

Preface:

Students, faculty and staff; Trustees of the University; citizens of our wonderful state, and friends of Grand Valley: I am humbled by this occasion, by the trust you place in me, by the unpredictable but navigable challenges, and the amazing opportunities that lie ahead of us, in our future that we will shape together. I stand before you ready, and accept the responsibilities as President of Grand Valley State University. I am proud to be your president, and I commit to you my best judgment, my fullest energies, my mind, my conscience and my heart.

I want to tell you this morning about my vision for where we can go together. I want to tell you how I see a degree from Grand Valley as a public good; about how I understand the powerfully liberal education that distinguishes our degree as crucial to our common future; about how lifelong learning and leadership are tangibly, vitally connected to our region's future; about how we have not only regional, but national and global responsibilities to deliver just exactly this kind, and caliber of education; about how that calling underpins and justifies our energy and optimism today ... although I pledge to pursue with all my energy the more substantive forms of underpinning that will enable us to meet our mission ever more fully... I want to tell you about that ... but first, speaking now on behalf of the University, I have some acknowledgements to share.

Acknowledgements:

I am honored and awed by this assemblage of dignitaries, colleagues, family and friends.

Trustee Brooks and members of the Grand Valley Board of Trustees; Mr. Canepa and the GVU Foundation members; Faculty Senate President Franciosi; Student Senate President Foster; President Emeritus Lubbers; Former President Murray; President Davison and members of the Alumni Association; Deans and officials on the platform representing the myriad parts of our great University; distinguished leaders of Michigan government; leaders from the academy, students, faculty and staff; individuals from the greater Grand Valley community of West Michigan, our great State and nation; my family and my wife Marcia ... and distinguished visitors in the audience;

Good morning and thank you for sharing this day in the life of Grand Valley State University.

Grand Valley Board of Trustees Chair Donna Brooks, members of the Board of Trustees, and Mr. Canepa and members of the GVU Foundation, I appreciate the confidence you have shown in my abilities to guide and lead this University to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Your collective leadership and guidance have shaped this University. Would members of the Grand Valley State University Board of Trustees and GVU Foundation, please stand to be recognized.

Local, state and national governmental leaders are present or have sent greeting. Thank you for your support for Grand Valley, and further, understanding the critical role of education in the continued prosperity and security of our nation, state and communities.

I am also honored today by the presence of former leaders of this University, who kept this institution on track with its mission while ensuring that it met the needs of a changing society. President Emeritus Don Lubbers and Former President Mark Murray are here along with their

wives, Nancy and Elizabeth, who also contributed a part of their lives in support of their husbands and this place. Each, please stand, and accept our appreciation for your service ... thank you for being with us today, and for all you have done to advance our beloved University.

There are many others here whose dedication have served Grand Valley, and moved it forward through the years. While they are too numerous to name, I do ask that our retired faculty and staff members in attendance please stand to be recognized.

Thank you to Alumni Association President Fred Davison, our alumni and the many leaders from Allendale, Grand Rapids, communities from West Michigan and across the State who are present today. You have made our transition to this place, and this position one of the smoothest we have ever experienced. You have welcomed us into your homes and your gatherings, invited us to share in your work and your play (yes, I have even played a little golf) and made known to us your desire to partner with us in the advancement of this University, and this community, which are so important to each other.

I have the privilege to note that also in attendance are members of my extended New York, Coast Guard and higher education families, including fellow presidents, colleagues from SUNY, from the Coast Guard, and classmates of mine, fellow graduates from the Coast Guard Academy, some of whom traveled a distance. Your efforts to be here today are so meaningful.

And my journey to this place, and this challenge would have been impossible without the encouragement of my beloved family. My brother Ken and his wife Sharon, and my mother-in-law, Barbara, are in the audience along with Marcia's sister, Karen, and brothers Skip, Dave and Ric along with their families. My Mom is unable to travel, my daughter in-law, Jacqueline, and our two grand-daughters, Sydney and Stephanie, are in Florida, and Gregory, my "Coastie" son, is on travel in China. I know they join us in spirit. All your love and support is greatly appreciated.

My son, Eric, traveled from the Gulf Coast, and my daughter Sarah from Boston to join us. Eric is a Captain in the Air Force, currently an F-15 Instructor Pilot, and Sarah is completing her senior year at Boston University, and will graduate and be commissioned into the Navy this May. I am so very proud of both of you.

They along with Gregory are my heroes, and are part of the next unending line of "greatest generations" that mark our nation's history ... and our future. I know that today there are members of our Armed Services in harms way. Please, let us take a minute to reflect in our own way, and send them our thoughts and prayers. We could not stand in this place with the freedoms we have if it were not for all those who have served our nation and communities.

Marcia, my wife of over 30 years, and best friend, is always ready for a new adventure. And she's back home in Michigan. She's a great mom and teacher. We have been blessed, have fun and support each other. I continue to be inspired by her spirit and service to others. I do love you.

I have also been afforded the opportunity to have outstanding senior, seasoned and committed university staff. Gayle, Maribeth, Matt, Nan, Pat, Teri, Tim and Tom. Thank you for the initiative, advice, and follow-through and, yes, counsel when needed over these past few months.

I want to share my appreciation and acknowledgement of Provost Gayle Davis as she took on the reigns of leadership when Mark left until I came onboard. I know her commitment to faculty, staff and students is extraordinary. Please stand to accept our appreciation for your service.

I also must recognize Rachel Siglow, and the other individuals in the office, who keep me on track with a hectic schedule. As well as Mary Eileen Lyon who helped take my perspectives, values, themes, words, and outline to finalize these remarks ... and Dean Antczak. Thanks.

We have also been treated this day by the talents of faculty, students and others ... Professor Patricia Clark for the gift of words through poetry, the gifts of music offered by Professors Martin, Vanden Wyngaard, the Grand Valley Brass, the Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the University Arts Chorale ... and Professor Beverly Seeley for the gift of symbols, as represented in this medallion.

Our Processional Marshals add so much to the formality of an Investiture, thank you; and I must recognize the delegates in the audience. Your presence this day represents our collective dedication to the fundamental purposes in higher education, and in shaping our future.

Finally, in order to prepare for this day there were many hands who put in extraordinary efforts. There is a great deal of pride that I've seen. Please accept my thanks for the many on the Investiture Committee, and others who displayed professionalism in preparing for this day, and for what you do everyday.

Address:

To *shape* ...

At the core of our mission statement so clearly articulated in our strategic plan is this sentence: "Grand Valley State University educates students to *shape* their lives, their professions, and their societies." I join the leaders who came to Grand Valley before me, and the faculty and staff of the past and present in embracing our mission to *shape*.

We are shaping the future of Grand Valley. We are poised for even greater heights because of the firm foundation, and inspired leadership in our past. Everything starts with an idea, and large credit for the idea of Grand Valley goes to L. William Seidman, the Grand Rapids civic leader and accountant who began talking about a community-based effort to grow a college out of a West Michigan cornfield in the 1950s.

People listened, and the state legislature acted. In 1962, Dr. James H. Zumberge, from the Zoology Department at the University of Michigan, was appointed the first president of Grand Valley State College, (a public, "Liberal Arts" institution, unique for its times), and we were off and running with classes beginning in 1963. I think there are some in the audience who took the risk as those first students and their faculties, and are here today ... they were the pioneers.

At the end of Jim Zumberge's tenure in 1968 he writes in *Grand Valley State College, Its Developmental Years, 1964-1968*;

"I have had the unusual experience of seeing a cornfield transformed into a vigorous young college. I would be less than honest if I did not admit to frequent periods of despair during these years ... We did not succumb, however, because within all of us there was a fierce determination to make Grand Valley College what the founders wanted it to be. Whether or not we have succeeded will be up to some future observer to decide."

And after having breakfast with Bill Seidman recently ... the answer is quite clear.

From that beginning, teaching in the liberal education tradition throughout the curriculum has been at the center of Grand Valley. The man who carried this mission close to his heart for 32 years is with us – President Emeritus Arend D. Lubbers.

Mr. Lubbers successfully led this university from 1969 until 2001. During that time, we grew from 2,700 students to nearly 20,000. Under President Lubbers' visionary leadership, we grew in size and stature, but never moved away from our liberal education foundation.

In his 1969 inauguration speech, President Lubbers said, and I quote:

"I have been told by some that this college must choose between liberal arts and specialized or technical training. How many colleges have been fooled or pushed into a bifurcation of this issue? Is this college to take up the sword for liberal arts while ignoring a society that demands from its schools the trained personnel to keep our economy alive? Or are we to man the barricades for technical training at the expense of educating the critical and historically conscious minds that a healthy democracy demands? I will endorse neither such approach."

Don Lubbers knew that it's not, either/or, it's both/and.

President Mark A. Murray continued the tradition of inspired vision and strong leadership during his five-year tenure at Grand Valley. He left us with a vibrant university, and I am pleased to be able to carry on his respect for the academic mission, academic excellence and the student-centered philosophy that guided his years here.

President Murray stood before the assembled on his inauguration day, and made a commitment to raising the rate of graduation from this institution, while embracing more rigorous academic programs. He said: "In an ever more rigorous academic environment, those factors that contribute to true human progress will flourish." And so we have. We are blessed today to be building, to be shaping our future with the tools left for us by our passionate leaders, our dedicated faculty, staff and the students they guided, and all those who invest in this wonderful resource, this university in West Michigan.

Which brings us to the central question, “What is a university?” John Cardinal Newman pondered this question in the 1850s when he took over the administration of the Catholic University in Dublin. In *The Idea of a University*, Newman wrote that the range of studies offered at a university should be vast for the sake of the students: “... though they cannot pursue every subject which is open to them, they will be the gainers by living among those and under those who represent the full circle.”

We, at Grand Valley, are fortunate to avail ourselves of representatives of this full circle ... to be participants in this full circle. Our outstanding faculties and staff members individually and collectively are committed to our students and to each other in teaching and learning, in service and in scholarship.

Newman also writes: “Knowledge is capable of being its own end. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any kind of knowledge, if it be really such, is its own reward.”

Some truths never change. What you find at Grand Valley in the year 2006 is true to its foundations. We are a teaching and learning community. Students are at the center of our work. What a powerful charge in our mission statement – shaping students lives. That to me is such a tremendous challenge and obligation ... to do right by that goal. We have to ensure that we are always improving the intellectual stimulation, the activities, and the abilities to provide direction for our students in a positive way. They will then leave Grand Valley continuing to adapt, to lead and to shape their societies. The essence of life-long learning. What makes our liberal education commitment so relevant is that it equips students with the ability to adapt and knowing how to think.

If our students have critical thinking skills, are able to communicate, work in teams, work with technology, and understand and appreciate diversity, they are ready to face the complex realities of the world in which they will lead. As John F. Kennedy said, “Learning and Leadership are indispensable.”

From a recent American Association of Colleges & University publication that I received just last week, *Communicating Commitment to Liberal Education*; the authors report:

“Business leaders have formed a virtual chorus to proclaim the importance of analytical, contextual and creative thinking to our economy. They are calling for graduates versed in communication skills, adept at quantitative reasoning, oriented to innovation, sophisticated with diversity, and grounded in intercultural and global learning. Civic leaders proclaim the importance of civic, personal and social responsibility ... the very capabilities ... precisely those that a liberal education fosters.”

And they go on:

“ ‘liberal education’ is the best, and most accurately descriptive term available for the kind of college education that empowers individuals with broad knowledge and transferable skills, and a strong sense of values, ethics and civic engagement.

Moreover, liberal education has always set the standard for excellence within American higher education.”

The facts we memorize today may be outdated tomorrow, but the ability we have to reason with facts is useful for a lifetime. The ability to work in diverse teams is one of the ingredients of a societal leader.

I’m a chemist, as most of you know. I enjoy my discipline, and I enjoy that there’s a particular language chemists use to describe our knowledge. That’s part of the skill to be a good chemist. To be an exemplary chemist, you have to take the language and move beyond it; you have to understand how to work on a team and critically think. A chemist has different partners in the laboratory where leadership skills develop and knowledge is applied and extended. That ability to lead people and collaborate for a common good comes from a broad-based liberal education.

As James Collins and Jerry Porras write in their book, *Built to Last*, there’s a fundamental difference in those who merely tell time, and those who actually build a clock that tells the time forever. They write: “Having a great idea or being a charismatic visionary leader is “time telling”; building a company that can prosper far beyond the presence of any single leader, and through multiple product life cycles is “clock building.”

Grand Valley State University is built to last. Our everyday life creating a positive learning environment is the essence of clock building. We believe in shared governance and mutual respect. We are shaping our future by our continual challenge to ourselves to achieve academic excellence on our campus, and must be guided by relevance in all we do.

In August, we welcomed a stellar freshman class once again, with ever-improving GPAs, ACT scores and high school activities. We also work to provide access by offering programs for students who show great promise but may not yet have all the tools needed to excel.

As our enrollment has swelled to more than 23,000 students, we have continued to add faculty who are leaders in their fields of study to keep our small, liberal arts college feel. We have an average of 28 students in our classrooms, so both students and faculty can take full advantage of mentoring opportunities that result in increased scholarship and achievement.

We are proud of the atmosphere of teaching and learning we have at Grand Valley, and proud that we do it in a fiscally sound manner. We must continue to be good stewards of all of our resources and our communities.

From the leadership of our Board and across the university, we have made careful, strategic decisions that have allowed us to weather these difficult financial times, while keeping our tuition affordable. For the eleventh year in a row, we have been named one of America’s 100 Best College Buys by Institutional Research and Evaluation, Inc. in Georgia.

Because we are a public university, we are accountable for what we do. A degree from Grand Valley should rightly be considered a public good. It is a promise ... for our students and to our society.

In *The World is Flat*, Tom Friedman argues; “that lifelong learning, one of the *tenets* of liberal education, is economic survival in a global economy. He maintains lifetime employment is fat, which a flat world can’t sustain, so we must focus on giving workers tools for lifetime employability. Muscle needs to replace the fat.”

He is suggesting we must be agile and adaptable in order to thrive. He continues to say: “This will become even more of an advantage in the flat world, as job creation and destruction both get speeded up.”

The value of liberal education that Friedman touts today is exactly what President Lubbers was espousing 37 years ago when he began leading this university. At Grand Valley, we fulfill our social contract by providing lifelong learners ready for leadership positions with a degree, a public good. We further fulfill that contract by supporting innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit so well known in West Michigan. We are the only university in Michigan to be awarded two SmartZone designations by the state.

One is the West Michigan Science and Technology Initiative located in our Cook-DeVos Center for Health Sciences building on “Health Hill” in downtown Grand Rapids. The Initiative is a business incubator for companies involved in the life sciences. The Initiative’s goal is to help turn life science industry innovations into commercial products, and to place students and faculty in the research and commercialization process.

Grand Valley’s other SmartZone is the Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center located in Muskegon. MAREC is a business incubator and research and development center for alternative and renewable energy technologies. It also serves as a major demonstration project of those technologies.

We are proud of our public and private partnerships. They yield benefits to our students, certainly, but also to the broader community. The medical workers of our future are getting quality instruction in our state-of-the art Center for Health Sciences. The state’s investment, coupled with the generous support of area individuals and companies, is building the Kennedy Hall of Engineering next to the Eberhard Center in Grand Rapids.

These are just a few examples of how our mission fits into the regional mission of shaping a high quality of life and work, and being good stewards of our future. We are helping diversify our economic base, and as such, our graduates will stay and offer their skills delivering on a robust and vital West Michigan.

We have centers of excellence in their individual areas of expertise that are gaining national, and in some cases, international attention. The Annis Water Resources Institute just marked its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary contributing to the enjoyment and preservation of the Great Lakes and area waterways; the Van Andel Global Trade Center is expanding its programs to educate more businesses on how to survive in a global marketplace; the Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies attracts scholars from around the country to its programs, and from around the world to its active Website.

The Center for Entrepreneurship of the Seidman College of Business serves to promote, preserve, influence and impact students, faculty and the community through its broad range of activities. The Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy and Non-Profit Leadership supports the university's efforts that promote programs in the study of philanthropy and non-profit leadership, in grants, faculty fellows, development of curriculum and Student Life's Community Service Learning Center. The University is home to other centers of excellence as well that bring credit to Grand Valley.

We have regional, national and global responsibilities to shape our future. We must increase our global understanding. Our faculty and students benefit from our partnerships around the world, like the one we have with the University of Cape Coast in Ghana or the one with Cracow University of Economics. We are pleased Vice Rector Janusz Teczke traveled from Poland to help celebrate this day. Welcome and thank you.

We are seeking more global opportunities. Increasingly, we are reaching far beyond the immediate region ... both with students studying abroad, and by welcoming international students to our campus. Each year brings us a more diverse community. More than half of our student body is from outside of West Michigan. Hundreds are part of a growing international student body.

We strive for this increased diversity. Diversity is an intellectual asset that I am determined to cultivate. Diversity of background and experience is vital to our learning environment. Without diversity, we fail. Respect for the dignity of each person is at its core! To do so is to appreciate our responsibilities to ourselves and each other.

All our resources must be cherished, including our natural ones. I have heard it said that decisions made today will shape tomorrow's reality. The university has embarked upon a major sustainability effort that involves partnerships between area governments and forward-thinking corporations. Our young program has already become a model for communities around the nation. We must be guided by our commitment to stewardship.

We are a University of its many parts ... a unity within our diversity. Each of us needs to do our individual parts, tackle our individual responsibilities with an energy and an optimism that adds to this vibrant community. We accomplish our purpose with collaboration across all the parts. Unity, purpose and collaboration ... the watch words of Don Lubbers. Mark Murray embraced excellence in all we do ... thus, shaping Grand Valley State University.

A university is in the business of serving students for their future service and leadership ... as alumnus who will shape societies. It is noble work. The ripple effect of our contributions to this university will travel many miles. We have over 60,000 alumni, some in far-flung places around the globe. We even count the president of a country among them – President Tommy Remengesau, Jr. of Palau who graduated with the class of 1979.



Other ripples will stop within the region. Their power will be felt, not by the distance they travel, but by the service they give here in Michigan ... in our alumni's homes, companies, and communities.

I, personally, look forward in serving West Michigan, our state and nation, representing our University, as well as speaking out on issues that affect our University and our communities. I am pleased to see efforts like the West Michigan Strategic Alliance, or the developing partnerships on Health Hill ... as I'll refer to as Meds and Eds ... and I will join in to lead and to serve. There are opportunities that I will seek with K-12 partners, our community colleges and sister institutions of higher education, with businesses and not-for profits, and others ... all with the intent of enhancing and enabling a high quality of working, learning, playing and living.

And I know that our faculty and staff not only serve this university with passion, but also in their disciplines in the research and scholarship in which they engage colleagues and students. Through their service they apply and extend knowledge.

Out of the liberal education context, we are developing a whole person, a person of character who understands his or her relationship to the larger community ... servant leaders who feel an obligation to carry out a mission to the best of their abilities. Newman wrote about a habit of mind that comes from a liberal education; we also cultivate a habit of heart ... and with these habits we shape our future. We must be guided by our commitment to service.

I am honored to join you at this point in the institution's history. I am emboldened by that history to plan great programs with you at my side ... together. Quality will reign at Grand Valley. We see this in the brick and mortar; we see this in our students, our faculty, our staff; we see this in our classrooms; we see this in our research and scholarship; we see this in our service to our university and our disciplines; we see this in the performances in the arts; we see this in the play of our student-athletes in our intercollegiate programs; we see this in our undergraduate programs; we see this in our graduate studies; we see this in our alumni through their leadership and service.

We see this in the commitment of our Board of Trustees; we see this through the generosity of members of our Foundation, and other community leaders and businesses; we see this in the investments and support made by our state and federal legislative leaders.

We will take our liberal education foundation, our values, our commitment to excellence, and our aspirations, and be on the national landscape as an institution of choice in Michigan and well beyond. We are a comprehensive university of extraordinary quality.

I'm ready to stand with you, and roll up my sleeves ... I pledge my energy and commitment to GVSU.

Bill Seidman and Jim Zumberge established a fundamental base in the liberal education tradition. Don Lubbers led by the words of unity, purpose and collaboration. Mark Murray challenged us to excellence. With those principles, they and others, shaped the university of the past 50 years ... the result ... just look around ... powerful!

At this point in time I challenge each of us to continue to act in accordance with those values, and understand that our commitment to relevance, stewardship, and service, must guide us as we start our next 50 years together and shape our future.

Together ... We will shape our students.

Together ... We will shape our university.

Together ... We will shape our state, nation and the world.

Together ... We will shape our societies.

We will shape our future ... Together.

Thank you.