

## **MLK-Business and Finance**

### **Introduction**

Regent Varner, Vice President Womack, Friends and Fellow Workers

It is a very great pleasure--indeed, a privilege--for me to be able to welcome you here today.

We are here this afternoon to honor the memory of one of our nation's greatest leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was born on this day 59 years ago.

Indeed, the challenge and importance of this evening and the next several days is conveyed by the title of this Symposium:

"The Multicultural University:

Enlightenment, Empowerment, and Equity:

A Challenge of the King Legacy"

I believe that this is precisely the spirit and purpose of the events planned for the University of Michigan's educational program honoring Dr. King and confirming our commitment to diversity, to pluralism, and to building a truly multicultural institution to serve our state and our nation.

I hope the result of these events will be action by each and every one of us to make Dr. King's dreams for our University, our nation, our world a reality.

This afternoon, I want to take a bit of time to remember Dr. King and to reflect on the way his life teaches us, inspires us, to build a university community that is a model for our country, a model of a diverse, pluralistic, multicultural community of people respecting and valuing one another for our differences even as we work together sustained by common values and common goals.

Most of you know that the University is setting forth on an ambitious plan known as the Michigan Mandate.

### **Michigan Mandate**

This is a plan--a framework for action--that we hope will make the University of Michigan a place where every person is respected and valued for the unique contributions they bring to our community.

It is a plan for change...

A plan that aims to eliminate racism and prejudice from our midst.

But more than that, the Michigan Mandate is a plan aimed at making this University a better place for all of us--students, faculty, and staff--

Where differences of background, race, or belief, do not divide us but rather become a source of strength and celebration.

This won't be easy.

In the Michigan Mandate, we are addressing one of the most persistent and difficult problems confronting our university and our nation.

But Dr. King and his heroic life teaches us that there is hope. He was one man armed only with the force of his ideas and the power of his teaching.

Yet he changed our country.

I believe that by following his example, by working together as a community, each in our own way, we can achieve our goals of building a multicultural community in which all are respected.

Each one of you, in your own work, can play a part in making the ideals of Dr. King a living reality by helping to build a more caring community on this campus.

For just as we must learn to value our difference, we must also be bound together by our common values and purposes.

Every one of us must help to build that sense of common bonds, of caring, of compassion, of community.

You, personally, can do a great deal to make the Michigan Mandate work.

Each of you can remember that in every personal contact you have in your work, whether it be with students, faculty, other staff, or the public...in every such contact you represent the University.

You have a marvelous chance to show that we are a community that respects people...

...that cares for people...

...that we are dedicated to doing our best for every person with courtesy and respect.

...and that we will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or prejudice.

If every one of us resolves to show this kind of pride and commitment, then we will take a giant step forward in

creating a truly diverse community that will be a model for all to follow.

### **Conclusion**

Now it is my great pleasure to introduce to you someone who exemplifies in her own life and achievements many of the values and aspirations we have come together to celebrate today.

She is a former colleague, a lasting friend to the University, and someone whose tireless and strong leadership have helped guide us through difficult times.

Please join me in welcoming our newly re-elected Regent, Nellie Varner.