

Commencement-Fall-1989

Welcome

On behalf of the entire University of Michigan community,
it is my very great pleasure to welcome each of you
to our 1988 Winter Commencement.

I would like to extend a special welcome to:

...today's graduates

...to their families and friends

...and to our Honorary Degree recipients,

Mr. Joseph Brodsky

Professor Stephen Spurr

Winter Commencement falls during the most festive
of times...

...We are surrounded by symbols of the season...

...fresh-fallen snow...

...the candles of Hannakuh

...the trees of Christmas

...the roses of Pasadena and the New Year

...and what could be more appropriate than

to include also the symbols of the cap

and gown that mark the rites of

passage represented by University commencement.

Tell me, are the rest of you beginning to feel just a
little bit nostalgic yet? Or do you just feel relieved!!!

Well, I can understand it if you do, because you seniors
have had a really spectacular year...
packed with memories to last a lifetime.

Just think back for a moment...

...Remember Leroy Hoard's breakaway 67 yard run that
sealed Michigan's exciting come-from-behind victory
over USC in the Rose Bowl...or John Kolesar's
spectacular catch in the waning seconds of the
Ohio State game...

...and who will ever be able to forget Rumeal Robinson
stepping to the line in Seattle with 3 seconds
left in overtime and calmly sinking two free throws to
win the national championship against Seton Hall.

...What about the sight of over 10,000 students and faculty
marching together, arm in arm down S. University to

honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and to confirm Michigan's commitment to achieving new levels of understanding, tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

...or the CBS Morning News, broadcast live from a luxury condo in East Quad!!!

...or Leonard Bernstein celebrating his 70th birthday in Hill Auditorium with the Vienna Philharmonic...

...or the visits of Ella Fitzgerald or Toni Morrison or Kurt Mazur and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra now performing in the May Festival...

...or the scores of spectacular student productions, plays, concerts, dances, operas, and, of course demonstrations and protests, that have enlivened this campus over the past year.

Images

Most of us tend to remember in terms of images...
...and the images generated from the past year are quite extraordinary...

That feeling of impending doom, leading Miami, the #1 team in the nation by 16 points with 5:28 left on the clock...
...particularly after that frustrating last second loss down at South Bend the week before...

The excitement of Rackham's Golden Anniversary in which scholars from around the country came together to discuss the remarkable impact Michigan has had on the intellectual life of this country...

Of course, my inauguration...
which most others enjoyed more than I (since I viewed it more as an execution than a coronation)
...on a beautiful fall day in which the fall colors mixed with the colors of the academic robes of the 400 delegates

Toni Morrison, holding a packed audience in Rackham spellbound for over two hours while she discussed her deeply moving novels

Leonard Bernstein, performing with the Vienna Philharmonic to celebrate his 70th birthday...and then returning to our house hold court with a large group of music students...
reminiscing, playing, singing...

Back to football again...that incredible second half
down in Columbus...with John Kolesar coming back
in the final moments with a spectacular catch to beat OSU

Or my birthday...in which I began with a visit to the White
House to meet with President Elect Bush...
...and returned to host a dinner in Ann Arbor for
Presidents Ford and Carter and the delegates from
the world's democracies...

But, of course, the new year was even more exciting...

...Remember Leroy Hoard's breakaway 67 yard run that
sealed Michigan's exciting come-from-behind victory
over USC in the Rose Bowl...

(or Bo Derek making a surprising appearance at that
pep rally at the Century Plaza...)

...What about the sight of over 10,000 students and faculty
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confirm Michigan's commitment to achieving new
levels of understanding, tolerance, and mutual fulfillment
for peoples of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

...or the CBS Morning News, broadcast live from
a luxury condo in East Quad!!!

(and my interview with Kathleen Sullivan...

...4 minutes to blow a career)

...and who will ever be able to forget Rumeal Robinson
stepping to the line in Seattle with 3 seconds
left in overtime and calmly sinking two free throws to
win the national championship against Seton Hall.

...and the Cinderella story of Steve Fisher and his
team "with a mission"

The Alumni Satellite Broadcast, in which Anne hosted
alumni clubs in over 50 cities to a reception in the
President's House

And then the May Festival...a remarkable series of
concerts with Kurt Masur and the Leipzig Gewandhaus
Orchestra...ending that final night with Jesse Norman
signing Strauss's Final Four Songs...and the magical
moment of silence as the audience attempted to prolong the spell
(and, once again back in the House, where we gave Miestro
Masur a UM NCAA Championship sweatshirt)

And, of course, Spring Commencement, notable
not for the dignified behavior of our students, but
rather to the fact that the three extraordinary
individuals we honored with honorary degrees this
year all happened to be Michigan graduates.

It convinces me even more that there really something very,
very special about this institution--that we seem time and
time again, whether in academics, in athletics, in the
performing arts,...in the achievements of our alumni.

With each passing day we have become more
and more convinced that this University is really
a very special place...and a very special resource to
this state and the nation because of the talents,
commitments, and vision of its people.

It is clear that Michigan touches the lives of many, many
people in many, many important ways...

But, as memorable as all of these events are, I suspect
that for most of you today's ceremony will be
a highlight of your senior year since it celebrates
the culmination of many years of hard work, dedication, and
achievement.

For our graduates, today's ceremony represents the
culmination of their hopes and aspirations...
not to mention years of diligent work...

For our faculty, today is also very important since it
is a moment of pride and transition as they share this
event with their graduates, taking pride on your accomplishments
and reflecting on their role in teaching you, working with you, and
learning from you during your years at the University.

I suspect, however, that the group for whom this day means
the most is not the graduates or the faculty...
...but rather the families of today's graduates.

Because it is you who probably deserve the most congratulations
It has been your support...emotional, intellectual, and, of course
financial...that ultimately has made this moment
possible for the graduates today.

In a very real sense, today is your day as much as it
is your graduates...and you should take great pride in it.

For that reason, before we proceed further any with this
ceremony, I believe it very important that we all

stop for a moment and join together in recognizing
your contributions.

Hence, I would first like for the parents of today's graduates
to please rise...and be recognized by the graduating students
and the faculty.

Next, I would ask the grandparents, spouses, children, relatives,
and friends of the graduates to all stand so that we may also
publicly recognize all of you...

Thank you very much....

Now I would like to turn to the introduction of today's commencement
speaker.

CLOSING REMARKS

Before we conclude our program, I would like
to address a few final words to the graduates.

There is little doubt that college has as much impact as
anything in our lives...

It sets us on a career course...

Many of your college friends will remain close throughout your lives.

Many of us meet our lifetime companions in college...
roughly one-third of Michigan graduates meet their
spouses at Michigan

Throughout our career and our lives our college experience
provides us with an anchor, a tie to the values and
understanding that guide our lives...

And, of course, provides us with something to do on
Saturday afternoons in the fall...
...and on New Year's Day!!!

Although most of you will be leaving Ann Arbor following
your graduation, I suspect you will find yourself
returning time and time again.

You know, one of the most meaningful moments on this
campus occurs in early September when the Ann Arbor
merchants put up banners along State Street and
South University welcoming back students at the
beginning of the fall term with the simple phrase:
"Welcome home"...

In a very real sense, this University has become your
home...you will forever be a member of the Michigan family.

Today you are joining that long line of maize and blue alumni...
over 300,000 strong, one out of every thousand Americans...

And if there is single common theme that seems to characterize
the lives of Michigan graduates, it is the theme of
leadership...

And an unusual commitment to both intellectual and humane
values while achieving excellence that we are proud to see governing the
lives of our graduates as they take up leadership roles
in our society.

As a Michigan graduate, as a leader, you will face a
future of great challenge and responsibility...
but it will also be a future of great opportunity
and excitement.

Today we celebrate your accomplishments...
but even more, we look forward with great anticipation
to your achievements in the years ahead.

There is an old saying that...
"The best way to predict the future is to invent it!"..

That is the real challenge before you!

We hope your education has prepared you to now
assume the roles of leadership that is your heritage,
your destiny, as graduates of the University of Michigan...

To go out into that exciting world full of challenge and opportunity...
...and to invent the future!

We welcome you to the Michigan family.

We wish you health, happiness, and the satisfaction of
a rewarding and meaningful life...

You know, it has been said that there are really only
two types of folks in this world:

Those who always say "Why?"

And those who always say "Why not!"

I hope that your years here Michigan have prepared
you to always answer in the latter spirit...
the "let's go for it" spirit of the Maize and Blue.

Congratulations...

Godspeed...

...and Go-Blue...

Luncheon Remarks

Let me welcome you to the Luncheon for the
Winter Commencement...

This is always such a special time of year...
fresh fallen snow...the anticipation of the holiday season...

...and, of course, of the California sun and Roses...

It is most appropriate that we come together to celebrate
the rites of passage for our graduates represented by
University commencement...

Today we are joined at this luncheon by

...the Regents of the University...

...Paul and Meg Brown

...Tom and Sally Roach

...Deane and Marilyn Baker

...Neal and Paula Nielsen

...Philip Power

...and water polo team member with Professor Spurr
and former Regents

...Trudy Huebner

...Gene Power

...and another water polo team member

...David Laro--Nancy, Marlene, and Rachel

...we also have in attendance the officers of the University

...Vice President for Finance Farris Womack and Anne

...Vice President for Research Linda Wilson and Paul

...Vice President for Government Relations Dick Kennedy and Ann

...Vice President for Student Services Henry Johnson and Billie

...Vice President for Development John Cosovich and Timmie

...Vice Provost for Medical Affairs George Zuidema and Joan

...and co-President for everything, Anne Duderstadt

...several members of the faculty are also here

...John and Nanette Mersereau from the Slavic Studies Department

...Shaw and Nancy Livermore from History

...Philip Kearney and Julia from Education

...Beth and Harvey Reed, chair of the Faculty Senate

...several students

...Bart and Dixie Barnes

...John Bisceglia

...Invocation

...Rev. Douglas Evett and Debbie, St. Clare's Episcopal Church

...the folks who put this together...

...Anita Miller

...Pam Korniski

...and, one of the University's great treasures...the president
of the University alumni association...general of that

army of 300,000 maize and blue...

...Judge Geraldine Bledsone Ford

And, of course, most important of all, we have today's honorary degree recipients...

Although these will be honored in the ceremony to follow, it is customary to recognize their achievements in this luncheon...

Let me first make some introductions...

Steven Spurr...

...Patricia Spurr

...Margaret

...Adriane

...Steven

...Nathaniel

...Laura

...David

Note: Water polo...

Joseph Brodsky

Welcome back to Ann Arbor...

Logistics...

Buses

Robing

Reception at President's House afterwards

Role of Alumni

And, of course, this is where you come in!

For a university achieves leadership...greatness...

...through its people...

...through their talents and abilities,

...through their involvement and commitment.

The Michigan family extends far beyond those

on our campus for the moment, our students, faculty, and staff

It includes that army of maize and blue,

our 340,000 alumni, one of every thousand Americans!

Indeed, you have been...

...and will continue to be even more...

...the most critical factor in achieving and sustaining

the greatness of your University.

For that reason, this evening I would like

to take this opportunity to issue a request...

..."a call to arms"

to activate and energize you as our

alumni and friends

A Call to Arms

We call for your

- your commitment
 - your involvement
 - and, most of all, your loyalty
- to your university, the University of Michigan.

A call for help...

- 1) Of course we need your financial support
which provides our capacity of excellence
--while it provides you with an
opportunity to have great impact
not just on your university, but
through your university, on this
nation and the world.
- 2) We also seek your influence
Michigan produces leaders...
and many of you are in positions of influence
in the public or private sector and capable of
helping your university
- 3) Your help in telling the Michigan story to the nation
We are among the most visible universities in America
(CBS Morning News, Steve Fisher, activism)
...let your Michigan pride show a bit!
- 4) Help us make new friends and enlist new supporters!
- 5) And most of all, become involved...
...providing to our students a sense of the
potential of a Michigan education
...providing to our faculty and staff
encouragement and support

In a very real sense, you as alumni and friends
play the key role in passing the torch...
in passing from one generation to the next
the Michigan traditions of excellence and leadership
which we all cherish so deeply

Concluding Remarks

You know, Michigan is really a very special place....
It is one of only a handful of universities capable
of truly changing not only higher education,
but the nation and the world.

A personal note here:

It was just about 20 years ago that Anne and I left
the warmth and sunshine of Pasadena to come to
Michigan.

We did so, in part, because Michigan had what was
clearly the best department in the world in my
particular field of interest, nuclear engineering.

And throughout almost two decades on this campus,
I have found myself surrounded by faculty and
students who have arrived on this campus because
they wanted to be associated with the very best...
...the world leader...in education and research.

These linked themes of leadership and excellence
are what have kept me here...and what make
this University so very special.

We believe the challenge of re-inventing
the American university for the 21st Century
...is not only an exciting and
challenging mission for the 1990s
...but it is also a mission befitting
UM's long heritage of leadership
...and it is also a challenge worthy of
the army of maize and blue alumni
across the nation and around the world

Indeed, I'd be very surprised if you
settled for anything less from your university!

The 1990s will be a time of great challenge
opportunity, and responsibility for your university.

But they will also be years of great excitement.

As we stand on the threshold of this
great adventure of re-inventing the
University for the 21st Century,

Let me call on you to demonstrate yet
again that extraordinary sense of
loyalty and pride in your University
that has been our key source of
strength...

Let me call on you to show that
"Go-Blue" spirit that is the key
to our heritage and our destiny.