

Anne and I feel very honored by this action, and we want to thank the Regents and President Coleman for your recognition.

This November will mark our 35th year at the University of Michigan, and over these many years it has been our great privilege to serve this remarkable institution in many ways—on its faculty, as a members of the University community, and through leadership assignments as dean, provost, and president.

I remember a former dean once remarking that there were very few social institutions worthy of the commitment of an entire career, and Michigan was clearly one of these. (Actually I don't remember just who said this—probably someone like Harold Shapiro, Billy Frye, or Chuck Vest, long since departed for another university.)

Of course as you all are well aware, this is not the easiest place to serve,
Or to lead,
Or to govern!!!

But as Regents and as executive officers, each of you view your role as a higher calling, deserving of the personal commitment and sacrifice you each dedicate so unselfishly to the University, just as did Anne and I during our years in the presidency.

During the past several months I participated in two meetings that vividly illustrate just the importance these commitments to Michigan:

The first was in Montreux, Switzerland this past June where I co-chaired a joint meeting of university presidents from the United States and Europe, sharing visions of the future of the university. Then this October at UC-Santa Cruz, I participated in a meeting with the leadership of the University of California to explore the future of that institution.

In both events I was struck by how many people approached me to learn more about what they referred to as “the Michigan model”. Now, of course, this “model” meant quite different things to different people.

To some it was your courageous defense of diversity in higher education. In a sense Michigan carried the water for the rest of higher education all the way to the Supreme Court, something that others not only depended upon Michigan to do, but actually expected us to do as a part of our long tradition to provide “an uncommon education for the common man”.

To others the Michigan model means our capacity not only to sustain but enhance our quality even as our tax support declines. Clark Kerr used to call Michigan “the mother of public universities” because of this unusual ability to achieve high quality as a public institution. Many other public universities with far more generous state support such as the Universities of California, North

Carolina, and Virginia now look to our model to learn how to sustain quality during tough budget times.

To some the Michigan model arises from the “free and open spirit” of our students and faculty, a phrase used to describe Michigan by a Harpers magazine article in the 1920s.

Still others see the Michigan model as innovation and risk taking, for example, when Michigan developed the quantitative social sciences in the 1950s through its Institute for Social Research or its role in building the Internet in the 1980s.

For Michigan, quality by itself was never quite enough. Instead we have always sought leadership, perhaps best captured by the phrase “the leaders and best” in our fight song, the Victors.

Anne and I are privileged to be a part of this tradition, and we are deeply grateful to the Regents for this action that links us even more tightly to this remarkable institution.