

## Freshman Family Orientation (9/1/91)

**Welcome!**

**.....and Congratulations**

**Congratulations because you deserve tremendous credit!**

You have brought your student to this day.

Oh, I know. They certainly had the raw talent.

But thanks to you they developed the character to use it well.

**In our times it isn't easy for young people to achieve**

unless they have strong families to support and guide them.

**You must have done a lot of things right .**

I know you have given a lot of love, and support

you have worked hard .....and sacrificed often.

**And now we see the results in our entering class.**

I hope you take great satisfaction in this moment

**We are especially grateful to you**

because it is the quality of our student body

that most determines the quality of our education

and of our community life.

**This may seem to be an odd assertion.**

**Considering the fact**

that you are sending your students to learn from us

and paying a price for the privilege, at that.

**But believe me**

at Michigan education is a two way street.

**Our students challenge, inspire and teach all of us---**

faculty and staff and their fellow students.

**Our students help to push us to the forefront of knowledge**

with their questions, their insights,

their refusal to accept the "accepted" wisdom.

**And I should note that they also constantly press us**

to live up to our ideals

They teach us not to be complacent about anything we do.

**This new class will be no exception,**

**Indeed, we expect great things of it**

as we stand here at the beginning

of the journey of discovery that lies ahead.

**I am delighted to welcome you and your student**

to the University of Michigan family.

It's a big family

...some 370k strong--alumni, countless friends,

35k students, 2,500 faculty, XXstaff, and all their families.

**You might think that a family so large,**

and one stretched across America and the world,

couldn't have real emotional meaning for its members.

**But I think you and your student will find**

that this Michigan family will reach out and embrace you.

It will be a source of pride, engagement, and sustenance

for for you for the rest of your lives.

**My colleagues from other institutions,**

invariably remark on this extraordinary loyalty

that holds Michigan people together.

**They ask me what accounts for it.**

in an institution that is so large, often competitive,

and seemingly impersonal.

**There isn't a single or simple answer.**

There are so many things that come to mind.

**First and most importantly, is the Michigan education itself**

that puts our students at the cutting edge  
of research and discovery.

**We are not a small liberal arts college.**

We aren't the right choice for everyone. .

**But students who choose Michigan,**

find here an unparalleled opportunity for learning.

**Then, too, Michigan has a special energy, a spirit,**

that inspires and unites us.

**It comes at least in part from the fact**

that we are a public university

**Our deepest commitment is to pursue academic excellence**

to serve the public good.

From this our students derive a sense of obligation to society  
they appreciate the need to give something back.

**From the beginning Michigan has represented opportunity**

for an education as good as any available anywhere in the world  
for all those students with the ability and will to achieve  
without regard for their background, wealth, ethnicity or belief.

**Michigan is also a uniquely dynamic place.**

Whether it is in the classroom, in the laboratory or library,  
at a computer screen or on the playing field,

Michigan people demonstrate a special energy and drive,  
they aspire to be the best.

to set the highest goals and go all out to achieve them.

But you already know that from your own student.

**Our history and tradition are to be an academic leader**

and to educate leaders

Our students develop a sense of personal responsibility to lead not  
follow.

**Of course we couldn't be what we are if we didn't attract**

the cream of the crop of faculty and students.

And, believe me, the class of 1995 is no exception.

**Your student is part of a class**

that is among the best in our history.

**They are sure to make you...and us...**

proud while they are with us and long after they leave.

**There is a special electricity**

when so many talented people brought are brought together  
when they are given the freedom to explore ideas  
to create, to do the best they can do.

**You need to know that Michigan also can be a tough place**

in the sense that we expect students

to take a lot of responsibility for themselves.

**Of course, there are plenty of supports,**

countless sources of advice and counsel,

faculty and staff who will mentor and care,

**But Michigan students need to seek out resources,**

to take the initiative, if they want to get the most out of their education.

**Michigan is a caring place but it is not always an easy place**

**To succeed, our students have to work hard**

to commit themselves to academic achievement.

**They have to be willing to go the extra mile.**

**At first, some students may find the University**

a bit overwhelming

there are so many options...

**Students from so many backgrounds and interests**

**... who to befriend**

**Lectures, concerts, conferences, plays, movies, dances**

**...which to attend**

**There is a tremendous range**

of world class cultural presentations  
and countless social events to choose among.

**And there also are so many opportunities to participate**

whether in student government  
or journalism, or political activism, creative arts,  
competitive sports, drama, music.

**Students are surrounded every day by so many choices.**

**But not to worry.**

Before many days pass, students begin to know their way around,  
make a place for themselves.  
to feel at home  
to understand they can't do it all  
to be selective,  
to explore and express the growing sense of their own individuality.

**Actually I think it is this range of choice,**

all this energy and excitement,  
all the intellectual and social diversity and ferment  
that makes Michigan unique.

**The fact is that our students**

learn nearly as much outside of the classroom as in it.

**And they learn not just academically but socially.**

we have an environment that helps develop  
character, motivation, determination,  
self reliance, and commitment to serve society.

**Our students are challenged**

and this accounts for their special spirit  
and explains why our alumni go on to be leaders  
in so many walks of life.

**These are some of the things that bond**

the University so closely to its extended family.

**There is just nothing quite like it anywhere.**

Now you and your student have taken your place here.  
I look forward to seeing you often in coming years.  
Best of luck and Go Blue!

Note: You and Mary Ann will offer to answer any questions.

**First of all,**