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Fred Vandenberg Eulogy, delivered on July 30, 2006

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FRED VANDENBERG EULOGY

SATURDAY, JULY 30, 2006

AREND D. LUBBERS

I have a memory of meeting Fred and his cousin Howard as they walked from their lodging to class on the Hope College campus. I remember thinking how handsome he was and what a winning smile. When you see photographs of Fred from his later adult years you will notice that his countenance changed less from college to the 50th anniversary of his graduation than that of most of us. Fred belonged to the Emersonian Society and I to the Fraternal. Our fraternities were strong rivals, resulting in some good competition and sometimes youthfully indiscreet competitions. The rivalry made us aware of one another and out of that awareness good friendships often developed. That was the case between Fred and me. I remember, too, how pleased we all were when Fred and Gretchen Yonkman decided to attach their lives. Perhaps it was a marriage made in heaven; certainly it was one made for the Hope Alumni Association.

Our friendship had several dimensions, but the one special to me was a shared sense of humor. While traveling with the Vandenberg in France, after a long day, a sumptuous dinner, and several glasses of wine, a perceived ridiculous situation that surfaced in our conversation sent both of us into a fit of laughter that we could not contain. We must have laughed for twenty minutes, stopping only because of exhaustion. Laughing like that is cleansing. It wipes out unnecessary inhibitions and dark thoughts. It keeps you from taking yourself too seriously. It forges a bond between two people.

Fred and I had lots of laughs. We identified humor in situations that eluded the observations of others, and that was special between us. It also helped us keep a proper perspective on ourselves.

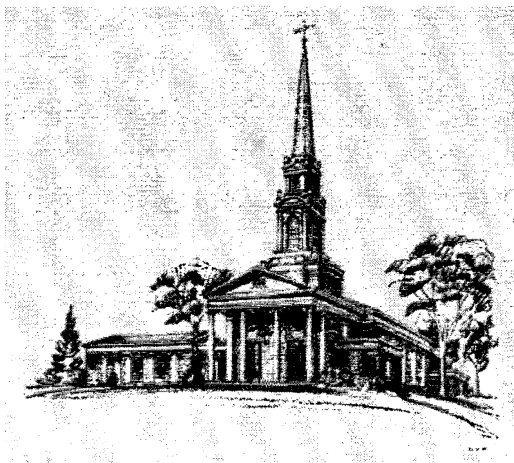
When we reflect on Fred's successful career, we tend to overlook that he was a vulnerable person. Those who lose parents in childhood or early adolescence have an emotional wound to tend. Fred did it in two ways. First he became unusually sensitive to the vulnerability in others and dealt with it more effectively

because he appreciated it. Second, he wanted to make life better for people and organizations by overcoming difficulties, relieving pain, and alleviating the consequences of their vulnerability. He used his vulnerability to become a caring person. His caring and sense of social responsibility communicated itself to all with whom he worked – even those who sat across the table from him.

Genuine caring translates into trust, and everyone trusted Fred.

Trust as well as intelligence and skill made him successful.

I suppose being allotted 74 years should be considered a privilege, yet it doesn't seem long enough to some of us. I don't like being deprived of Fred's presence and the feelings of affection that it always engendered. I don't like giving up our shared sense of humor. What we all have available to us now are memories, and they can provide more satisfaction than we might suspect. When I think about friendship and its importance, Fred will be in my thoughts. When I laugh at myself or enjoy the humor indigenous to most human situations, I will remember my friend who shared my understanding and laughed with me.



MAYFLOWER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

**A Service of Thanksgiving
and Celebration for the Life of
Fredrick E. Vandenberg
June 30, 1930 ~ June 29, 2006**

**The Rev. Dr. Mark Barger Elliott
Officiating**

Saturday, July 29, 2006 at 11 a.m.

A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING AND CELEBRATION

OF THE LIFE OF

FREDRICK E. VANDENBERG

PRELUDE Jonathan Tuuk, Organist

OPENING WORDS Mark Barger Elliott, Senior Minister

PRAYER

SCRIPTURE

REMEMBRANCES Mark Barger Elliott
Arend Lubbers
Donald Maine
Randy Flechsig
John Edison

PRAYER Rev. Donald DeYoung

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE “Eternal Father, Strong to Save”
Navy Hymn

*Friends may greet the family at a reception
in the Parlor following the service.*