

Presidents Club Finale

Concerns...

Today, our state, our nation, indeed,

the world is going through a period of
extraordinary change...

and facing a period of great challenge...

...the challenge of pluralism

...the challenge of participation in a global community

...the challenge of the age of knowledge

...the challenge of change itself.

Needless to say, these same challenges of pluralism,

of globalization, and of this age of knowledge

that is our future will pose great challenges and

demand similar changes in our state and our nation.

The America of the 20th Century that we have known...

was a nation characterized by a rather homogeneous,
domestic, industrialized society...

But that is an America of the past.

Our students will inherit a far different nation...

a highly pluralistic, knowledge-intensive, world nation

that will be the America of the 21st century

It is clear that our nation is in the midst of a profound transition...

...from an industrial economy based upon the abundance
of natural resources, unskilled labor, and, to some degree,
constrained, slowly moving domestic markets...

To a knowledge-based economy, characterized by intensely

competitive world markets, rapid change, and--most

important of all--educated people and their ideas.

This has not been...and will not be...an easy transition to make.

The truth is that the outcome is still very much in doubt!

producing jobs and improving our quality of life.

Whether we will emerge from this transition as a

world economic leader once again...with a

strong, prosperous--albeit new--economy

Or whether we will fail to heed the warnings...

...to make the necessary investments and

sacrifices today necessary for strength and

prosperity tomorrow...

And become an economic backwater in the century ahead.

It is clear that we face a watershed--a fork in the road ahead.

My central theme is that education, broadly defined, will

be the pivotal issue in determining which of these two alternative futures will be Michigan's...and America's.

Indeed, I am absolutely convinced that the dominant issue of the 1990s will be the development of our human resources.

Previous economic transformations were closely associated

with major public investment in infrastructure such as railroads, canals, electric networks, and highways.

In the coming economic transition, an equivalent infrastructure will be an educated population.

The actions we must take today...

...and the investments we must make...

...will clearly determine our capacity to respond to this future...

The Challenge of Leadership

Knowledge will play the same role that in the past

were played by natural resources or geographical location or unskilled location...

In the knowledge-intensive future that is our destiny

it seems clear that education in general...

...higher education in particular...

...and the research university most specifically are rapidly becoming the key ingredients determining the strength, prosperity, and social-well being of our nation.

Just think of the challenges which cry out for attention

- the plight of our cities,
 - the development of an underclass
 - polarization of American society
- greenhouse effect and global change
- international competition
 - Pacific Rim or Europe 1992
- health care: cancer, heart disease, AIDS
- new frontiers: outer space
 - or spaceship Earth

But the greatest need of all is for leadership

and this is the University of Michigan's great contribution to America...

...through its teaching, research, and service

...through its graduates and their achievements

Indeed, leadership is both

our heritage
and our destiny!

Re-Inventing the University

But we have an even more ambitious

mission of leadership:

To re-invent the university for the 21st Century

The winds of change are blowing...
stirring the cauldron of higher education
to create a new model of the university
for the future.

Who will determine the new paradigm for the research?
university in America?

Who will provide the leadership?

Why not the University of Michigan?

After all, in a very real sense, it was our University
that developed the paradigm of the public university
capable of responding to the needs of a rapidly
changing America of the 19th century...
as American expanded to the frontier...
as it evolved through the industrial revolution...
as it absorbed wave after wave of immigrants
a paradigm that still dominates higher education today.

In a sense, we have been throughout our history the
flagship of public higher education in America.

In a very real sense, it was the University of Michigan
which invented the University of the 20th Century.

Perhaps it is time that we once again played that role...
re-inventing the nature of the university once again...
...a university capable of educating the citizens
and serving the society of not the 20th,
but rather the 21st Century.

Let's do it again, as America evolves

into a highly pluralistic, knowledge-intensive
world nation of the 21st Century!

Role of Alumni

And, of course, this is where you come in!

For a university achieves leadership...greatness...

...through its people...

...through their talents and abilities,

...through their involvement and commitment.

The Michigan family extends far beyond those

on our campus for the moment, our students, faculty, and staff

It includes that army of maize and blue,

our 340,000 alumni, one of every thousand Americans!

Indeed, you have been...

...and will continue to be even more...

...the most critical factor in achieving and sustaining
the greatness of your University.

For that reason, this evening I would like

to take this opportunity to issue a request...

..."a call to arms"

to activate and energize you as our
alumni and friends

A Call to Arms

We call for your

- your commitment
 - your involvement
 - and, most of all, your loyalty
- to your university, the University of Michigan.

A call for help...

- 1) Of course we need your financial support
which provides our capacity of excellence
--while it provides you with an
opportunity to have great impact
not just on your university, but
through your university, on this
nation and the world.
- 2) We also seek your influence
Michigan produces leaders...
and many of you are in positions of influence
in the public or private sector and capable of
helping your university
- 3) Your help in telling the Michigan story to the nation
We are among the most visible universities in America
(CBS Morning News, Steve Fisher, activism)
...let your Michigan pride show a bit!
- 4) Help us make new friends and enlist new supporters!
- 5) And most of all, become involved...
...providing to our students a sense of the

potential of a Michigan education
...providing to our faculty and staff
encouragement and support

In a very real sense, you as alumni and friends

play the key role in passing the torch...
in passing from one generation to the next
the Michigan traditions of excellence and leadership
which we all cherish so deeply

Concluding Remarks

You know, Michigan is really a very special place....

It is one of only a handful of universities capable

of truly changing not only higher education,
but the nation and the world.

A personal note here:

It was just about 20 years ago that Anne and I left
the warmth and sunshine of Pasadena to come to
Michigan.

We did so, in part, because Michigan had what was
clearly the best department in the world in my
particular field of interest, nuclear engineering.

And throughout almost two decades on this campus,
I have found myself surrounded by faculty and
students who have arrived on this campus because
they wanted to be associated with the very best...

...the world leader...in education and research.

These linked themes of leadership and excellence
are what have kept me here...and what make
this University so very special.

We of believe the challenge of defining the nature

the American university for the 21st Century

...is not only an exciting and
challenging mission for the 1990s

...but it is also a mission befitting
UM's long heritage of leadership

...and it is also a challenge worthy of
the army of maize and blue alumni
across the nation and around the world

Indeed, I'd be very surprised if you

settled for anything less from your university!

The 1990s will be a time of great challenge

opportunity, and responsibility for your university.

But they will also be years of great excitement.

Your university is preparing to embark on a

fascinating adventure of great importance

to our nation and the world---

the adventure of defining, yet again,

the nature of higher education for generations to come.

We invite you to join with us,

to assist us with your wisdom and your support.

As we stand on the threshold of this

great adventure of re-inventing the

University for the 21st Century,

Let me call on you to demonstrate yet

again that extraordinary sense of

loyalty and pride in your University

that has been our key source of

strength...

Let me call on you to show that

“Go-Blue” spirit that makes Michigan

the very special force it has been and

must continue to be in American life!