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Rotary Club Speech, delivered at the DeVos Center's Exhibition Hall on September 28, 2000

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Rotary Club Speech
Thursday, September 28, 2000
DeVos Center, Exhibition Hall

I. Benefits Controversy
A. People's comments to me
B. Lincoln story
C. Free Press and media most important for the survival of a legitimate democracy
D. Didn't answer question correctly because I did not hear it correctly Matt McLogan told me.
E. Did not intentionally try to dissemble
F. Story about two deaf friends.

II. Theory of the Cities
A. Atlantic Monthly – 1980’s – French Author
   1. City more important than political boundaries
   2. Economy revolves around a city-state laws effect it some
   3. Detroit – Grand Rapids supports theory
B. Renaissance City States
   1. Florence, Sienna, Perugia – new levels of learning, art, architecture –
      Perugia – sister city of Grand Rapids.
   2. All this supported by strong economic development

III. Sources of Energy for the Nation
A. Cities on the Eastern Seaboard – Boston, New York, Charleston – ports on the
   Virginia Rivers – farm to market – manufacturers to population
B. Rapid development of the frontier – new cities – Chicago, St. Louis
C. The new city states – core city – smaller cities
D. Characteristics of the successful city state
   a. strong economic base
   b. good schools for children
   c. government that functions in the interest of the governed
   d. a university and colleges that see that the regions' jobs are filled with
      qualified people, and that research contributes to the growth and problem
      solving of the region
   e. good health care
   f. good recreation, art, music, theatre, dance and sports

IV. Grand Rapids as a modern renaissance city
A. Entrepreneurial spirit
B. Core loyalty – people stay, people come back. Shakespeare asked and answered
   the question in Coriolanus in one sentence, "What is the city but the people?"
C. People of wealth who are ready to reinvest in the city – in business and in
   charitable giving – many and substantial wealth
D. Successful enterprise brings strong leadership for the myriad causes that need
   support
E. Charles Dudley Warner wrote in My Summer in a Garden, "The thing generally
   raised on city land is taxes."
While we most often have our attention focused on the wonderful philanthropy that surrounds us, the taxes we all pay contribute substantially to the renaissance of our city—they do so in two ways. First, there are the partnerships (hotel/motel taxes, tax rebates, state taxes for local use, federal taxes for local use put together with private dollars for our arenas, our university, our arts, and our economic expansion in one way or another. This requires creative leadership to make it work so effectively for our city's renaissance.

Second, our taxes determine our infrastructure. All the entrepreneurs, all the people in services, all citizens ease of life or lack thereof depends on water, roads, parks, parking, public transportation, and the maintenance of our public buildings and public areas. There is no pride without good infrastructure. There is lost opportunity for economic growth if the infrastructure fails. People seek other places if the infrastructure does not serve them. So, you can see that good government officials elected and appointed are essential to our city's renaissance. They must assign and use our taxes to create for all of us the roadways, access to water, public transportation, green space, and a safe environment to enhance our lives.

We might say that Grand Rapids is on a roll. I think we can argue that it began in the 1960's. Some of the initiators are still around; most are retired. Some of those in place now were associated with the past leaders who were their mentors. Other new leaders have burst on the scene. In a sense there is a "changing of the guard" since life is an ever-rolling stream. Perhaps that is more poignant to me since I am about to be borne away on that ever-rolling stream. The Grand Rapids renaissance has moved and succeeded through at least two generations, and there are no reasons that it should not continue. But there is an old proverb "City gates stand open to the bad as well as the good."

What are the potential threats to any renaissance? In Italy the fighting interrupted the progress. In any body politic there are differences, but those differences cannot be so polarizing that people of differing views do not come together often for the public good. Power and who controls are constant and always threatening to unit. Government in its rough and tumble must keep from cozy relationships that serve only the few. Political, social and business leaders must appeal to the highest ideals and instincts. It is too easy to prey on peoples' selfish and weaker instincts to gain power for oneself. There must always be open dialogue on subjects that deal with the quality and nature of the city. Inevitably some people receive inordinate amounts of credit and blame in the city state. They may be in politics or they may be philanthropists. The high intensity feelings need to be tempered by appreciation where it is due and reasoned disagreement and expression of opinion in setting forth a conflicting opinion. If passions and feelings are in control, and if a substantial majority believe they are participants in the life of the city state the renaissance will continue.

One of the hallmarks of a renaissance city is beauty. Keats wrote, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all Ye know on earth and all Ye need to know." That is a strong statement, one that most will not accept entirely. Yet you might accept the fact that beauty and truth have an affinity. Beauty in physical surroundings is a more profound influence on an individual than one expects. I believe it affects the way we treat one another, the way we work and the way in which we develop spiritually. You are in a building today, the DeVos Center, that we at Grand Valley believe is part of the Grand Rapids Renaissance. We wanted this to be a beautiful building, and we dreamed and worked hard with the resources available to us to make it so. We wanted it beautiful because of the effect of beauty that I have explained. I want the building itself to contribute to the students' appreciation for education.
Story of my walks past Ottawa Hills Middle School. Compare to Webster School in Pella.

I hope you have an opportunity to walk through this building. Observe the way spaces are designed, look at the interior design, and see the art. See what the 6,400 students who use this building see. I am sure that most of our 18,500 students will have occasion to be here sometime. Soon we will break ground for a Health Professions Building at Michigan and Lafayette, another structure that will add to our cities renaissance through beauty and service through health.

Walt Whitman wrote, "A great city is that which has the greatest men and women." Our recent past demonstrates that there were and are some good ones. May the tribe increase.
INTRODUCTION OF PRESIDENT AREND D. LUBBERS

ROTARY CLUB OF GRAND RAPIDS
SEPTEMBER 28, 2000

BY
DAVID G. FREY

DON LUBBERS' CAREER IS REPLETE WITH ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ORDINARY AND THE EXTRAORDINARY – HE IS A GRADUATE OF HOPE COLLEGE (1953), AND RECEIVED BOTH HIS MASTERS DEGREE IN HISTORY IN 1956 AND HIS DOCTORATE IN 1959 FROM RUTGERS UNIVERSITY. THEREAFTER, HE SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF CENTRAL COLLEGE IN PELLA, IOWA FOR NINE YEARS. HE RETURNED TO HIS NATIVE WEST MICHIGAN IN 1969 AND HAS SERVED FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS AS PRESIDENT OF GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY. HIS
ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING HIS 30 YEAR REIGN INCLUDE THE CREATION OF:

- AN UNDERGRADUATE ENGINEERING PROGRAM

- THE SCHOOL OF NURSING, SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES, AND PROGRAMS IN PHYSICAL THERAPY, PHYSICIANS ASSISTANT

- THE GRAND VALLEY STATE FOUNDATION

- WGVU-TV AND WGVU-AM & FM
UNDER DON'S LEADERSHIP:

- THE UNIVERSITY'S ENDOWMENT ASSETS INCREASED TO $40 MILLION

- ENROLLMENT INCREASED FROM 1,700 STUDENTS TO 18,500 STUDENTS

- THE FACULTY INCREASED FROM 85 TO NEARLY 1,300 PERMANENT FACULTY AND STAFF

- FACILITY SPACE EXPANDED FROM 451,000 SQUARE FEET TO OVER 2.6 MILLION SQUARE FEET [GROWN OVER 4X'S DURING HIS TENURE].
BUT IT IS DON'S QUALITIES OF DETERMINATION, LEADERSHIP, PERSUASIVENESS, PURPOSEFULNESS AND SINGLE MINDEDNESS LURKING WITHIN AN OUTWARDLY UNDERSTATED AND PRIESTLY [CHERUBIC] DEMEANOR THAT HAVE BROUGHT THE UNIVERSITY TO ITS CURRENT PROMINENCE.

THROUGHOUT ALL OF DON'S THIRTY-YEAR JOURNEY AT GVSU, HE HAS BEEN BLESSED WITH A REMARKABLE PARTNER, NANCY, WHO SHARES EQUAL BILLING AS GRAND VALLEY'S CHEERFUL WARRIOR, FEISTIEST ADVOCATE, AND MOST INSIGHTFUL ADVISOR. SHE POSSESSES A SPARKLING PERSONALITY, A KEEN INTELLECT, AND DEFT JUDGEMENT. IF THERE WAS EVER A PERFECT CANDIDATE FOR AN HONORARY DEGREE FROM GVSU, IT IS NANCY — WHO HAS SERVED THE UNIVERSITY WITH QUIET
DISTINCTION AND JOYFUL ENTHUSIASM. THEY ARE QUITE A TEAM.

AS WE KNOW, DON WILL RETIRE IN JUNE OF NEXT YEAR AND, WHILE THE WHEELS OF SUCCESSION PLANNING ARE ALREADY IN MOTION, THERE IS MOUNTING SPECULATION ABOUT WHO HOLDS THE HOTTEST TICKET . . . THE OPEN SEAT ON THE SELECTION COMMITTEE. . . BUT, LET NO ONE DOUBT THAT DON LUBBERS WILL BE PRESIDENT OF HIS BELOVED GRAND VALLEY UNTIL THE LAST MICRO-MOMENT OF HIS FINAL DAY IN OFFICE.

IN 1962, LIFE MAGAZINE NAMED HIM TO ITS LIST OF THE TOP 100 YOUNG MEN UNDER 40 IN THE UNITED STATES. I WOULD LIKE TO
INTRODUCE ONE OF THE TOP 100 YOUNG MEN UNDER 70 IN THE UNITED STATES ... AREND D. LUBBERS.