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Remarks, delivered at Olivet College on June 20, 2002

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OLIVET COLLEGE

June 20, 2002

My first visit to Olivet College was during the early years of Michael Bassis administration. Before that a friend of mine Ray Loeschner, a former Olivet President, told me many Olivet stories as we discussed the pleasures and vicissitudes of college administration. Over the years I have known several trustees and Gorton Reitmuler, who preceded Ray Loeschner as President, and I had occasion to talk with one another by telephone. Even in the misty past as a college student at Hope I encountered Olivet students at athletic and oratorical contests. So I come here tonight, not as someone unfamiliar with you, your history, your successes and your challenges. And I come as a friend of Olivet College.

When I first saw Olivet and walked the campus a spark of interest ignited, a bond began to forge, a positive desire for the college's success took root. My acquaintance of and friendship with people involved at Olivet influenced my feelings, but seeing this beautiful New England like campus with its stately trees, green spaces, and buildings well placed and attractive confirmed for me that this is a worthy place.

I have accepted your award tonight because I appreciate your recognition of my achievements, but also because of my interest in your past and belief in your future. There are some colleges and universities that have seen their best days. Olivet's best are in the future. I say that knowing your long history and several of the high points in it. I say it because I feel a renewed and higher enthusiasm among alumni and friends. I say it because you have an able President who knows what a president should be and do, and because his blood is Olivet red. I say it because I believe there will be unleashed on this campus efforts and commitments among faculty, staff and students for new levels of achievement in all legitimate college endeavors.

These great days ahead come only with sacrifice, generosity, vision, and good administration. They will not come without unforeseen adjustments, stress, and painful change. But Olivet is a community, a special kind of community that comes only in a liberal arts college package. The professional and personal relationships possible in such a community should provide the human condition that overcomes the bad and reinforces the good. As a community, with a new leader you are beginning to chart your next course. One I am confident will bring you where you want to be. The 19th century English Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli said, "The secret

of success is constancy to purpose.” You have the purpose. You have the constancy.

I share my view of Olivet with you after one of the longest careers as a college and university administrator. My optimism about you is well based in experience. I am deeply honored by your recognition of that career and in my retirement I am reminded of the words of Charles Lamb who wrote in “The Superannuated Man” “Let me caution persons growing old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forgo their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it.” To avoid the danger I keep interested in both institutions I have served as President, my Alma Mater, and now Olivet College because of your kindness to me and because your future piques my interest. You may take off like a Comet.