

## Alumni Scholars Reception

Welcome to Michigan!!!

Let me congratulate you on the distinguished record  
each of you have brought to Michigan...

As I noted in Freshman Convocation, this year  
we had almost 20,000 applications for admission  
to our freshman class.

We therefore had the luxury to build a class drawn  
from students across the nation with  
extraordinary achievements  
...in the classroom...  
...in the studio or concert hall...  
...on the field...  
...as scholars, musicians, artists, athletes...  
...as leaders...

I cannot help but note that you are part of what is the  
strongest class in Michigan history...

Each and everyone of you is something very special  
and I must confess that we are already very proud  
of you...

### The Challenge of Michigan

In the past two months, you have  
probably already learned a great deal  
about Michigan

In fact, despite your obvious academic talents, many...  
most...probably ALL...of you are already finding  
Michigan a challenging experience.

You have learned that Michigan is not a small,  
liberal arts college...it is a great research  
university...

And it is also a very large, complex, and  
exciting place...with some very important  
characteristics:

A serious commitment to scholarship  
Unusual breadth, rich diversity of academic disciplines,  
professional schools, social and cultural activities  
Unusual degree of pluralism of students, faculty, and staff  
Unusual degree of participation of faculty and students in  
University decisions

In a sense, the strength of our institutions depend upon  
our efforts to achieve an optimum blend of  
Quality, breadth, and scale...

We attempt to do a great many things...  
to involve and benefit a great many people...  
and we attempt to do them all very well!

Teaching, research, and service  
Undergraduate, graduate, professional education  
and faculty development

Note: Not a conflict!

Rather an opportunity, a "creative tension"

It is this which provides our research universities with  
a unique environment for undergraduate education...

What we are...and what we are not!!!

Our unique role...

1. To provide our undergraduates with an experience  
which draws on the vast intellectual resources of  
a research university...its scholars, its libraries and  
laboratories, its professional schools...its remarkable  
diversity of people, ideas, and endeavors
2. To expose our students to the excitement of great minds  
struggling to extend the bounds of our knowledge...

NOTE: The scholars we place in the classroom may not be the best teachers of facts in the traditional sense... but we are convinced that only by drawing into the classroom scholars can we stimulate our students to develop the skill at inquiry from a broad range of scholarly disciplines so essential to life in an age of rapidly expanding knowledge.

3. To develop in our students both the ability and the will to strive for knowledge. Few of our research universities will deliver an education to its students on a silver platter. Rather, we believe that a critical component of an undergraduate education in a research university is the development of the skill to seek and the will to find.
4. To expose our students to the diversity, the complexity, the pluralism of peoples, cultures, races, and ideas that can only be found in the intellectual mixing pot of the modern research university.
5. Oh, yes, we also believe that our mission is also to educate the leaders of American society. Indeed, if past experience is any guide, most of our leaders will continue to be produced by the great research universities of our nation.

#### The Role of Alumni

It is appropriate that this reception should be in the Alumni Center.

Alumni play a very key role in this institution...

After all, one out of every 1,000 Americans is a UM graduate!

Hence, it seems appropriate that we introduce you early to this Michigan tradition...since it is one of the keys to the strength of our institution.

#### The importance of the University to Alumni

There is little doubt that the college experience probably has as much impact on our lives -- certainly on our careers-- that any other event

It sets us on a career course...

For many of us, we meet our lifetime companions...

roughly one-third of Michigan graduates meet their spouses at Michigan

Throughout our career and our lives it provides us with an anchor...a tie to a values and understanding that guide our lives

#### To the University

Yet, as much as this place will probably come to mean to you,

I can assure you that you will come to mean as much to us!

A university achieves greatness through its people...

through their talents and abilities...

their involvement and commitment...

But it is important to recognize that the "community" that comprises a university extends far beyond its students, faculty, and staff...

Rather this community extends outward...

beyond our ivy-covered walls to embrace our alumni and friends...

it also extends backward in time...to include that long line of maize and blue that have build and sustained the distinction of this University...

I might even suggest that this community extends into the future...through those families...many of them already associated with the University.. that will produce the

students and faculty for this institution in years to come  
A key factor in the strength of the University...  
active involvement by alumni  
Not just for financial support...  
although you can expect to hear from us even more  
frequently  
Not just for your efforts in directing outstanding  
students to Ann Arbor -- many of them your own children  
or grandchildren...  
Not just for influence...  
although since Michigan produces leaders, many of alumni  
have the opportunity to have major impact on UM through  
their roles as leaders of government or industry  
But beyond that, through your active involvement...  
to provide to our students a sense of potential, what the  
future holds in store for them...  
for our faculty, since by buying in to what we are trying  
to do, you provide them with strong evidence of the  
profound importance of their activities  
In a sense, our alumni play the key role  
in passing the torch...  
in passing from one generation to the next the  
Michigan tradition...the tradition of excellence  
which we all cherish so deeply.