

## **Vest Inaugural Lunch (5/9/91)**

**President Vest, Becky, distinguished guests and colleagues.**

**I am delighted to be here for this Inauguration of my friend,**

Chuck Vest, although in coming I may have blown my cover.

**You see, this is one of a number of key presidencies**

we are seeding

in a Michigan takeover bid.

Rhodes, Sudarkasa, Wilson, now Vest.

Think about it.

**When Chuck was named President of MIT, a reporter asked me**

why I thought Michigan was the source

of so many leaders for America's colleges and universities.

**I said I thought the answer was at least partly that**

we are the boot camp for higher education.

**Once you have navigated the fearsome**

bureaucratic labyrinths of Michigan,

dodged the dean's firing squad,

evaded the foraging faculty...

armed and mounted in hot air balloons,

outlasted the the only Trotskyite demonstrators

remaining on the planet,

passed your political correctness tests,

been pilloried by the Michigan Daily as an enemy of the people,

.....(in the same week the Michigan Review

accuses you of betraying Western Civilization)

tamed the Legislative Lions,

soothed the savage donors,

surmounted the government audit of your toilet seats,

practiced conjuring up heavenly interventions

on demand through a few tight Bowl games  
and put together your first billion and a half dollar budget,  
you are ready to take your place at any of  
the battlements of higher education.

**So Michigan is the boot camp**

for those heading to the front to face enemy fire.

**For those who know him, Chuck Vest may seem to be a very unlikely**

survivor of such a tough trial by fire.

**Indeed, he might seem to be a very unlikely warrior altogether.**

**Modest and soft spoken, humane, decent, a scholar scientist,**

slow to judge, quick to defend the underdog, a listener and a learner,

**Chuck Vest might appear to be the last person**

to lead a charge into battle.

But, believe me, in this case appearances are deceiving.

**First of all, he is, as I said, already a decorated veteran.**

**And then, too, Chuck has a zealous side.**

**I have never known anyone with a fiercer sense of integrity,**

a more unwavering commitment to justice,  
or more steady moral courage.

**He is truly a man for all seasons.**

He is definitely the right man for for this place in this season...  
when higher education and science are under  
unprecedented hostile fire.

**I promise you,**

---MIT, the scientific community, American higher education--

all of us can look to Chuck Vest with easy confidence.

He will will be a vigorous, perseverent,  
and victorious champion of our cause.

You can count on it.

**Chuck will earn the admiration and affection of everyone here at MIT**

just as he did at Michigan.

**He will will also be a voice of reason and integrity**

in the halls of science and academe

as well as in government and public life.

**I've known Chuck and Becky for XX years,**

ever since we were young Assistant Professors.

**We have moved together up the professorial ranks.**

**Neither of us expected to find ourselves here at the administrative front.**

...maybe it has something to do with our lagging textbook sales.

...at least that is what Chuck alleged when he spoke about me at my inauguration.

**Now Michigan has reluctantly sent them off**

to carry the Maize and Blue flag back to the colonies.

**Soon you all will be singing Hail to the Victors**

and agonizing over Bowl games on New Year's Day along with the rest of us.

We will miss Chuck and Becky

But, then again, as Hal says in 2001,

"We're here."