentle

proficiency. Work, work, work, objectives met, new tasks undertaken, never complaints, requests sometimes, always justified, but never complaints. I waited for them and they never came. Maybe they came to some of you and I never heard them. Compliments, often, for his staff, for his university, often compliments, soft spoken and sincere. Tom made the space around him good; good work, good feelings, good management. We who lived in Tom's time here will remember that for

a long time.

We have a lot of reports. Tom gave reports, each year a report to the Board of Control. Matter of fact, friendly, clearly, he told us where our graduates went. That's about as important as it gets at a university. That's what we are all about, our students, our graduates. Telling the facts, he told about himself. He told us how good he was and his associates too, without intending to, without knowing he was doing it.

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His major work was the final act of a university for its students, helping them find a place to apply what they had learned. He was modest about his accomplishments and we appreciated that. He was good at his job and we appreciated that, too.

We don't like cancer, nobody likes cancer. Sometimes we can't do much about it. That's what happened to Tom. No one did much about it that helped, not enough to keep him alive. They tried, we

prayed, but in the end it was not enough. We are here today, a little sad, some maybe a little frightened, that he could be taken away from us so soon. But we are here because more than anything else right now we want everyone to know, and we wish Tom could know, how much we admired him; how fair he was, how diligently he worked, what good feelings he elicited, what a good life he lived. Any faults he may have had are subordinated to all these wonderful personal qualities that

make us want to be here worshipping, praising, and thinking of Tom. He is back in Minnesota, buried. Since he came from Minnesota and joins family members there, that seems appropriate. But that kind, gentle spirit, those strong convictions, those feelings of friendship and loyalty that he felt for us and we for him--they stay in Michigan. They stay with us. They cannot be buried.

*Thomas M. Seykora
Memorial Service*



*Friday, January 22, 1993 - 2:00 p.m.
Cook-DeWitt Center
Grand Valley State University*