

6-1-2007

Speech for Niemeyer's Award, delivered in June 2007

Arend D. Lubbers
Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/presidential_speeches



Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#), [Education Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)

ScholarWorks Citation

Lubbers, Arend D., "Speech for Niemeyer's Award, delivered in June 2007" (2007). *Presidential Speeches*. 255.

https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/presidential_speeches/255

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Presidential Speeches by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.

Niemeyer's Award
June 2007

I.

He came from West Michigan, Dutch-American roots. And he carried with him the good qualities of that tradition; integrity, determination, openness, and thrift. He brought those qualities to a new college, serving all the people and invested them in it.

II.

He was tall, good looking. He had presence, and a certain charisma, the academic kind, that captivates students, and attracts the attention of colleagues. He was a master teacher and a solid scholar.

III.

He had ambition, too. He didn't like it when academic matters went awry and early on set about to make them right. He was

the faculty leader, the committee chair, the honest broker of academic decisions, a person to be reckoned with.

IV.

The time came for a Dean and then for a Provost to manage all academic and student affairs. Both times he was the natural choice. Wow! Could he manage! He could manage a staff, a committee, a whole structure, a budget. And so carefully he, at times, managed me. With gratitude and admiration I watched him manage.

V.

He could listen, he could accommodate, and most importantly he could lead a faculty. If you played straight with him, he played straight with you. If you lied or tried to maneuver him, if he thought you were undermining Grand Valley, if you shirked

the responsibilities of your job, you had a formidable opponent; one with a long memory, who usually won.

VI.

In 1963 he came. He served long and well. We served together. In a university the relationship between Provost and President shapes the institution, drives it forward or keeps it in limbo. We calibrated ours early on. It became fine tuned. We could speak to one another in a kind of verbal shorthand.

VII.

He could share a vision. He was especially good at putting in place the “building blocks” necessary to turn vision for the future into reality today. His dreams never escaped practicality. We worked together thinking big and building for the present.

VIII.

He is a special person, whose special career was as important as any in shaping Grand Valley, for laying the academic foundation that has catapulted our university into the first rank of regional state universities. Intelligence, integrity and commitment carried him a long way – all the way to this award tonight recognizing his high talent and its contributions to Grand Valley.