

Honors Convocation-1989

First things first...

UM: ... Southern Alabama:

Now back to business...

Welcome

It gives me a very great pleasure to welcome all of you...

...to this afternoon's Honors Convocation...

...the students that we honor today...

...and their parents, families, and friends...

This convocation is a very special moment in the cycle of the academic year since it celebrates that spirit that is at the core of this University's distinction...

the aspiration, the will, the determination to achieve excellence in learning, teaching, and scholarship...

It truly is an honor...a privilege...for those of us who are here today as faculty, administrators, Regents, and friends of the undergraduates we have just recognized to pay tribute to the impressive achievements of this group.

I must confess that this is an event particularly special to me, since while I have had the pleasure of participating in these convocations over the last two decades, this is the first time I have ever done so as President of the University of Michigan.

Recognition to the Families

I suspect, however, that the group for whom this day means the most is not the students or the faculty...
...but rather to their families

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 their students.

In a very real sense, today is your day as much as it is your students...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.

I would like at this point

to ask all the parents and family members in the audience to stand so that we may acknowledge your contributions...while acknowledging as well the very special pleasure and pride that you are justifiably feeling today.

The Honor

Michigan is a very challenging institution...but it is also an institution characterized by an extraordinary diversity of opportunities.

The students we honor this afternoon have not only met these academic challenges, but they have excelled as well in a broad range of extracurricular activities...the performing arts, athletics, student organizations, leadership.

As proud as we all

are

of the grades the students here today have
received their achievements go far beyond this.

After all, grades are just a shorthand, a symbol, that
should reflect not only your intelligence, discipline,
and willingness to work hard--

all important traits, to be sure...

But they also symbolize a set of values and characteristics
that reflect the essence of what a university is all about:

A commitment to intellectual discovery and rigor...

...the excitement of acquiring knowledge and
discovering new ideas and new ways of thinking...

...of participating in the quest to better understand
ourselves and the world around us.

The greatest rewards of teaching come from nurturing
and witnessing this kind of development and
commitment in our students.

...of reading your papers and exams and lab reports...

...of sensing the great excitement and involvement
in your learning and thinking.

Our pleasure and pride thus

is not only for your individual achievements,
but as well for your collective role in reflecting and
sustaining the values and goals upon which the
University of Michigan is based.

It is because we have such students that we can
attract a great faculty to the University...

...it is, in turn then, those faculty who have such

a profound effect on the intellectual development of the students before us.

Thus we are very proud of you, grateful to you, and eager to do everything we can to enable you to realize your fullest potential and make your years at the University both meaningful and valuable in themselves...

Making certain that those years serve as a foundation for your futures as productive and contributing members of our society.

Indeed, while today we celebrate your accomplishments... even more, we look forward with great anticipation to your achievements in the years ahead.

And that brings me to my final comments before introducing this afternoon's speaker...

A Challenge...

A Question:

Just out of curiosity, how many of you are intending to attend

...business school

...law school

...medical school

How many of you are intending to become teachers?

How many of you are intending to become college professors?

As I noted earlier, you are an extraordinarily talented group of individuals...

...because 2 + It is likely that regardless of what happens during your college education, you will go on to become leaders of our society...

You will leave this University at a particularly
interesting...indeed, important...moment...

Looking back over history/ one can identify certain
abrupt changes, discontinuities, in the nature,
the very fabric of our civilization...

The Renaissance, the Age
of Discovery, the Industrial Revolution

There are many who contend that our society is
once again undergoing such a dramatic shift in
fundamental perspective and structure.

We are rapidly evolving from a
resource- and labor-intensive society to a knowledge-intensive
society...in which intellectual capital...educated people and their
ideas...become the keys to our prosperity, security,
and well-being.

New ideas and concepts are exploding forth
at ever increasing rates...

In many fields, the knowledge base is doubling every
few years...

You must prepare yourselves for a future in which permanence and
stability

are less valued than flexibility and creativity...
in which the only certainty will be the presence of
continual change...

The typical college graduate of today will
likely change careers several times during a
lifetime...

Hence a college education today will only serve as
the stepping stone to a process of lifelong education...

and the ability to adapt to...indeed, to manage change...will become the most valuable skill of all.

Yet there is also another challenge here...

...one that we refer to in academic circles as the demographic crunch...

...the fact that the number of young adults in this country is declining rapidly as we slide down the backside of the postwar baby boom...

declining by as much as 25% to 30% in states such as Michigan

The fact is that there are simply not enough college students of your ability to meet the needs of this nation in the years ahead...

And, this shortage of human capital will be felt most seriously of all in those knowledge-intensive careers which will underpin our society as it enters the age of knowledge that is our future...

Those careers such as college teaching and research, which require further study at the graduate level are a preparation, will feel particular shortages.

Hence, now perhaps you see the reason for my concern...in view of your response to my earlier question about your career interests...

And perhaps you also now see why we believed it so appropriate that we invite the Dean of the Graduate School to be our head 3 - speaker this afternoon...

Introduction of John D'Arms

We have chosen in Dean D'Arms a member of our academic community who most clearly exemplifies a commitment to intellectual values and the kind of achievements that can flow from such a

COO

into...`hlad 2 + Professor John D'Arms, De`n of the Horace Rackham

School of Graduate Studies at the University.

Unfortt

aully, Dean EArms did!

Learn the value of a Michigan

He had his education until he came here as a member of the faculty

in 1965 as an Assistant Professor of Greek and Latin

in the Department of Classical

Studies.

He received his B.A. from that basketball powerhouse,

he had - Princeton University...□

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°□'â!, he then went on to receive a second B.A.

from Oxford.

He came a bit closer to real learning through his studies

for a Ph.D. in Classical Philology at the "Michigan

of the East"...also known as Harvard University.

Since arriving in Ann Arbor c

most 25 years ago, he

has contributed enormously as a teacher,
a scholar, and a leader.

He has served in numerous national and international roles

...Director of the American Academy in Rome
...Chairman of the Department of Classical Studies at Michigan
...Dean of the Graduate School
...and chairman of the Council of American Graduate Schools

He is internationally known for his scholarly contributions

and is a leading national advocate for the values of a
liberal education.

I present to you with great pleasure...

...not to mention a eager curiosity in light of his chose title!...
...Dean John D'Arms who will be speaking on
"One Way Streets and Ties that Bind"