

NAACP State Convention

53rd Annual State Convention of the Michigan NAACP

Friday, September 8, 1989

Ramada Inn, Ann Arbor

11:55 Moderator/Presiding Officer John Finn

Ann Arbor NAACP Executive Committee

12:00 Invocation, Rev. John Shayne

State NAACP Chaplain

12:45 Introduction of Keynote

On Arrival Salutations Governor James Blanchard

Talk Points

On behalf of the University of Michigan, warmest greetings to you Gov

Blanchard, President Breeding and honored guests.

Thank you for coming today.

It is an honor to be part of this important 53rd annual meeting of the NAACP and to welcome you to Ann Arbor

I was delighted when President Breeding offered us the opportunity to welcome you.

It is important to continue our dialog with you and other state leaders about what the University of Michigan and other universities are doing to help address what is still the most painful and damaging problem confronting America --racism, discrimination and unequal educational and economic opportunity

Of course, higher education cannot solve these problems alone. But we have an important contribution to make.

At Michigan we have adopted a long range plan to achieve national leadership in minority educational opportunity and success. We call it the Michigan Mandate and it sets a course for the University that stresses long term investments at critical points in the educational pipeline. Vice Provost Moody will tell you more about what we are doing but let me just point out one of the strategies we are following.

We are developing with schools outreach programs to improve educational preparation of students and we will do much more of this. Vice Provost Moody and others have instituted programs that are bringing students to campus and taking the University to their classrooms to help enrich their educational experience and assure them admission to college.

We are reaching out early for recruitment of students and committing resources to financial aid so that I can say now that we are pledged to meet the financial need of every admitted Michigan student. Vice Provost Moody and others are also working with community colleges and Historically Black Colleges and Universities for educational cooperation--I think we have something to learn about how to teach just as perhaps we can offer some assistance to them--

A critical issue is the recruitment of the next generation of university faculty and for this reason the University has committed nearly \$2 mil in additional fellowship money to make sure that every graduate student is supported. The UM is the largest source of PH.D.s in the country and therefore we have a special role to play in preparing a new generation of minority students for leadership in our society. Indeed, we are now second only to Howard University in the number of Black PhDs that we graduate.

I'd like to point out that all of the efforts I have mentioned require major investments now and none of them will pay off overnight. In fact, many will take years of support and effort before we see today's 5th graders graduating from the UM and entering grad or professional schools. It will be years before this year's crop of entering grad students finishes a degree and teaches on our faculty or begins medical or law practice or starts up the management ladder in business.

The point is that the University of Michigan is in this for the long haul. I think we all have to recognize that it is only by this kind of long term and deep commitment that real solid progress will come.

Of course, long range efforts and programs won't grab headlines. But they will improve the life chances of many Michigan children and strengthen the leadership development of our state and country. That is our goal.

As a public university, we must meet our responsibilities and achieve the goals we have set because we must help Michigan prepare for a very different American future in which those we call minorities today will be the majority tomorrow just as they are in the world community.

And I know that we will from time to time make some mistakes, or experience setbacks. You will probably read about them in the paper or see them on the nightly news. But we can't let this stop us from going on.

Michigan and its sister institutions I believe are determined to do their best but we can not do the job alone.

Fortunately we have a visionary and committed Governor who is providing leadership for reform of education programs to support equal access and economic opportunity.

And I think the general public is awakening to the need to invest in our children and their future.

But our most important resource and allies are people like you who care enough to work for change and help lead all of us along the path to true equality. Many of you have spent your lives in this struggle so we have much to learn from your experience. I hope you will help us as we move forward and that we can all work together to build a brighter future for all of our children and their children.

Thank you again for this chance to meet with you. I hope many of you will get over to campus to see some of the things we are doing.

Have a productive and successful meeting and come back whenever you can.

But in Michigan under Governor Blanchard's leadership I think the commitment to at last make good on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all of the sons and daughters of this state