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Slykhouse Lifetime Achievement Award Acceptance Speech, delivered for the Economic Club on May 29, 2002

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ACCEPTANCE OF ECONOMIC CLUB AWARD
(SLYKHOUSE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD)

MAY 29, 2002

In this day of psychological analysis, an enabler is often looked upon as one who assists another in destructive behavior, but an enabler can make it possible for a person to achieve as well. More than thirty-two years ago, when Nancy decided to marry me, she agreed to give up her career and join me in mine. She became my enabler. I couldn't do the job without her.

Donna Brooks, who introduced me, was chair of the Grand Valley State University Board of Control during my final years as President. We had quite a run together at University building. She was one of six chairs during my tenure, including Bill Seidman, who brought me to Grand Valley. All Board members during my thirty-two years gave me their support. Little disagreement, no bickering, no harsh partisanship divided us nor them from one another. They all were my enablers. It was a modern day miracle for a University President, a person who often finds himself either caught in the crossfire or a target.

Another miracle was the relationship that existed among the team that administered. It is a case study for University administration and it

contributed to the success of all who participated. We were each other's enablers.

If you have loyal support from those with whom you live intimately, from those for whom you work and those who work closely with you, you have increased dramatically your odds to succeed.

I am grateful to the members of the Economic Club who thought I was successful enough to receive the Slykhouse Lifetime Achievement Award. They were right in one of their observations. It took me a lifetime to get where I was going. I have been around long enough to remember that this club owes its existence to George Slykhouse and this award will always be a reminder of his achievement. Whatever I have achieved is accompanied by my gratitude to the Faculty, staff, and students of Grand Valley, and to so many citizens in wonderful west Michigan. And to my friends: you have added the salt and spice, the fun and laughter, the sport and adventure, the caring and loyalty that have kept me refreshed in my lifetime of work.