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University Club Scholarship Awards Speech, delivered on May 11, 2011

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University Club Scholarship Awards
Arend D. Lubbers
May 11, 2011

Many of us have teacher stories and I have mine. I don't know what causes the light in the mind to be turned on, but often a teacher throws the switch. Listen.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit

Bird thou never wert,

That from Heaven or near it

Pourest thy full heart

In Profuse strains of unpremeditated art

Like a port hidden

In the light of thought

Singing hymns unbidden

Till the world is wrought

To Sympathy with hope and fears it heeded not

I was sixteen, taking English literature from Lillian Van Dyke in Holland High School. Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark" turned me on to poetry and I have loved it ever since.

At Hope College, Professor D. Ivan Dykstra opened a door to the great philosophers of Western Civilization and let light into my mind. The door has never been closed.

While in graduate school at Rutgers University, Professor John Higham lifted lecturing in American History to a high art, and I made his profession mine. What are your teacher stories? Did you think of one or two while I was recounting mine? These are life changing events. They shape our thoughts, enlarge our minds, and lead us to our vocations. Whether we live in the rarified sphere of abstract thought or the everyday practicalities of making things work, we want the opportunity to go as far as our ambition, talents, and inclinations can take us. Our teachers help us on the way. That is education.

You have heard from Steve Marshall who is carrying on the work of his father, Harry, as he reignites the University Club scholarship program. Harry was a man brimful of kindness and friendliness. I am sure it made sense to him that a club with the name university attached to it should help students attending universities. Harry really liked this club. It was integrated into his social life. If I remember correctly, I would see Harry here over the noon hour playing cards with his friends. One of the characteristics of that group. They all appreciated Grand Rapids, even loved the place. Some of them came from affluence, some from more modest financial backgrounds. They were successful and appreciated their

good fortune. Their sense of place, gratitude for what each had become, and the expansive personality of Harry and his cause supporting tendencies led to good things, hence the scholarship program we celebrate and promote today.

Harry and his friends represented an era in Grand Rapids. In a sense his generation provided the foundation for philanthropy that has grown exponentially in less than fifty years. The money is here and so is the willingness to give it. Harry lived long enough to see this begin to happen and I am sure it warmed his soul. I see this scholarship program as one of those stones he and his friends built into philanthropic foundation and it's our job to keep it in good repair.

Scholarships are enablers. They enable people to go places and do things they could not do without them. They provide students opportunities for those professor-student experiences that I described and I am sure you have had. They help to form lives.

Scholarships are rewards. If you receive a scholarship you have performed in ways that make you worthy. Those in charge of the money believe investing in you is an investment in making society work. I'm sure Harry and his friends had that in mind when they were moved to build the University Club Scholarship Fund.

Scholarships have a conscience. They place a person under obligation. If you receive one you must prove your worthiness by continuing to perform in the manner that earned you one in the first place. Beyond that when you have

achieved you have the responsibility according to your financial ability to see that others have the same opportunity that was extended to you.

Scholarships are fulfilling. Many people with the means want to contribute to the well being of others. Nancy and I have a scholarship fund in our names. Each year we receive notes from our scholars, and meet them at an annual dinner. We listen to their stories and learn of their dreams. We can see and talk to the people who are the direct beneficiary of the money the fund provides. We see personally what the scholarship does for each of them. We are fulfilled.

Listen to these stories that tell of the importance of scholarships:

He was born to a poor family in North Carolina, but his mother had expectations. When he was ready for college he had the grades, not the money. North Carolina Central saw his record and offered help. He was still short of the amount needed. When he graduated from high school he was headed for the U.S. Navy. He told me all he lacked was \$70.00 to pay the college bill. Then at the last minute he found a scholarship fund that provided it. His trajectory was set. He earned a college degree in accounting with honors, worked for Ernst and Ernst, was offered a full scholarship at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, for his MBA and the University of Georgia for his PH.D. He joined the faculty at Notre Dame, and then Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Administration interested him. He progressed through Assistant Dean Positions to the Dean of the

Business School at Delaware State, and then at his alma mater, North Carolina Central. Seven years ago he was persuaded to become Dean of the Seidman College of Business at Grand Valley State University where he is having unusual success. For James Williams, it all started with a scholarship.

Eleka Ann Collins was born and raised in a single parent home in Detroit. She was bright and fortunate. Her name was drawn to attend the University Preparatory Academy where she excelled. She qualified for a \$7,700 scholarship per year from the Robert and Ellen Thompson Foundation. The Thompson's are committed to helping people from Detroit's inner city who need a break. What money her mother could provide ended when she lost her job in 2009. So Eleka has worked 20 hours a week in the Academic Affairs office at Grand Valley. Presently she is completing her junior year studying German language and culture at the University in Schwäbisch Gmünd in Germany. Graduate school and a fulfilling career await her. Her future is beginning with a scholarship.

Jamal Johnson graduated from Muskegon High School with a 2.7 grade point average. He graduated from Grambling University with a 3.5 GPA. Jamal's future began when Pfizer Corporation gave the Muskegon Community Foundation money for scholarships. Jamal was deemed worthy and took his Pfizer money to Grambling. After college he accepted a job at Pfizer and has become an award winning salesman of Pfizer products. Recently Jamal decided it was time for him

to help others as he had been helped. He established a scholarship fund at the Muskegon Community Foundation to do just that. It all began with a scholarship.

We are gathered together to announce our University Club's Scholarship winners, to hope for them their stories will happily compliment the ones I have just told, and to urge us and our membership to fulfill ourselves by providing scholarship help to those who need it from us. The Educator George Peabody, who has a college named for him, stated "Education-a debt due from present to future generations." Here is our chance to pay down the debt. I don't think Cindy, our super manager, will let us default. Her passion for this cause should inspire us all.

As I think about what a scholarship can lead to in a person's life I am reminded of John Ruskin, an Englishman who led the arts and crafts movement in the 19th century, a movement that led to profound changes in several fields including architecture. Frank Lloyd Wright exploded on the scene to change the way our spaces are enclosed; he, along with many others. People did new things, better things. Ruskin said, "Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know; it means teaching them to behave as they do not behave." Better more creative behaviors are what we are after. We want our scholarships to make that happen to those who receive them.

UNIVERSITY CLUB OF GRAND RAPIDS

Schedule of Events

WELCOME & COMMENTARY

Mr. James Brady

University Club Board Member & Scholarship Committee Member

Mr. Steve Marshall

University Club Scholarship Committee Member

Mr. Gregory Schupra

Senior Philanthropic Advisor, Comerica Trust

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Arend Lubbers

Former GVSU President

PRESENTATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS

Ms. Valerie Feehan

President, University Club of Grand Rapids & Scholarship Committee Member

TESTIMONIALS

Scholarship Recipients

CLOSING

Mr. Frank Dunten

University Club Board Member & Scholarship Committee Member

*We may not be able to lift their burdens,
but with your help, we will be able to lighten them.*