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Investiture Toast for President Tom Haas, delivered on October 27, 2006

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President Haas, you are like an Olympic runner carrying a torch passed on, not by one hand, but hundreds, even thousands. Hands that have shaped our university, helping hands that reach out to students, hands that tend the trees, flowers, and buildings keeping the campus beautiful, hands that reach deep into pockets to provide resources for the university. Over the years those hands have worked and provided, and their efforts make the flame of the torch you carry burn brightly. We are still a young university, but not so young. We have the beginnings of a history. We have traditions. We have our way to reach objectives. We care about our students, their intellectual development and the life of their spirits. From all our striving and caring emerges an ethos that permeates the university and we bestow that upon you hoping you discern it, care about it and enhance it. The often overcast skies of West Michigan may
keep us from remembering that the bright rays of the sun shine
on Grand Valley and nourish a special place in Michigan of high
academic achievement, community service, human
understanding, and of course, national championships. When
the gloomy clouds hang heavy upon us, we ask that you remind
us of our special place, our sacred duties, and the sun that will
break through and continue to shine upon us.

As we lift our glasses in a salute to your physical and
psychological health we ask that you hear Winston Churchill’s
call to leadership, “never flinch, never retreat, never despair,”
and lead us to the greatness that awaits.