

Luncheon

Thanks

Anne and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for attending this event...

Inaugurations are always very special events for universities since they link the past with the future...

The extraordinary turnout today is evidence once again that the University plays a very special role in the lives of a great many people...a great many institutions...and our state, nation, and world.

This event has taken extraordinary efforts by lots of folks...

The Inauguration Committee...led by Dean John D'Arms... Anita Miller and her team from the Development Office
The Staff of the President's and Provost's Office
And, literally, a cast of hundreds...

Including the stunt man who stood in for me during the ceremony...

The Past

This December will mark the 20th year since my family and I first arrived here from Pasadena. When we left Pasadena it was sunny and in the high 80s. However, as we stepped off the plane in Metro into snow and subzero temperatures, with no warm clothing and children who had never seen snow, we wondered whether we have made the right choice.

Two decades of service as a faculty member in

this University is testimony to the fact that we've become hooked on Michigan. We have found our warmth through friends and colleagues...indeed we now feel like native Michiganders!

And we have found this University to be a truly extraordinary place for teaching, learning, and living... for scholarship and for service.

The Present

To be chosen as the 11th President of the University is a formidable responsibility to the people of this state and the nation.

But it is also a bit intimidating, since Anne and I will be following in the footsteps of some truly extraordinary people...

Vivian and Harold Shapiro

Sally and Bob Fleming

Alene and Allen Smith

Ann and Harlan Hatcher

Each presidency of this University has had a theme... and, as many of you know,

As a scientist and an engineer, I tend to be a futurist...and in this sense, it is not surprising that my theme for the University is a theme of the future.

A vision in which the University of Michigan continues its strong heritage of leadership...

By developing a model of what higher education must be to serve Michigan and the nation in the

century ahead...

A mission of building a University for the 21st Century.

My crystal ball suggests a future of great challenge

and responsibility...

but also a future of great opportunity and excitement...

But then I always remember that old saying...

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it!"

And isn't that, after all, just the role of a University...

the job of inventing the future.