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Dr. Russ Mawby Introduction, delivered at the GVSU Foundation Enrichment Dinner on June 5, 2007

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Mawby Introduction
GVU Foundation Enrichment Dinner
June 5, 2007

This annual dinner celebrates philanthropy. Tonight we will take a few minutes to recognize one of America's greatest advocates for philanthropy, a special guest of the University.

Dr. Russ Mawby, former President of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. He was the inspiration and lead funder for Grand Valley's Johnson Center for Philanthropy.

The Center took a dramatic expansion as Dottie Johnson retired from the Michigan Council of Foundations – or as she says, “graduated” – and lent her expertise and determination to its growth.

Now, the Johnson Center is doing remarkable things to help nonprofits and grant-makers alike. It is one of the top three

academic centers of its kind in the nation, along with Arizona State and Indiana University.

Russ has had incredible impact in the foundation world and for society. His leadership brought funding to thousands of beneficial projects. I'll just mention one:

Through the Kellogg Foundation, he encouraged a long and quiet investment in the black leadership in South Africa. These well-prepared leaders made the difference between success and conflagration when Nelson Mandela conquered apartheid and governance of South Africa changed forever.

Russ's perspective and expertise are unparalleled in the foundation world, making his gift to GVSU, which I'm about to describe, all the more important.

Russ has given an annual research fellowship for faculty and students at the Johnson Center. This is the first fellowship in the entire U.S. to involve undergraduates and faculty together in studying philanthropy. Russ always knows how to be a trendsetter, to establish models for others to learn from.

Secondly, Russ has also given his papers and memorabilia to Grand Valley for researchers and historians, so that we may preserve and to share the lessons he learned from 25 years at the helm of one of the largest foundations in the world.

Russ, thank you for your tremendous generosity to Grand Valley, and for your leadership – from Battle Creek to Johannesburg and many points in between.