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

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Investiture Toast for President Tom Haas
October 27, 2006

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.