

Draft Stump

I'm here today as a lame duck. At the end of June my wife, Anne, and I will return to normal life. I'll be passing on the reigns to my long valued colleague, Homer Neal, who will become interim president of the UM. at the end of June. Any alums here can relax. I'm also passing on to him the big tin cup he'll need to begging for his living since that's the main job of university presidents.

The best thing about being a lame duck is that you can once more say what you really think. Not that I've pulled many punches over the years. My natural instinct and my background as a scientist compel me to call things as I see them..... Whatever I do next, I'll never be a politician.

So today, I'd like to talk with you not about politics, or ideologies, or special interests. We're all hearing plenty of that these days.

Rather, I'd like to share my thoughts about these last seven eventful years in my life and the life of our University and our state

- Where we were when I set out;.
- Where we are now, and
- Where we need to go as the century winds down.
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Such much has happened.. ..is happening.

As we approach the start line for the new century we are certainly in far better shape than in 1988... We are more lean, more disciplined, more realistic, more focused---Well, perhaps not me....but certainly the state and University are.

It's been tough. There are still many hard choices and difficult sacrifices to be made. But I believe we have started on the right course.

At the Beginning

1988 seems a lifetime ago. Starting then, in my Inaugural address, I sounded the alarm for the University of Michigan and later I went circuit riding throughout the state with the same message.. I said we were in the midst of a revolution affecting every aspect of our lives. While we all certainly felt the symptoms of change—the pain—we had not grasped the cause, its scope, its breathtaking pace.

As I moved about the University and the state in the beginning, described the revolution we were experiencing as the transition to a postindustrial society as fundamental as the agrarian or industrial revolutions preceding it. There was a seismic shift underway in the very foundations of our economy, society, and indeed our culture.

I described the key underlying forces driving this transformation as being:

- Emergence of an economy based on knowledge—educated people and their ideas powered—by breathtakingly rapid development of new technologies;
- internationalization of the world's economy and culture enabled by technologies of communication and travel; and
- Demographic changes in the American population bringing hitherto un or under represented groups into a majority of the workforce.

It seemed to me then that too many of our people and their leaders were floundering, on the defensive, desperately clinging to the past....to the

habits and expectations of an earlier era when we were a leading industrial power not just of America but of the entire world.

Many looked for scapegoats—foreign workers, immigrants, business, labor, politicians.

Some took an “if we close our eyes and hold our breath, we can make change stop” position”.

Many others demanded the protection of more and more public subsidies even when public expenditures climbed sky high and revenues fell.

Not that I want to cast blame. Economic and social upheaval of the magnitude we have experienced. is unprecedented. It challenges our basic assumptions about how we live our lives, it changes the rules in mid-game. It displaces and hurts far too many..

At the same time , the certain consequence of this continuing widespread denial of and resistance to change seemed to me to condemn Michigan –both the University and the state-- to a future of decline that would soon be irreversible. We all know that it is a fundamental law of nature that all living systems must continually adapt to their changing environment or risk extinction

To survive let alone prosper, Michigan had to summon the .courage and strength to face up to reality , to see change not as a threat but to seize the opportunities it offered to make a better world for ourselves and our children..

Like our state, the UM had its own set of challenges to overcome. During the preceding two decades, UM, and our other universities, had come through an extraordinary growth and prosperity. This led to complacency and led us to try to be all things to all people at a cost that became unsustainable when Michigan's hard times caught up with us. We took our status as a leading university of the for granted. . Our administrative practices were inefficient and too costly. We were not as entrepreneurial as our private university competitors....Harvard, Stanford...or as responsive to the state's rapidly changing circumstances as we needed to be as a public institution.

Building on the efforts of my predecessor, Harold Shapiro, I called on all members of the campus go further, to help renew the UM to better serve our state and nation and they responded far beyond my expectations.

My colleagues and I set forth a strategic plan and set of objectives designed to address the challenge of change and turn them to opportunities for improvement of our teaching, research and service mission

At the same time I began my circuit ride across Michigan seeking out audiences in every part of the state and every walk of life to alert them to the profound nature of the revolution we were undergoing and the dangers of continuing denial.

I think many if not most of my listeners concluded I was at best a crank, one of those ivory tower types...probably not dangerous but certainly not practical.

Most in my audiences grew up in a state where a few large companies – indeed, one mammoth industry, controlled Michigan’s destiny, where economic growth and security was a given. Where there was little call for entrepreneurship. Where the focus of government was on expanding services, regulation, entitlements... and the taxation to pay for it all.

Since 1988, as the ad says “We’ve come a long way, baby.”

Turning the Corner

As we stand at the brink of a new century and a new millennium we are learning to live with change as a fact of life. It is woven in the fabric of our daily lives, in the way we work, relate to each other, and experience the world.

We have learned hard lessons and taken them to heart.

The best news is that we’ve broken the stranglehold of the past.

Fortunately for us, no state or nation is richer than Michigan in the essential ingredient needed to thrive in the century to come. We are rich in our people.

People--From our forebears, we inherit a priceless legacy of pioneering spirit, gritty courage, and self reliance. And in this new world we enter, it is the quality of our people, their character, their ability, their knowledge and skill that will be our salvation.

Knowledge—universities--For today it is clear that the age we enter is the age of knowledge. It is the skill of our workforce and our capacity

for innovation that gives and will continue to give Michigan the competitive edge in the world economy

XXState improvements

Government Restructured

Educational reform, investing in our people

Economic Development

Changed attitudes, quality

UM achievements

Proud to report that the UM has never been better—Renewed, rebuilt

Commitment to Excellence

measures

Undergraduate Ed

Information Technology Leadership

Michigan Mandate

Fiscal and Management Reform

What Next?

Still a distance to go—for state, universities, individuals.

Resist fear and impulse to deny or evade.

Social Foundations—in a period of intense change we need the security of strong families and communities yet deterioration continues.

Attitudes

- Need long term view, willingness to invest, to sacrifice for the future as our parents were willing to do.
- Commitment to quality
- Personal responsibility
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Race/Class—Must urgently build unity out of our social diversity.

Growing divisions of class and race will doom the progress we have made and must make in the future.

Education

Focus on quality education and training at all levels and ages

Nourish and protect universities as

Closing

My time is up but I cannot leave without thanking you for your support of the UM over the years. The University could not have achieved so much in these years without you and people like you throughout our state.

No institution has more loyal alumni or citizen support. Your pride in us, commitment to our values and goals makes and keeps us strong.

You send us your children to educate. You come yourselves for continuing education, for cultural events, for help in starting new businesses and careers, the professional community relies on us to help them stay current with new knowledge and best practice, Young students reach out and interact with us on the internet and through our school programs, You access our libraries on line, Our research is creating whole new industries. You come to our hospitals for the latest treatments. When our teams take to the field, it is your enthusiastic support that gives them the competitive edge (You might have tried a bit harder this year). As President, I have called for help from so many of you and you have never failed to come through.

Anne and I are Michiganders to the core We arrived in Ann Arbor in 1967 with two young daughters and we have never seriously thought of leaving the place that has been so warm, and supportive throughout my career.

In these seven years, I've tried to give something back to my adopted state. The extent to which I have succeeded is thanks to you and to the University's extraordinary faculty and staff who carry on Michigan's historic commitment to excellence in public higher education.

Although I am leaving the Presidency, you can be sure that I will never stop working to help our state prosper. I expect to be very active in coming years putting the UM's strengths to work for you to improve Michigan's quality of life.

Thankyou.