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Tribute to Donalee Holton and Judy Hooker, delivered in Spring 2004

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Tribute to Donalee Holton and Judy Hooker

Though accomplishments of the two people honored bring us here tonight, their personal characteristics revealing motivation, need and commitment require our closest observations. For in those we gain the full measure of their value in our lives and in our society. I cannot speak of Judy and Donalee as one human commodity, but they share a few characteristics which we should note. Both have high octane energy. I am sure there is a genetic chart that records the energy gene, and both of them were fortunate to inherit it. The energy they both possess propelled them into many activities that led to many accomplishments. Even matters of health that have circumscribed Judy's freedom of movement during significant periods of adult life and Donalee's occasional bouts with illness serious enough to impose physical

limitations have not prevented their whirlwind progress to making a better life for those they chose to serve. Where there is a will; there is a way to overcome the barriers.

We are not talking about two people who are characterized only by sweetness and generosity even as we credit them with endearing qualities and giving spirits.

They are moved by well directed ambition. Energy and ambition are similar to the chicken and the egg. We don't know which comes first, but they serve one another. These two have the drive to reach the objectives they see as worthwhile, desirable and self-fulfilling. Though their objectives were mostly dissimilar, their persistent, gracious way in which they pursued them was similar. Michigan philanthropic foundations and young people seeking to be educated for jobs are better off because of Judy while Spectrum Health and Kent Intermediate School District

have received benefit from Donalee's efforts. Both committed themselves to political candidates whom they believed would deliver a better west Michigan, a better United States. Their candidates were fortunate because both Donalee and Judy could "tip the scale". Ask either of them to raise funds for a good cause and its success was more secure. Honor them both for a good cause, as we are doing tonight for the Arthritis Foundation, and all of us who admire them will help make the event important to attend. I experienced their combination of energy and focus when they both served on the Grand Valley State University Board of Control, Judy as chairperson for a term. All I can say is the citizens of the state, the faculty and staff, and the students had the best of thoughtfulness, wisdom, decisiveness, and commitment from their trusteeship. Each brought both different and similar talents

to the functions of a Board member. All together they were a formidable force for good. Obviously the energy and ambition I have talked about, that both of them possess, has never found a channel outside that which flows toward the improvement of family, institutions, and society. What a model for all who would achieve, and be personally fulfilled.

We do not select the times of our lives, but we live our lives affected by the events of those times. We are experiencing a transformation in the expectations and the legal rights of women in our society, and the changes for women inevitably result in sometimes difficult adjustments for men. Donalee and Judy contribute to a desirable alteration in the condition of women because of who they are, what they believe, and the times in which they live. Again their energy, life view, and ambition lead to the

expectation that they will have equal opportunity to pursue their interests. They insist on it, and by all measure this insistence is fair and just. No one needs to be defeated, save those who want to preserve a past that was once accepted, but no longer serves. I feel that their way of life, our recognition of their significant contributions, makes life better for women, men and children.

For some reason they have been chosen for significant tasks. For reasons within themselves they have chosen to do them. We should always hold before ourselves and others that our society is delicate and fragile and needs the attention of the Judys and Donalees.