Introduction of Stephen Rowe, delivered at the GVSU Grand Forum on May 7, 2012

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Stephen Rowe –

The Grand Tradition of Philosophy - spiritual is reality

1) **Education** – Colgate and Univ. Chicago
   a. **No** university fertilizes the mind like the University of Chicago
   b. **Probing** for ultimate meaning in whatever field standard

2) **Came to Grand Valley, James College in 1972**
   a. A philosophy of America’s greatest philosopher as its base – pragmatism – what works – never ending search
   b. Steve has always been on the search for an understanding that makes sense and ultimately works best
   c. As a result he has published six books, the most recent is *Overcoming America, America Overcoming*. I think we will hear about that today. If you want to know more or have help on your reflections on the subject his book is on sale here
   d. My relationship – As president he would make an appointment to see me at fairly regular intervals. After the first one I knew what to expect – financial help to assist him on his journey to understanding. In the process we learned to understand one another.

f. **Liberal learning** – humanizing learning, spiritual learning - Prime moves in GVSU’s Liberal Studies program and major

Steve doesn’t care for intelligence in silos. Intelligence should be developed in a multi-disciplinary fashion.

g. Recently pursued research, study, and discussion with Chinese and Japanese scholars who have profoundly affected his world view and his, theirs – brings his new insights to bear on our own nation, its problems, and its strengths.

h. Wrote Introduction to and edited my speeches book
1. Four World Views in America
   
a. Ideologies take a fixed position – at time of uncertainty people draw back into positions of certainty – to feel whole they must assent and defend.

b. _______ - lost all faith in the common good and the possibility of common good. Life is about struggle and self-interest, ultimately they seek self-_______ there is no meaning beyond self. There is absence of soul.

c. Depressed – they are critical of society, zeroing in on its blindness and weakness, but essentially _______ about the ability of society to change. They have great arguments and take pride in their insights. They get lost in the problem they identify and argue about.

d. The relationist quotes Martin Heidegger, “only a god can save us now. A god would help us articulate a new worldview —not a new set of ideas or philosophy, but a way of living, child rearing, education, a vision of the way to live. Greatest U.S. philosopher William James is an example of relational worldview. What works to make us more human. This outlook demonstrates the limitations of an absolute belief because it finds itself in the interaction of individual with others, there is never ending learning in the continuing encounter with others. There is continued growth and discovery. The modus operandi is dialogue.