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## Speech at Retiree Reception, delivered in June 2015

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Speech at Retiree Reception  
June 2015

- I. Opening—Looking over this group, I am reminded of what Elizabeth Browning wrote. We as a group “are a little bit burnt by the glare of life.” Why shouldn’t we be? We have lived in the sun a long time.
  - a. Miss those who are no longer with us and appreciate them
  - b. Byron wrote, “Tis very certain the desire of life prolongs it.” That didn’t work very well for him, but it will serve me. I intend to live til 90.
  - c. The implication for you if you attend these receptions is that you will be required to hear six more speeches by me, if I am invited, and if I retain my acuity, which I have every intention of doing.
- II. 100,000+ alumni wandering around the world—a large percentage of them want to live in West Michigan
  - a. What should reaching this number of graduates mean for Grand Valley
    1. Dominant factor in our West Michigan factor
    2. More throughout the world—what we have wrought. London walks.
    3. Institutionally we must keep track of their accomplishments
    4. We must pay more attention to them so Laker for a Lifetime has substance
    5. Their support will determine the future of the university—local philanthropy in early days. Paul Johnson uses the Avis slogan. “We try harder.”
    6. Smith & Smyth vs Lubbers—no more in loco parentis
- III. Looking Backward
  - a. Close the college—make it a prison
  - b. Gov. Milliken’s visit
  - c. TV license - Sen. Tory Storm story
  - d. Glen and Betty—Nancy and I went to Miami of Ohio. We are to a great extent in Michigan what it is in Ohio
- IV. The Future Holds
  - a. Spinga—16<sup>th</sup> century philosopher-Dutch from a Portuguese-Jewish family who discovered for us freedom for the mind
  - b. He with “nothing exists from whose nature some effect does not follow”
  - c. We must be aware of what Grand Valley is and what we want its nature to be. Each of us contributes to the nature in some way. The nature of GVSU will be on display through our alumni. And we want them to make their contributions to the ongoing nature of our university. In some ways, our calling to contribute to that nature never ends. And it is a higher calling than we anticipated when we entered the profession.