Inauguration Remarks List

Quips...
One of the perogatives given the president is that of choosing appropriate music for his inauguration.
After much thought, I have asked Margot Halsted, University Carrolliner, to play Berlioz's "March to the Scoffold" during the Academic Procession.
For you see, the modern inauguration of a university president is in reality, a cross between a coronation and an execution.
Indeed, while there are only 10 speakers listed on your program, it is my understanding that there is an 11th gentleman standing offstage...wearing a black hood and carrying an axe...to handle the final investiture ceremony!

Anne and I are deeply committed to this institutions, and we view it as a great honor and privilege to be asked to serve in this new way...

The Past
This December will mark the 20th year since my family and I first arrived here from Pasadena.
When we left Pasadena it was sunny and in the high 80s. However, as we stepped off the plane in Metro into snow and subzero temperatures, with no warm clothing and children who had never seen snow, we wondered whether we have made the right choice.
Two decades of service as a faculty member in this University is testimony to the fact that we've become hooked on Michigan. We have found our warmth through friends and colleagues...indeed we now feel like native Michiganders!
And we have found this University to be a truly extraordinary place for teaching, learning, and living...for scholarship and for service.

The Present
To be chosen as the 11th President of the University is a formidable responsibility to the people of this state and the nation.
But it is also a bit intimidating, since Anne and I will be following in the footsteps of some truly extraordinary people...
Vivian and Harold Shapiro
Sally and Bob Fleming
Alene and Allen Smith
Ann and Harlan Hatcher
Each presidency of this University has had a theme...and, as many of you know,
As a scientist and an engineer, I tend to be a futurist...and in this sense, it is not surprising that my theme for the University is a theme of the future.
A vision in which the University of Michigan continues its strong heritage of leadership...
By developing a model of what higher education must be to serve Michigan and the nation in the century ahead...
A mission of building a University for the 21st Century.
My crystal ball suggests a future of great challenge and responsibility...
but also a future of great opportunity and excitement...
But then I always remember that old saying...
"The best way to predict the future is to invent it!"
And isn't that, after all, just the role of a University...
the job of inventing the future.

A "Futurist"
As some of you may know, I am a scientist and engineer
by training and background...
I must also confess I tend to be one of those
people who lives more in the future than in
the present or the past...
I can remember that...
in the 1960s I was working out at Los Alamos
on nuclear rocket engines designed to
power the first manned mission to Mars...
in the 1970s I was working in an exotic
area known as laser-induced thermonuclear
fusion in which we were attempting to use
super high powered lasers to compress
matter to the incredible densities and
temperatures found in the center of stars..
and create tiny thermonuclear explosions
in the laboratory, hence providing a
limitless source of power...
in the 1980s I refocused my efforts on
building an Engineering College which I
believed could trigger a major economic
resurgence in this state...and lead
efforts to build world-class programs in
robotics, microelectronics, artificial
intelligence, while building new bridges
between the University and the private
sector
In the late 1980s as a member of the
National Science Board, I have been
working very hard with Erich Bloch and
others to strengthen the science and
engineering base of this country...
with my particular focus on the development
of the scientists and engineers we will
need to keep our nation strong and
And, now, entering the 1990s, I find myself
looking once again to the future, facing
the challenge of helping to build a University
able to serve our state and our nation in
the 21st Century.
the model of a University for the 21st Century...

Thank You
The University is a meritocracy...
We place enormous stress on the achievements of
our faculty in teaching, research, and service...
Yet, we must never forget that few of us can
achieve excellence alone...
Red Dare:
"If you're driving down the road, and you
see a turtle on a fence post...
then you can be sure that bugger had to
have some help to get up there..."
Hence, I would like to thank
all of those who provided the help, support,
and encouragement to make your achievements
possible...as spouses, families, friends...
parents and mentors.
I have no doubt that your efforts and sacrifices
were equal to those we honor this evening...
and you deserve both our deep gratitude and
congratulations as well.
And hence a second toast to those who really made
this evening possible.