

Academic Women's Caucus/Sarah Godard Power Award (January 24, 1991)

Good afternoon and thank you very much

for inviting me to be here today.
the truth is I wouldn't miss it for the world
both because I am an admirer of the important work
of the Academic Women's Caucus
and because of my unbounded admiration and respect
for the leaders you are recognizing today.

The Academic Women's Caucus belongs to a long line

of women's organizations and less formal groups
that stretch back to our founding.

From that time,

women themselves have consistently and persistently
been the leaders in the long struggle at the University
to achieve equality for women,
to recognize women's contributions,
and to foster an environment in which women may succeed.

From the time in 1858 when Sarah Burger

first applied for admission to the University to the present,
women from the University and the community
have dedicated untold effort,
overcome formidable barriers,
and endured considerable hardship and sacrifice
to make the University a better,
more fair, more intellectually challenging,
and a more diverse and enriching place for us all.

Each generation of Michigan women has faced a different set of problems.

Today, I know that while we still have not achieved full equality in hiring,

we have added significant numbers of women to the faculty
especially at the lower ranks
and I think we have in place some mechanisms now
to increase the number of hires
at a rate that will accelerate in the next few years.

(Let me also note that in response to a recommendation

of the President's Advisory Commission on Women's Issues
Provost Whitaker has authorized three senior level hires
of faculty women
to begin to address the issue of representation at the rank of Professor.

So while faculty hiring continues to be a pressing concern,
of even more concern now
is the issue of climate, or retention, and equal opportunity
for fulfilling careers and professional advancement.
while also meeting the needs of both men and women
to sustain the quality of family life and responsibility.

Let me note parenthetically in this connection
that at the recommendation of the Women's Commission
that we have made some progress

- Tenure clock policy
- child care referral services
- and we will soon have in place a policy for modified duties
for women faculty experiencing pregnancy or childbirth.

But I don't have to tell you that
we still have a long way to go before we can say
that our community fully welcomes reflects
the experiences and talents of women.

The Academic Women's Caucus is thus
a vitally important part of our efforts to bring change
and to support women at the University
and you are a part of a tradition of women's leadership
that is an integral part of the University's greatness.\

Of course, individual women of courage, dedication and commitment
have also provided critical leadership and today.
I am pleased to be a part of awards to three of them--
Janice Jenkins
Jean Krish
and Phyllis Ocker

Until recently, Michigan women have not received
the recognition they fully earned

but fortunately, and thanks largely to women themselves, that is changing.

Your award is named after Regent Sarah Godard Power

a woman whose care and influence
will be felt by many generations to come
in our University for many contributions to policy
and also for many direct and interventions and
examples of personal caring and concern for our community and its people.

And how wonderful, how absolutely appropriate,

that Regent Nellie Varner should
be with us to present these awards named for Regent Power.
since she and Regent Varner formed such a dynamic partnership
as advocates and leaders.

Regent Varner is someone who has moved mountains

to change our University for the better.

As faculty member, Director of Affirmative Action,

and Associate Dean of Rackham
and now in her second term as a University Regent,
Nellie Varner has been a driving force has made a difference not just for
women
but also for people of color and, indeed, for all of us
in making Michigan a more open, diverse and caring place for learning.

For years Regent Power has been found at meetings

and conferences, and sending notes and making phone calls
offering encouragement, checking up on progress,
opening bottlenecks
doing whatever needed doing to support
changemakers, women, minorities
a catalyst for grass roots leadership
and, at the same time, pushing and shoving the Board and the
Administration
in the direction of justice and equity.

We are all in your debt, Nellie,

and the impact of your many contributions to the University
will be felt as long as there is a University of Michigan.

On behalf of all of us, I thank you.

Now please join me in welcoming Regent Varner

who will make the awards.

but one of a long line of women leaders who have pulled, pushed, and sometimes dragged this University along the path to equality for women in life and leadership of the University.

□