

## **Inauguration 1.9S**

### **Introduction**

Distinguished Guests,

Members of the Board of Regents, Faculty, Students  
and Staff, Alumni and Friends

It is a great honor and a privilege to be able to serve  
my University and my State in this new role.

In a sense, this marvelous institution embodies the hopes and  
dreams, the commitment and stewardship of  
eight generations of Michigan citizens.

To be chosen as its 11th president is a formidable responsibility  
to the people of this State--and indeed, the nation and  
the world.

Actually, I should correct myself here, for I am really  
only the "approximately 11th" president of the University.

In that hectic period following the announcement  
of my appointment as President-Designate, I received the  
following electronic mail message from two distinguished  
historians who teach a course on the history of  
this University

READ E-MAIL MESSAGE...

Maybe I should be regarded as the 11.4th president, since there were  
no students during the time of President Monteith...

### **Michigan Presidents**

Whether the 11th or 12th, the fact remains that in  
the 170 year history of the University, it has  
had remarkably few presidents...

Hence, it is both a manageable and a mandatory

task for any new president to read carefully  
the inauguration addresses of his predecessors  
I was impressed by how each responded to the times...  
and set the theme for the subsequent administration...  
I was particularly influenced by the eloquent address of Marion LeRoy  
Burton

who assumed the presidency of the University in 1920  
shortly after the end of the First World War...  
Perhaps it was natural I would be attracted to Burton because  
of some rather unnerving similarities

he was tall, redheaded man...

he was 45 when he assumed the Presidency of Michigan

he was a graduate of Yale University...

in Divinity...but that's pretty close to Engineering

(at least alphabetically...)

Actually, I was particularly struck by Burton's very simple and direct  
statement of the role of the public university:

"The function of the State University--stated Burton-- is to serve the state  
and through the state to serve the nation and the world."

### **The Historical Role of the Public University**

To serve...perhaps the most unique theme of higher education  
in America...

For the bonds between the university and society are  
particularly strong in this country...

Historically our institutions have been responsible to, shaped by,  
and drawn their agendas from the communities that founded them...

Perhaps this is nowhere more apparent than in our State of Michigan  
and with its institutions...

For example, the founding principle of this institution, can be found in those familiar words from the Northwest Ordinance above Angell Hall: chiseled above Angell Hall:

"Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

And perhaps it was appropriate that Michigan

A state with seemingly infinite resources of fur, timber,  
iron, and copper...

A state with boundless confidence in the future...

Should play such a leadership role in developing the models  
of higher education which would later serve all of America.

For while the University of Michigan was not the first of the state universities, it nevertheless is commonly regarded as the model of the true public university, responsible and responsive to the needs of the people who founded and supported it, even as it sought to achieve quality equal to that of the most distinguished private institutions.

So too, our sister institution to the west, Michigan State University, was really the driving force stimulating the Morrill Act and it became the prototype of the great land grant university that has served America so well...

And our sister institution to the east, Wayne State University, has provided an important model of the urban university, seeking to serve the needs of one of our nation's great cities.

The State of Michigan, through these institutions and others which have arisen since, has provided a model of how higher education serves society through the triad mission of

teaching, research, and public service.

These institutions grew up with our State...responding to the changing needs and aspirations of its people...

- i) First as Michigan tamed the frontier...
- ii) Then as it evolved through the industrial revolution into the manufacturing capital of the world...
- iii) As the population of our state surged following the war years...
- iv) And most recently, as Michigan has sought to strengthen and diversify its economic base.

Yet the strength of our State, its capacity to build and sustain such extraordinary institutions, lies not in looking to the past, but rather in its ability to look to the future...to take the actions and make the investments in the present that would yield prosperity and well-being for its people in the future.

Hence, as I assume the responsibilities of leading the University of Michigan, it seems appropriate that I look ahead... to suggest what some of the themes of our future will be...and how our academic institutions must respond.

### **Challenges for Today--Opportunities for Tomorrow**

Think about it for a moment...

The students we are educating today will spend most of their lives in the next century...they will be citizens of the 21st Century...

Yet we, their educators, are very much products of the 20th Century...

And our institutions, the university of today, is

in reality a product of the 19th Century!

It is therefore important to ask whether  
the university as we know it today is really  
prepared to educate the citizens and serve the  
society of the 21st Century?

While it is always dangerous to attempt to predict the  
future, three themes of 21st Century America seem clear:

- i) the changing nature of the population of our nation
- ii) our growing dependence on the global community
- iii) our shift from a resource-intensive to a knowledge-intensive society

Let me consider each of these themes for a moment...

### **1. Demographic Change: Diversity and pluralism**

America is changing rapidly today...

Our population is aging as the baby boomers enter  
middle age, and the number of young adults declines.

Indeed, today there are already more people over the  
age of 65 than teenagers in this nation...and this  
situation will continue for decades to come.

The United States will simply not be a nation of youth  
again in our lifetimes

This fact poses a most serious challenge to  
institutions such as universities which have  
traditionally served the young.

But there is a far more profound change occurring  
in the population of our nation.

The United States. is rapidly becoming the most pluralistic,  
multicultural nation on earth.

Those groups we refer to today as

"minorities" will become the majority population of our nation in the century ahead...just as they are today throughout the world.

In this future, the full participation of currently underrepresented minorities will be of increasing concern as we strive to realize our commitment to equity and social justice.

But, in addition, this objective will be the key to the future strength and prosperity of America, since our nation cannot afford to waste the human talent represented by its minority populations, this human potential, cultural richness, and social leadership.

If we do not create a nation that mobilizes the talents of all our citizens, we are destined for a diminished role in the global community, increased social turbulence, and most tragically, we will have failed to fulfill the promise of democracy upon which this nation was founded.

This is probably the most serious challenge facing American society today. While it is true that universities cannot solve this problem alone, we must not use this fact as an excuse for doing nothing.

Rather we must intensify our efforts to seek full participation of underrepresented minorities among our students, faculty, staff, and leadership.

As both a reflection and leader of society at large, we have a special challenge and responsibility to develop effective models of multicultural, pluralistic communities for our nation.

We must strive to achieve new levels of understanding, tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.

## **2. The Internationalization of America**

It will be a future in which America will become "internationalized" ... in which every aspect of American life must be viewed from the broader context of participation in the global community...

Whether through travel and communication, the arts and culture, the internationalization of commerce, capital, and labor, we will become increasingly dependent on other nations and other peoples.

Further, as the destination of roughly half the world's immigrants, the United States is rapidly becoming a "world nation" with strong ethnic ties to every part of the globe.

Understanding cultures other than our own will become necessary not only for personal enrichment and good citizenship, but indeed, necessary for our very survival as a nation.

If our institutions are to serve America in its role as a member of the global community, we must think and act more imaginatively, more aggressively, and more strategically to strengthen our role as truly international centers of learning.

## **3. The Age of Knowledge**

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

There are many who contend that our society is once again undergoing such a dramatic shift in

fundamental perspective and structure as we enter a new age, an age of knowledge.

The signs are all about us.

Today we are evolving rapidly to a new post-industrial, knowledge-based society, just as a century ago our agrarian society evolved through the Industrial Revolution.

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

We are increasingly surrounded by radical critiques of fundamental premises and scholarship...

In many fields, the knowledge base is doubling every few years...indeed, in some fields the knowledge taught undergraduates becomes obsolete even before they graduate!

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

Hence a college education 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.

As our society becomes ever more knowledge-intensive, and hence ever more dependent upon educated people and their ideas...

It will become ever more dependent upon our research universities as primary sources of new knowledge and those capable of applying it.



## **The Need for a New Paradigm**

The triad mission of the university as we know it today,  
teaching, research, and service...  
was shaped by the needs of an America  
of the past...

Yet our nation today is changing at an  
ever accelerating pace...

Hence, is it not appropriate to question whether our  
present concept of the research university,  
developed largely to serve a homogeneous,  
domestic, industrial society...must also evolve  
rapidly if we are to serve the highly pluralistic,  
knowledge-intensive, world nation that will be  
America of the 21st Century.

Of course, there have been many in recent years who have  
suggested that the traditional paradigm of the  
public university must evolve to respond to the  
challenges that will confront our society in the  
years ahead...

But will a gradual evolution of our traditional paradigm  
be sufficient...or, will the challenges ahead force a  
more dramatic, indeed, revolutionary, shift in  
the paradigm of the contemporary research  
university...

## **The challenge of change**

While it is always hazardous to speculate about  
the future, there is yet another theme I can  
predict with some certainty...

and that is the challenge of change itself...

We face a future in which permanence and stability  
become less important than flexibility and creativity...  
in which the only certainty will be the presence of  
continual change...

Here we face a particular challenge, since most of us  
have been trained to think in terms of change as a  
linear, causal, and rational process.

We have been taught that by looking at the past,  
we can extrapolate to understand the future.

Yet, perhaps because of my background as a physicist,  
I have become increasingly convinced that change in most  
complex systems...fields of knowledge...or complex  
institutions such as universities...is

- i) highly nonlinear
- ii) frequently discontinuous
- iii) and usually stochastic...random in nature...

Just as with other institutions in our society, those  
universities that will thrive will be those that are  
capable not only of responding to this future of  
change...but, indeed, have the capacity to  
relish, stimulate, and manage change.

From this perspective, it may well be that the continual renewal of  
the role, mission, values, and goals of our institutions  
will become the greatest challenge of all!

To prepare us for such a future of change, I believe  
our institutions should keep in mind several essential  
themes...

## **Key Themes**

### **The Commitment to Quality**

Of course, one of the canonical invariants that will allow us to respond to a future of change is an unrelenting commitment to academic excellence and scholarly values.

This will require that we also commit ourselves to focusing resources to achieve excellence...since in a future of limited resources, quality must inevitably dominate the breadth and capacity of our programs.

### **A Return to Fundamental Values**

Furthermore, while change and renewal will be important themes of our future, they can only occur upon a foundation of fundamental institutional values.

Of course, academic institutions usually focus first on intellectual values...values of the mind....

The seeking of wisdom

Freedom of inquiry

Intellectual integrity

Discipline of the mind

Respect for reasoned conclusions

While these are of course essential in any university, there are also other sets of values which we must not ignore:

Values of moral character:

Honesty

Integrity

Courage

Tolerance and mutual respect

So too, we must bear in mind those all-important values which characterize civilized societies:

Caring and concern and compassion

Cooperation and communication and civility

These are the values that pull us together as a community.

In a future characterized by rapid and unpredictable change, a future dominated by the themes of pluralism, internationalization, and knowledge, it seems clear that our universities will increasingly become the crucibles in which the new ideas and social structures capable of responding to this future are created.

Here we must take care that the ferment and controversy that always surround the birth of new ideas does not tear apart our communities.

We must recognize that in this future of change, these values of comity will provide the bonds that allow us to function as a community of scholars, dedicated to serving the society that supports us.

### **The Challenges Before Us**

A future of change...a time of challenge...

challenges to our institutions...

and challenges to each and every one of us...

Hence, let me take this opportunity to challenge each of the various constituencies involved with this University...

First, a challenge...

**To the Administration of this University...**

to its Regents, Executive Officers, and Deans

The stewardship of this marvelous institution is  
a heavy responsibility...It requires total  
dedication and commitment on our part.

Yet it is also the case that universities are very  
fragile institutions...

They are highly voluntary in nature...

indeed, they might be described as creative anarchies

We must never forget that while the primary responsibility  
for the distinction of the University rests on our  
shoulders, quality is determined at the grass roots  
level...through our teaching and our research...

Hence the momentum and quality of this University...of  
any great university...must flow up from the  
faculty and the students...and energize those  
of us in the administration...

**To the faculty**

It is sometimes said that great universities are  
run by their faculties...for their faculties...

Although I must hasten to add here they are also run  
for their students and their society as well!

The quality of our institutions is determined by  
the quality of our faculty...by your talents,  
your commitments, your actions...

However, while your commitment to quality in your teaching  
and scholarship will determine the quality of this

institution, let me suggest that something more is needed...

Let me urge a greater sense of daring and adventure in your intellectual activities...

For it is the excitement of attempting to push beyond the limits of our present knowledge that enlivens our teaching, our students, and our institution, while best serving the society that depends upon us.

### **To our students**

If our faculty is the key to our distinction, then it must also be acknowledged that our students are the reason for our being...

Hence, let me challenge our students to seek wisdom from the knowledge that you will learn in your studies...and seek to learn responsibility from the very considerable freedoms you will be granted on our campuses.

### **To our staff**

While the primary functions of the university, teaching and research, appear at first glance to involve primarily faculty and students,

We all know that these complex and remarkable institutions depend just as heavily on the talents and dedication of our staff.

Hence, I believe it appropriate to challenge you as well, to serve with imagination, pride, and competence.

To encourage you to be always alert to better ways

for the institution to accomplish its goals---  
And to convey to you my personal conviction that  
the fundamental values of an academic community  
simply cannot be sustained without your valued  
and frequently valiant efforts.

### **To our alumni and friends**

Become involved with your institution...

Learn about us...

Tell us when we are wrong...

Challenge us to rise to new levels of excellence...

And help us to serve our state and our nation

### **To our sister institutions**

One of the great strengths of higher education in  
America is the remarkable diversity among our  
institutions...a diversity that is all the more necessary  
to respond to the pluralistic nature of American society.

Yet, despite this diversity, we have far more in common  
than in contrast...

It seems clear that we can only face the challenges  
of the future if we come together in a new spirit of  
cooperation...setting aside meaningless competition  
(this Saturday afternoon excepted, of course...)  
and instead, working together to address the serious  
needs of our state, our nation, and the world.

### **To state and federal government**

As we prepare to enter the Age of Knowledge, our ability to sustain the  
strength of our state and our nation...to achieve the quality of life for  
our citizens...will be determined, more than any other

factor, by how we develop, nurture, and educate that most precious of resources, our people.

While it is true that our state and our nation have developed the finest system of higher education in the world...

We must also remember this resulted from the willingness of past generations to look beyond the needs of the present and to invest in the future by building and sustaining educational institutions of exceptional quality--

Institutions that have provided those of us in this auditorium today with unsurpassed educational opportunities.

Today's public leaders have inherited these marvelous institutions that represent the commitments and sacrifices of previous generations;

They face the challenge of being responsible stewards to preserve and enhance these precious resources to serve generations of the future.

### **To the public at large**

It is important for to recognize that your public universities are deeply committed to serving the society that built and sustains them.

They are not working on their own agenda...

but rather an agenda formed to respond to your needs.

While it is always tempting to ask "what have you done for me lately", it is also important to imbed this challenge to higher education in the dual context both of the history of past service...and the challenges that will face our society in the future.

Higher education represents one of the most important



investments a society can make in its future...since  
it is an investment in its human resources...

Our nation has always believed deeply in providing each  
generation with the means for a better life...

Our parents sacrificed for us...and we must be prepared to  
sacrifice for our children...

We simply must re-establish the priority of both our  
personal and public investments in education, in the  
future of our children, and hence in our own future...

### **To JJD**

And, finally, it seems appropriate to challenge myself...

To listen, to learn, and to understand the nature of this  
remarkable institution...

...the sacrifices people have made to build and sustain it...

...and the manner in which this state, the nation, and the  
world have come to depend upon it.

To have the patience, the courage, the dedication, and  
the wisdom to assist it in continuing to serve the state  
and the nation which gave rise to its birth...

### **Concluding Remarks**

In conclusion, I would like to direct my final remarks to the people  
of the State of Michigan

For over 170 years there has been an unusually  
strong bond between the people of this state and  
your university, the University of Michigan.

Generation after generation of Michigan citizens have  
reaffirmed a commitment to building and sustaining  
an institution capable of providing to their sons and

daughters an education equal to the best in the nation.

Your ancestors sought an institution capable of attracting to their state the most outstanding scholars, scientists, engineers, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals essential to prosperity and well-being.

They recognized the need for an institution capable of creating through its teaching, research and scholarship, the new knowledge and human capacities necessary to economic growth and development and to the fuller realization of human potential.

And they sought an institution which could address, through a myriad of public service activities, the many challenges facing our state and our nation.

This sustained public investment and confidence in the University over the decades has enabled it to serve the state in all of these ways and more. Through this unique partnership, the University and its activities in education, research, and public service have served Michigan and its citizens well.

Today our state faces serious challenges that will call once again on the vast resources of this institution---

the challenge of pluralism...

the challenge of participation in a global community...

the challenge of the Age of Knowledge that is our future...

...and, of course, the challenge of change itself.

Indeed, perhaps at no previous time in our state's

history has there been a greater dependence upon this  
this University...

for the people it educates...

the knowledge it produces...

and the service it provides.

It is true, indeed, that the University of Michigan belongs  
to the people of Michigan...it is your university.

But it is a university built and sustained through the  
commitments and sacrifices of your ancestors...

And it is a university that must be preserved and  
strengthened through your commitments today if it is  
to serve your descendants tomorrow.

Through this unique partnership, between a people and their  
University, we face together  
a future of challenge and responsibility...  
a future of opportunity and excitement.

A future in which the University of Michigan is deeply  
committed to serving the State of Michigan...  
and by serving our state, serving our nation and the world.