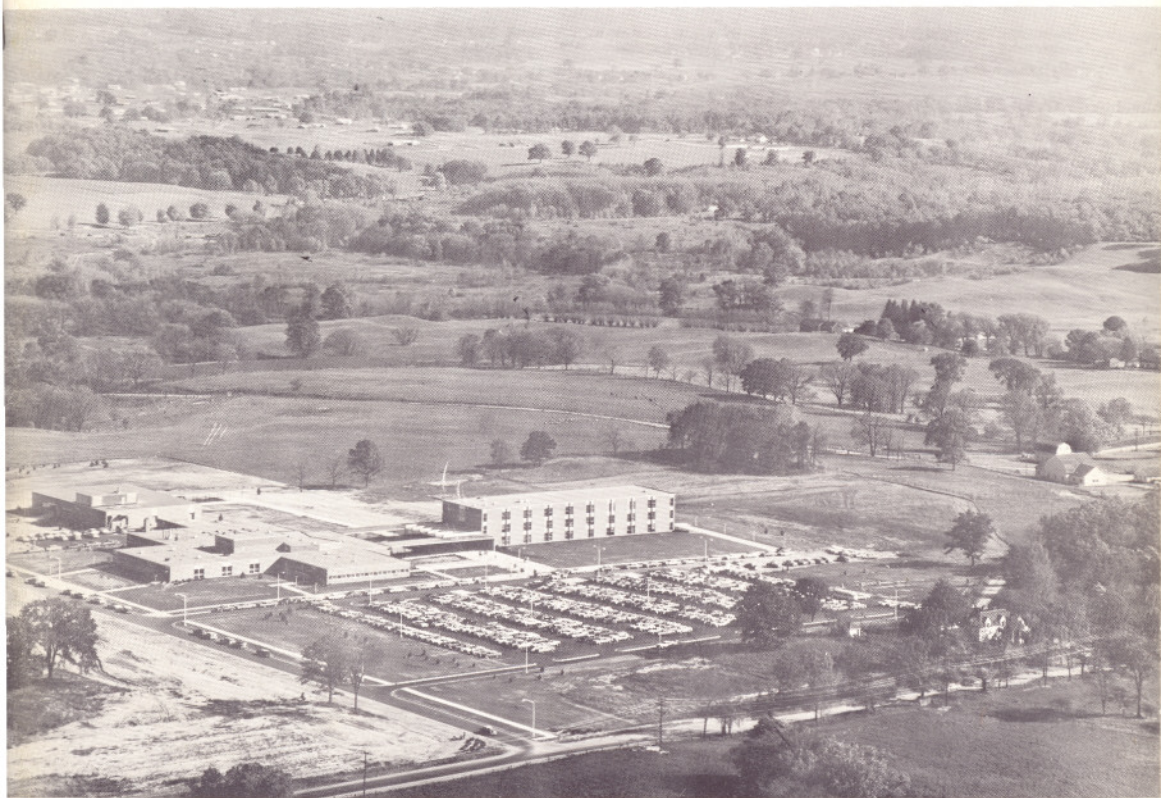


CONVOCATION  
OF  
CHARTER CLASS



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY-OAKLAND

SEPTEMBER 17, 1959

10 A.M.

# PROGRAM

ACADEMIC PROCESSION—Pomp and Circumstance .....ELGAR

*Audience to remain standing during academic procession, until after invocation*

INVOCATION .....FR. FRANCIS T. STACK  
*Pastor of the St. Hugo of the Hills, Bloomfield Hills*

PRESIDING .....D. B. VARNER  
*Chancellor, Michigan State University-Oakland*

INTRODUCTION OF MR. AND MRS. ALFRED G. WILSON,  
SARAH VAN HOOSSEN JONES AND OTHER  
SPECIAL GUESTS .....CHANCELLOR VARNER

GREETINGS .....JOHN A. HANNAH  
*President, Michigan State University*

ADDRESS .....DR. THOMAS H. HAMILTON  
*President, State University of New York*

TALK TO CHARTER CLASS .....DR. ROBERT HOOPES  
*Dean of the Faculty, Michigan State University-Oakland*

*Audience to stand for benediction and academic recessional*

BENEDICTION .....REV. ROBERT HERMANSON  
*University Presbyterian Church*

RECESSIONAL—"GRAND MARCH", from Aida .....VERDI

## TRUSTEES

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY and  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY-OAKLAND

Clark L. Brody

Connor D. Smith

Arthur K. Rouse

Don Stevens

C. Allen Harlan

Jan B. Vanderploeg

John A. Hannah, *Presiding Officer*

Lynn M. Bartlett, *Ex-Officio*

Philip J. May, *Treasurer*

Karl H. McDonel, *Secretary*

FOLLOWING THE CONVOCATION, THERE WILL BE A  
TOUR OF THE BUILDINGS AND  
LUNCH FOR THE GUESTS

This Convocation is the first Academic Function  
of the Nation's Newest University



## M E M B E R S

Of the Michigan State University-Oakland Foundation,  
the group of community leaders whose labors moulded  
the patterns for a new kind of university, made possible  
by the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred G. Wilson and  
Sarah Van Hoosen Jones:

### EXECUTIVE TRUSTEES

HAROLD A. FITZGERALD, *President*

DON E. AHRENS, *Vice-President*

PAUL K. COUSINO, *Vice-President*

MRS. WILLIAM T. GOSSETT, *Vice-President*

JAMES C. ZEDER, *Vice-President*

DANA P. WHITMER, *Secretary*

ALFRED C. GIRARD, *Treasurer*

### TRUSTEES

Judge Clark J. Adams

Donald C. Baldwin

Christian F. Beukema

John B. Bruff

Judge Howard R. Carroll

Mrs. L. L. Colbert

Keith Crissman

Robert Doen

Maj. Gen. Robert E. L. Eaton

Coy G. Eklund

William J. Emerson

E. F. Fisher

Marion Goodale

John F. Gordon

Fred V. Haggard

Delos Hamlin

John A. Hannah

Bert Henson

George J. Huebner, Jr.

Ernest A. Jones

Sarah Van Hoosen Jones

Bernard A. Kalahar

Adolph F. Klein

S. E. Knudsen

Mrs. Roger M. Kyes

Harold E. Lefevre

Howard L. McGregor, Jr.

Paul W. McKee

Lynn S. Miller

Mrs. Ralph T. Norvell

Raymond T. Perring

Harry M. Pryale

Thomas R. Reid

Arthur Rowley

Louis H. Schimmel

Ernest W. Seaholm

Mrs. Mildred Stark

D. B. Varner

Mrs. R. Jamison Williams

Walter K. Willman

Mrs. Alfred G. Wilson

Harry L. Winston, Jr.

\*Mrs. George Wyman

Theodore O. Yntema

\*Deceased





LAST-MINUTE INSTRUCTIONS BY . . .

. . . THE ABSENT-MINDED COACH



### ORDER OF PROCESSION

President Hannah and  
Chancellor Varner

Chairman Smith and  
President Hamilton

Trustee Brody and Trustee Harlan

Trustee Vanderploeg and  
Trustee Stevens

Mr. McDonel and Mr. May

Rev. Stack and Rev. Hermanson

Dean Hoopes and Mr. Alexander

Mr. Matthews and Mr. Hammerle

Mr. McKay and Mr. Pearson

Mr. Gherity and Mrs. Collins

Mr. Amann and Mr. Fitzsimmons

Mr. Rhode and Mr. Schwab

Mr. Kluback and Mrs. White

Mr. Straka and Miss Cusack

Mr. Burke and Mrs. des Parmet

Mr. Danielson and Mrs. Kovach

Mrs. Popluiko and Mrs. Smith

Miss North and Miss Young

Mr. Pope and Mr. Swanson

Mr. Eklund and Mr. Stoutenburg

Mr. Lepley and Mr. Karas

Mr. Fritz and Mr. Hopkins

Mr. Hannum

### ORDER OF RECESSION

Reverse of the procession.





1 CHANCELLOR D. B. VARNER



CHANCELLOR D. B. VARNER, Presiding:—

*The Invocation will be given by*

FATHER FRANCIS T. STACK

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Charter Class, Members of the Faculty, Members of the Board of Trustees, and distinguished guests. Today, with this convocation, we are writing both the closing words of Chapter I and the beginning words of Chapter II in what promises to be one of the nation's most exciting educational adventures.

To review for you each page of the chapter we are closing would be inappropriate. Yet at this convocation, committed to the purpose of making ready for the work of tomorrow, it would be equally inappropriate if we did not identify for you some of the highlights of this development. Beyond the simple identification of important events as they have occurred, we are fortunate to have as our special guests almost all those who have been responsible for what we are and hope to be.

As you must know, this university had its origin in one of the most courageous acts with which I have had any familiarity in my lifetime. It is not easy to give away one's life's accumulation, yet here we have witnessed a deed of generosity not often exceeded in America's educational record. This has been the story of wealth accumulated in the traditional American framework of competitive free enterprise, and the story of the return of a large share of this wealth to serve the community from which it came. For those who cry out for the preservation of our American ideals, I submit this decision of the Wilsons as a kind of positive action designed to achieve just this.

To the members of this charter class, to our faculty, and to our guests, I should like to introduce those responsible for the founding of this institution, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred G. Wilson.

(Mr. and Mrs. Wilson rose to acknowledge their introduction.)

Also with us today is a real pioneer of this community and this county and a person equally dedicated — both in personal contribution and philosophy to the establishment of this new university. Some five years ago, Miss Sarah Van Hoosen Jones, after serving for twelve years on the governing board of Michigan State University, gave to the University her beautiful 365-acre farm located five miles north east of where we are today. It, too, was a courageous act since it represented the yielding of a homestead which had been in the Van Hoosen family for more than 100 years.

Miss Jones, we have told you many times of our gratitude, but today we would like for you to stand and let this group express its appreciation for your generosity.

(Miss Jones rose to acknowledge her introduction.)

The decision to accept these generous gifts was, of course, a simple one. Far more significant, however, was the decision to accept the responsibility which accompanied the gifts. It was not merely a matter of saying a simple



Mr. and Mrs. ALFRED G. WILSON and SARAH VAN HOESEN JONES



"Thank you" to Mr. and Mrs. Wilson and Miss Jones, but a far-reaching commitment to the citizens of this area and everywhere that from this gift should in fact rise a new institution — one which could measure up to the potential symbolized by the magnificence of the gifts. This decision could be made at but one point — the Board of Trustees of Michigan State University. For their courage, their faith, and their commitment, we shall all — forever — be indebted.

We are pleased to have with us today most of the members of the Board of Trustees, and I should like to present them individually. Dr. Connor Smith, Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Mr. Clark Brody, a member of the Board of Trustees for 38 years; Mr. Arthur Rouse; Mr. C. Allen Harlan; Mr. Don Stevens; Mr. Jan Vanderploeg; and Mr. Lynn Bartlett, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(The Board of Trustees rose to acknowledge their introduction.)

To begin a new university is an experience which is infrequent to say the least. It is all the more unusual to begin with the freedom to plan and innovate as we have been given here. Our Board of Trustees has said literally, "Don't be bound by tradition — build a new university which encompasses as many of the good new ideas as can be identified."

With this mission, and with public interest in education at an all-time high, it seemed only natural for us to seek the counsel of an interested and enlightened group of citizens in the community. A group of 50 was selected, representing a wide variety of interests — leaders in industry, labor, business, banking, publishing, and education. Their enthusiasm for their role has resulted in the establishment of a permanent organization, known as the Michigan State University Oakland Foundation, with the purpose of promoting the development of this new institution. Their counsel has been invaluable, their support, both moral and financial, has been a source of continuing encouragement. In recognition of their role, the Board of Trustees of Michigan State University has voted to name the first building in their honor, and it shall be known as Foundation Hall. Because of their vital role in this institution — past, present and future — I am sure that you students will welcome an opportunity to meet them. It is my pleasure to present the members of the Michigan State University Oakland Foundation with Mr. Harold Fitzgerald, Publisher of the Pontiac Press, serving as their President.

(The members of Michigan State University Oakland Foundation rose to acknowledge their introduction.)

There is another group which has served without fanfare but which has played a vital role in the shaping of this new program. This is a group from Michigan State University at East Lansing. This includes the deans and the other administrative officers of the University, the curriculum study committee, the invaluable group which has handled the essential but unglamorous details of purchasing, architectural counseling, food services consulting, and countless other matters. To this group, let us say this — you



have been tolerant, patient, helpful — and we are grateful. Will all of you from the East Lansing campus please rise so that we may express to you our appreciation?

(The group rose to acknowledge their introduction.)

From each of the invited groups here today, there has come a special contribution. It is difficult to judge which has given the most crucial aid. With complete confidence, however, I can say that without the active support of this next group we would not be here today. Plagued, beleaguered and harassed with the accumulation of yesterday's problems, the Governor and the members of the Legislature might have been forgiven if they had ignored the needs for tomorrow. To their credit, let it be recognized, however, that they did not lose sight of the growing need to provide adequately for higher education in this State. We appreciate their confidence, and we shall do our very best to prove worthy of their support. I should like to introduce to you now the members of the Michigan Legislature from Oakland and Macomb Counties who have played such a vital role in the launching of this new institution.

(The Legislative group rose to acknowledge their introduction.)

With us today is another group which has given generously of their time, their counsel and their support. Because of their importance to the community and to this development and, since we have such an unusual opportunity for developing a set of mutually rewarding experiments involving the high schools and this university, we invited them to be here for this historic occasion. We are glad to have many of the superintendents of the public schools in Oakland and Macomb Counties with us this morning, and I should like to present them as a group now.

(The group rose to acknowledge their introduction.)

During the past fifteen years, Michigan State University has grown from a relatively unknown land-grant college to a major university.

It has enjoyed phenomenal growth in virtually every major field of knowledge and its educational programs have been expanded on a world-wide basis so that it now has more of its staff members rendering an educational service in foreign lands than any university in the world. It is universally recognized by those familiar with the institution that this great record of achievement must be attributed to the leadership of a single person — its President. Among his attributes are two which in my judgment have stood out — he has never been bound by the traditions of the past, and he refuses to believe that worthwhile objectives cannot be achieved. His is a mastery of the art of the possible.

It is a simple statement of fact when I say to you that he is responsible more than any other single person for the transformation of the gift of the Wilsons and the dream it embodied into the reality of today. It is my honor to present to you — members of this charter class, and guests — a great American citizen and educational statesman, the President of Michigan State University and Michigan State University Oakland, Dr. John A. Hannah.

# CONVOCATION ADDRESS

By PRESIDENT JOHN A. HANNAH  
MSUO

FIRST ANNUAL CONVOCATION  
September 17, 1959

Chancellor Varner, President Hamilton, Members of the Faculty, and students: It is more than the usual polite commonplace to say that I am very happy to be here today and to participate in this, the opening convocation of Michigan State University Oakland. Like everyone here, I have looked forward to the day when this new college became a reality, transmuted from what was only a dream three years ago.

The recollection is a very vivid one of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred G. Wilson coming to the campus at East Lansing to indicate their interest in giving their beloved Meadow Brook Estate as a site for this new center of culture and learning. So, too, are the recollections of the many meetings with the leaders of this community at which they exhibited their enthusiasm and pledged their support, the many planning sessions that were held, the seminars with distinguished leaders in education, business, and industry at which the courses of study began to take form, the ground-breaking ceremonies, and many other events in the fast-paced development of Michigan State University Oakland.

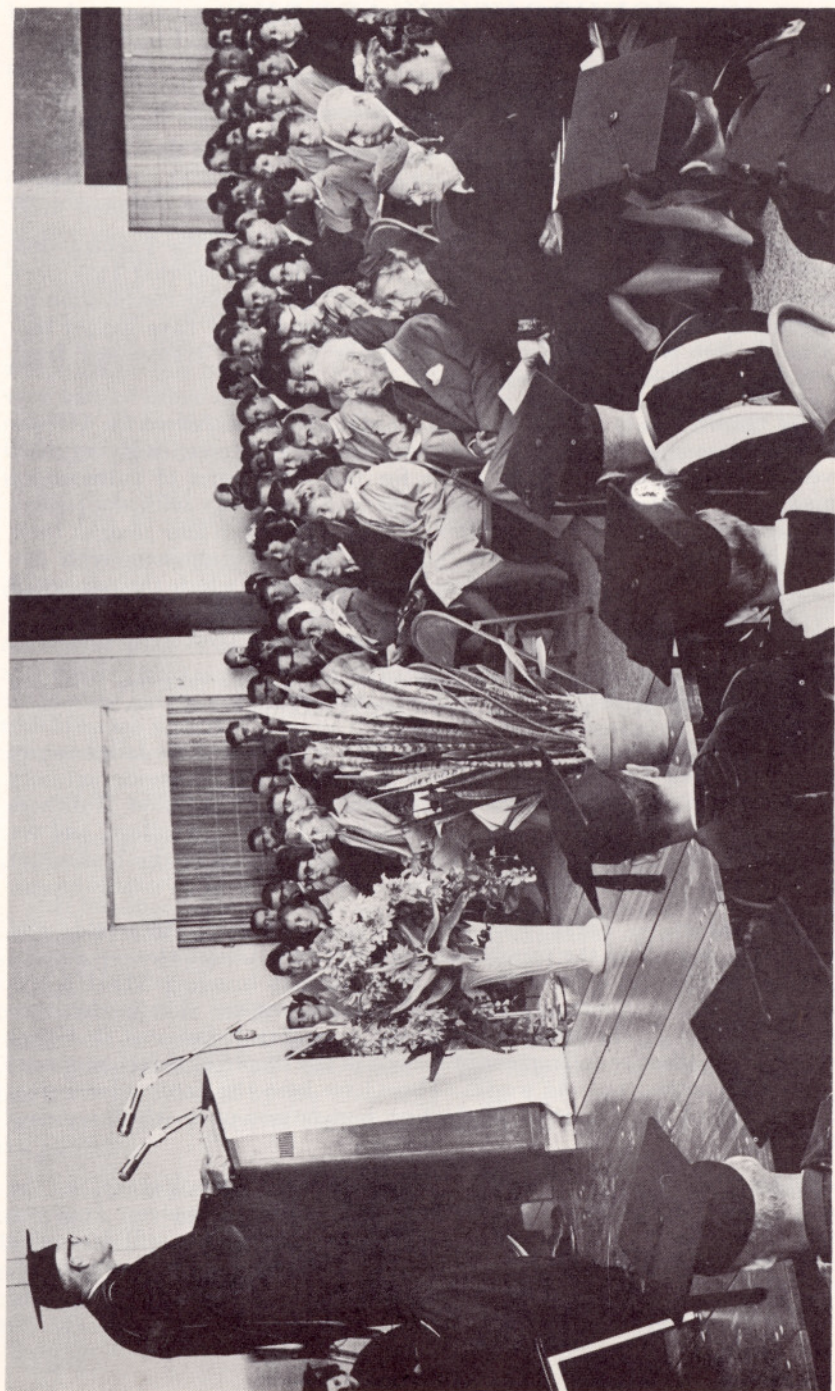
Now all of the preliminaries are behind us; today we take our first step into the history of Michigan State University Oakland.

As we take that step, we would do less than we should if we failed to pay tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Wilson for their great generosity in giving not only their beautiful estate, but also the funds with which Foundation Hall was constructed. They are in truth the real founders of this new college, and we could dedicate this new college to no better purpose than to the making of contributions to society comparable to their contributions to its establishment.

Many others — Sarah Van Hoosen Jones, Harold Fitzgerald, and James Zeder, and all of the members of the Advisory Committee — deserve our sincere thanks and appreciation for their parts in bringing MSUO into existence. Their contributions have varied in form, but are alike in that they express confidence in the idea being brought to reality today, and in higher education as an effective instrument of service to the people of this community, this state, this nation, and the world. These have been the hardy adventurers who have cleared the way and laid the first foundations upon which we now must build.

Today the major responsibility passes to Chancellor Varner, to the Faculty, to the administrative staff, and to the students themselves. It is you who by the quality of your leadership, example, and application will determine whether the bright promise will be realized; whether the glowing predictions will be justified; whether, in short, Michigan State University Oakland will live up to its advance notices.





DR. JOHN A. HANNAH addressing the Charter class



This is a formidable challenge, for the advance notices have been good. But it is not a discouraging task, for the assets are great. In Chancellor Varner, you have a leader of experience, imagination, courage, and real dedication to the cause of education. The administrative staff is highly experienced; and it, too, has enthusiasm and dedication. The faculty is exceptional in its youth, vigor, and professional qualifications. The student body is noteworthy for the excellence of its preparation but perhaps more for its courage in accepting the challenge of a totally new situation and its desire to be a part of a new adventure in higher education.

It is to you students — our prospective first alumni — that these brief remarks are addressed primarily. You are the first of what will be a swelling flow of young people seeking here the educational experiences which are coming to be considered an essential for those who will be the leaders of our society in the future.

Time was when America could afford to have relatively few of her capable young people undergo the experience of higher education and let the many go with their promise unfulfilled. That time has long since passed. We can no longer afford such a prodigal waste of human resources, and our efforts now must be in the direction of seeing that every young person receives as much education as he can profitably use.

I would remind you students that because you are the first of the thousands who will follow, you will set standards, establish precedents, originate traditions — in short, help to set the tone of Michigan State University Oakland. Because you are in this unique position, it seems fair to call upon you for effort commensurate with the importance of the circumstances in which you find yourselves. If you choose, you can establish a standard for true excellence; nothing less would be worthy of those who have made this institution possible, those who will be working with you as your instructors, and those who hold such high hopes for this college of which one day you will be the first alumni.

But as you go about establishing your standards and traditions here, I would have you remember that you are the inheritors of a glorious legacy, the influence of which you could not avoid even if you would.

Part of that legacy comes to you from Michigan State University, itself an honored pioneer in higher education. As many of you know, the University at East Lansing was the forerunner and the first of the land-grant colleges and universities which have made such a great contribution to American higher education. The basic philosophy of the early land-grant colleges has become the basic pattern for all of education in America.

In brief, that contribution was the opening of the doors of educational opportunities to young people from all walks of life instead of to the privileged few, a broadening of the fields of study to include all of the useful activities of mankind, and the studied application of the accumulated knowledge of the past to the solution of the everyday problems of living people.

The land-grant colleges brought higher education in America down from the ivory tower and out from behind the ivied walls and placed it in elbow-to-elbow contact with ordinary people. They offered a new kind of higher education, combining the liberal and practical, to the American people, and the acceptance was so overwhelming that it changed the whole course of higher education in this country, and indeed the history of the nation itself.

In this tradition you begin your work at Michigan State University Oakland, and it is a tradition in which you may rightfully be proud.

Much has been said of the strong emphasis to be placed on the liberal arts of Michigan State University Oakland. In the strict sense, this is no innovation, for the liberal tradition is an ancient one, the benefits of which have been enjoyed by countless generations of students before you. What we have planned for you here is a refreshingly different combination of courses to prepare you to live in a world far different from the world your grandparents knew, and far different from the ancient world which saw the first beginnings of the liberal tradition.

Sir Eric Ashby, the eminent British educator, made a pertinent comment recently when he pointed out that what is needed in the world today is a revision of the idea of a liberal education. The Oxford Dictionary, he reminds us, defines liberal education as education fit for a gentleman. That is still an acceptable definition, he contends; it is the idea of a gentleman which has changed.

What was good, sound education a century or five centuries ago is absurdly inadequate for 1959, or for 1979 when you students will be near the peak of your efficiency and productivity. Here at MSUO we are attempting to give effect to what some of the best minds in the country think is a sound revision of the definition of a good education — science, technology, and the liberal and humanistic studies in a new combination to meet the demands of today's world and tomorrow's world.

All of this suggests that while we improvise and innovate, we actually deal only with things on the periphery of an unchanging central purpose. Education as it was in the academies of ancient Greece and in the universities of Western Europe, and education as it is in the colleges and universities of modern America are alike in being dedicated to the central purpose — the preparation of young people to live useful and satisfying lives. The specifications are being rewritten constantly, but the objective remains the same.

But this view of education, while wholly valid, leaves us dissatisfied. It is too objective in that it takes the viewpoint of society as a whole, whereas the same liberal tradition of which we speak demands that we give equal or greater weight to the interest of the individual. How is he served by education? What objectives should he have in mind when he undertakes the search for knowledge under the guidance of learned masters? Does education have a central, unchanging purpose?



To those reared in the Western tradition with its strong Jewish-Christian undertones, the words of Anna Brownell Jameson are particularly appropriate. I recommend them to you as a sort of personal motto on objectives. Here is what she said:

*"The true purpose of education is to cherish and unfold the seed of immortality already sown within us; to develop, to their fullest extent, the capacities of every kind with which the God who made us has endowed us."*

This, I believe, is what you should seek from education: The opportunity to develop to their fullest extent the capacities with which God has endowed you. If you accept this premise, then nothing less than the very best you can do will be good enough.

Giving this opportunity to you, and extending it to those who follow, is the high and noble purpose to which this new venture in education is devoutly dedicated. We invite you to share this devotion and dedication, for your own sakes, for the good of your fellow men, and in hope of creating a better world for all.

On behalf of Michigan State University — the parent, the sponsor, the godmother of Michigan State University Oakland — its Board of Trustees, its faculty, its students, its alumni, its friends scattered all over the world, we dedicate this new institution for your use and for the service of this community, the state, our nation, and the world. We wish for it success and achievement equal to our high hopes.

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— *Chancellor Varner*

You have now met most of the key figures in the conception and development of Michigan State University Oakland. There is one, however, whom we have literally brought back for this occasion. We asked him to join us today partially because of his early and important role in shaping the character of this institution, but also because he is one of the nation's leading young educational administrators. From the first discussions of this program, he had played a vital role. At one stage, he had the official responsibility for this new institution in addition to serving as Academic Vice President at Michigan State University; throughout he has served as a valued consultant and personal advisor. It was the loss of the State of Michigan in general and of Michigan State University in particular when he left us in mid-summer, but it was for the State of New York a great gain. On this occasion, I can think of no one whom I would rather introduce than our guest speaker, one of the principal architects of this program and one of my warmest personal friends, the President of the State University of New York, Dr. Thomas H. Hamilton.





DR. THOMAS H. HAMILTON

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY OAKLAND

September 17, 1959

*Remarks by*

THOMAS H. HAMILTON

To say that I am happy to be here today would be to understate the case. Part of this stems, of course, from a delight in returning to Michigan to see my friends. But my enthusiasm runs deeper than this. We are today ceremonializing one of the most important and exciting ventures in higher education in the United States in recent times. Here, if ever, there is an opportunity for a fresh start — a chance to choose wisely from that which time and experience has proved valid and to clear away the rubbish of superficiality which certainly clings with at least the tenacity of ivy to many older universities. Here, too, is the opportunity to devise the new, to be bold, to be imaginative. You, the students, the faculty, the administration, and the entire community should feel fortunate in being able to participate in an enterprise characterized by both intellectual excitement and great promise.

Yet, in spite of the fact that this ceremony formally gets the first college year of this new institution underway, in spite of the fact that at the moment newness and a clean slate are the symbols of Michigan State University Oakland, you even now have a history and a tradition. As I view this tradition in embryo, it would seem to me that, if the graduates of this new center of learning display its elements, certainly the labor which has gone and will go into this enterprise will not have been in vain. For a student educated in this tradition would have four principal characteristics. He would be generous. He would be responsible. He would be courageous. He would be wise.

It is clear that the principal symbols of generosity in your new tradition are the figures of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wilson. To them I would express not only my personal admiration, but the admiration of all connected with this institution, this community, this society. They have demonstrated in their beneficence an understanding of the fact that the justification for the accumulation of wealth is the advancement of the good, not the acquisitive, society. But a listing of the exponents of this characteristic of generosity in your young history does not stop with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, great as their contribution has been. Leaders in this community in every field — business, labor, agriculture, education, public services — have given of their time, means, and wisdom that this institution might come into being.

The second facet of this tradition is that of responsibility. This has been exhibited by many who have had to do with the designing of this endeavor. It was characteristic of President Hannah, Chancellor Varner, the Board of Trustees, and those who worked with them as they surveyed this locale and recognized that there was here the need for an institution of higher learning which responsible officials of a state university dedicated to responding to the needs of citizens should meet. This sense of responsibility was also exhibited by the Michigan Legislature. They, too, saw that here was an area of the State which must have for its youth educational opportunity equal to



at this institution will enjoy, learn from and profit by non-intellectual activities. I recognize full well the beneficial results of socializing influences when properly directed. But there are other institutions in our society which are dedicated to the achievement of those kinds of goals. A university makes a basic mistake when it tries to treat all things as being of equal importance to its own nature. The university must not try to be a substitute for the family, the home, the church, social organizations, and recreational groups, valuable as these may be. The reason that society in the last analysis supports and nurtures universities is because of the fundamental commitment that society must have institutions the major purpose of which is the preservation of the knowledge of the past, the discovery of new knowledge, and the dissemination of both. If this premise is kept ever in the minds of all connected with this institution, then I have no fear of the various attempts to devise new ways in which this three-fold function of the university can be better realized.

Let me turn now my attention to the students. I think that I have indicated that a good deal has gone before you. It now becomes incumbent on you to determine your responsibility in the matter. And I would here first emphasize that you must recognize that nothing of significance in the last analysis was ever taught by anyone but only learned. If you approach your experience here with the attitude that, while you have no real objection to being present you will be entirely passive leaving to the faculty the responsibility of teaching you if they dare, then I can assure you that nothing much will come of your presence here for four years other than it may keep you out of inclement weather. Learning is a positive, active, exciting enterprise in which the teacher can, at the very most, provide the best possible conditions for the student to learn. Should you assume that yours is a passive and not an active role, almost all that has gone into the building of this institution will be for naught.

Having, then, identified what seems to me should be your attitude toward the learning process itself, let me turn my attention to what I think should be in your minds as you consider for what you should be educated. Let me set your minds at ease by saying that I cannot agree with those who lament the fact that many of you are here to learn certain skills which will later enable you to make a living. There is nothing wrong with this, provided the skills that you need are of a sufficiently complex, intellectual nature to warrant the turning of a university's resources to their teaching. Nor, in spite of some critics' statements, is student interest in vocational preparation solely a modern phenomenon. When Henry Adams asked one of his Harvard students what he could do with the education he was receiving, the quick reply was, "The degree of Harvard College is worth money to me in Chicago." Learning to do the world's work is a perfectly respectable and valid objective. Furthermore, the distinctions so frequently made between special education and general or liberal education or between vocational education and cultural education don't, it seems to me, in the last analysis stand up very well. I would quote with approval T. S. Eliot's comment that: "The distinction between vocational and cultural education is of little use: apart from the disadvantage that vocational is apt to connote merely a salary and a pension, and cultural to connote an education for leisure which is either a refined hedonism or a skill to practice harmless hobbies."

Having said this, however, I must immediately point out that you will make a grievous error if your only concern is for the acquisition of skills designed to make your livelihood. In the first place, I would guess that you are sufficiently inexperienced not to know with certainty what skills would be appropriate in this connection. It is now common-place for leading practitioners in business, industry, agriculture, engineering, medicine, and all of the other pursuits of life to recognize that most frequently the failure of individuals in these vocations is a product, not of any inadequacy in the professional or vocational phase of their educational experience, but rather in the inability to practice those intellectual skills which we have come to think of in connection with liberal education.

You must learn to come to terms with yourself as a man and as a citizen before you become overly concerned with your skills as an engineer, as a physician or as a businessman. This, then, means that you must learn a great deal, both in terms of content and skills which may seem to you to be unrelated to the development of your vocational competence. You must know something of the nature of not only your own society, but others as well. You must know the past to have some recognition of how we got where we now are. You must understand the nature of science, both as an intellectual process and as a body of knowledge. Perhaps most important of all, you must learn to read and understand material of complexity and to express yourselves in writing and speaking on matters of some profundity with clarity and taste and style. You cannot ignore the great creative works to which our culture is heir — in music, in art, in sculpture, in architecture and in literature. These you must learn, not because you are going to be an engineer or a physician or a businessman, but rather because you are a human being. These are fields of study and intellectual skills which experience has indicated are proper for all men regardless of calling.

"We who say, then, that we believe in democracy cannot content ourselves with virtual education any more than we can with virtual representation. We have not the option of deciding for ourselves whether or not we shall be liberal artists, because we are committed to the proposition that all men shall be free. We cannot admit that ordinary people cannot have a good education, because we cannot agree that democracy must involve a degradation of the human ideal. Anything less than the effort to help everybody get the best education necessarily implies that some cannot achieve in their own measure our human ideal. We cannot concede that the conquest of nature, the conquest of drudgery, and the conquest of political power must lead in combination to triviality in education and hence in all the other occupations of life. The aim of education is wisdom, and each must have the chance to become as wise as he can."<sup>1</sup>

I have suggested, then, that this area of liberal education is essential to your development because it is, among other things, that education particularly appropriate to man as man. But more than that is here involved.

Almost as far back as we have written record, it is apparent that men of wisdom and reflective capacities were aware that he who ruled must have a special form of education. You will find in the wisdom literature case after

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<sup>1</sup> Robert M. Hutchins, *The Great Conversation*, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1952. p. 82.



case of the philosopher addressing his remarks to the Monarch, to the King, to the Prince. Machiavelli's book comes, of course, immediately to mind but there is also St. Thomas Aquinas' *On The Governments of Rulers*, among others. The premise which underlay the writing of these books was a completely valid one for, to be sure, the responsibility of ruling does carry with it the obligation to be educated for that function. But what has happened since the French Revolution and the great democratic movements all over the world is that each citizen has become a ruler and thus must be educated as once was only the prince. If you are to be able to fulfill your obligations as citizens, then this liberal education with its emphasis on the ability to reason, to make judgments, to make wise decisions about complex social, political and economic matters is essential to the proper performance of your function. And, as the world becomes more and more complex, as national boundaries become of less significance in identifying the boundaries of the problems which confront us, this kind of education becomes more important to the welfare of our society.

Having then, I hope, emphasized to you the diligence with which you should pursue that part of your study which we usually designate as liberal, or general, I would say a word to you about that special education which you will undertake here to prepare you for a vocation, a profession, a calling. Even here I would beg you not to interpret what you are going to need too narrowly. It becomes increasingly evident with the years that colleges and universities, in educating for the various pursuits of life, have sometimes been guilty of interpreting the kind of education desired too narrowly, too specifically, and thus there has been built into the education of many of our adults of the present time an almost inevitable obsolescence. The times are not so much out of joint as they are so rapidly changing so that the person inflexibly educated for his profession soon is out of phase. Concentrate then, if you will, not so much on the applications of disciplines but rather on a thorough understanding of their basic principles. For if you learn a specific technique or application which may be the best that is known as of this date, almost certainly ten or fifteen years hence this particular application will be completely useless. And if you are unable to adjust to new and changing conditions, then your contribution to your profession will be meager indeed.

Finally, I would hope that you would learn here a respect for learning not as a means to an end but rather as a valuable and exciting activity in and of itself, an enterprise which must continue until the day you die. At the most, in four years here, you can begin to get some of the means of approaching problems — personal, social and professional — but you must also understand that, unless the learning process continues the rest of your life, you will soon find yourself not possessed of that kind of intellectual alertness so essential not only to utility but more importantly to the happy and the good life.

Let me conclude by quoting Whitehead on the nature of a university.

" . . . A well-planned University course is a study of the wide sweep of generality. I do not mean that it should be abstract in the sense of divorce from concrete fact, but that concrete fact should be studied as illustrating the scope of general idea.

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" . . . The function of a University is to enable you to shed details in favour of principles. When I speak of principles I am hardly even thinking of verbal formulations. A principle which has thoroughly soaked into you is rather a mental habit than a formal statement. It becomes the way the mind reacts to the appropriate stimulus in the form of illustrative circumstances. Nobody goes about with his knowledge clearly and consciously before him. Mental cultivation is nothing else than the satisfactory way in which the mind will function when it is poked up into activity. Learning is often spoken of as if we are watching the open pages of all the books which we have ever read, and then, when occasion arises, we select the right page to read aloud to the universe.

"Luckily the truth is far otherwise from this crude idea; and for this reason the antagonism between the claims of pure knowledge and professional acquirement should be much less acute than a faulty view of education would lead us to anticipate. I can put my point otherwise by saying that the ideal of a University is not so much knowledge as power. Its business is to convert the knowledge of a boy into the power of a man." <sup>2</sup>

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— *Chancellor Varner*

In the beginning, we said that today we are writing the closing lines to Chapter I and the opening lines of Chapter II in this adventure. You have met the key people in the formulation of the concept; you know of the plans and the projections — the dreams and aspirations.

This is the end of Chapter I.

It is closed.

Now we begin again — not in the planning, but in the execution of the plan — not in the dreaming, but in the reality of a new university. In the background are all the characters you have met today and others. But moving to the front and center is a new cast — you, the students; the faculty and the staff; and the administration. The stage is ours — the real task now begins. The careful planning shall have been but an exercise unless we are effective in its execution.

In the newscast, I have complete confidence. The student body is an extremely good one — able, serious minded, aware of the purposes for which we are established. The faculty is one of the most exciting faculties in America. Young, enthusiastic, well educated — and each with a sense of mission about this particular undertaking.

I state the case as simply as I know how — we are ready.

From this convocation, we turn to the serious business at hand. For the first of what shall likely become a tradition of our own — the address to the freshmen — I introduce to you the gentleman whose primary responsibility is the academic leadership of this university, the Dean of the Faculty, Dr. Robert Hoopes.

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education*, A Mentor Book, 1949, pp. 38-39.



# ADDRESS TO THE FRESHMEN

By DEAN ROBERT HOOPES

MSUO

FIRST ANNUAL CONVOCATION

September 17, 1959

President Hannah, Chancellor Varner, President Hamilton, members of the Board of Trustees, members of the MSUO Foundation, members of the faculty, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen of the freshman class: To some of you I offer for public record my stated gratitude for the privilege of helping taxi a new educational aircraft out of its hangar, a hangar and a housing that somehow got built simultaneously with the airplane, thanks to the concentrated thought and dedication of spirit represented by a number of people sitting with us here today. We are about to see whether the craft will take off, whether the plane will fly. It will.

To others of you, namely the freshmen, I may offer additional words — so far as a new dean can formulate for the first time in his experience the combinations of words he thinks might usefully be said to students entering college. So far as the members of this, the charter class, are concerned, each or most of you must be struggling with certain questions. What is life? What is success? What is happiness? What is good? What am I? What do I want? Where am I going? Those questions you *must* ask, somehow, some time; and the answers you discover will determine largely what you will become and what you will go on to find. Primarily, you are in college to seek answers to those questions, and the first thing you will discover is that there are no pat answers. If anyone tells you there are, he's a fool. And yet you must ask the questions that need to be asked. You will receive guidance from countless great historical voices that have asked the same questions, and, it will probably seem to you, come up with as many different answers as there have been voices. Out of the welter and confusion you will — hopefully — begin to develop a receptiveness to new ideas, freedom from prejudice and emotional bias, the habit of insisting upon verification and demonstration of everything presented as truth, an ability to distinguish between appearance and reality, a refusal to accept authority or tradition as final, and a permanent skepticism of all those fads, propagandas, and panaceas that may be called the patent medicines of the mind.

Start right in with the people and environment around you. If you find that you're not really interested in ideas, that thinking is a dull and wearisome business, that study of all kinds is painfully onerous, the probabilities are that you don't belong in college at all. Perhaps mechanics fascinate you. Then leave college and go to a trade school where you can get the training you need. It is a distinction to be a good mechanic, while it may be a disgrace to be a poor engineer.

Decide for yourself whether you've come to the right place. Don't be fooled by your instructors — but judge them by honest standards. The average undergraduate expects a faculty member to be as wise as Socrates,



DEAN ROBERT HOOPES



as eloquent as Daniel Webster, as witty as Oscar Wilde and as entertaining as Robert Benchley. You are no judge of his wisdom unless he is clearly an ignoramus, and you have no right to demand wit, oratory, or mellowness. Neither do you have the right to expect entertainment for the sake of entertainment. Enthusiasm for his subject and a genuine desire to help you learn, however; these you have every right to expect. Any student — bright, average, or dull — can detect these qualities quickly enough. If you do not find them, you are being cheated. But don't make the adolescent mistake of equating a professor's ability with his stock of gags.

The fiction exists in many quarters these days — and many of you are, I suspect, its innocent victims — that all work can be made easy, that by looking at certain difficult and uncomfortable tasks in a certain way we can make them attractive and light. I once saw a first-year high school text entitled **HAVING FUN WITH LATIN**: I've always wondered whether the second-year text was called **HAVING MORE FUN WITH LATIN**. The view is a fraud, and not even a pious one. In psychology it is called illusion, or fantasy, or hallucination. We may call it willful self-deception and let it go at that. It ignores the plain truth that the greatest kind of satisfaction a human being can experience is the kind which results from facing a difficult task, admitting its difficulty, wading in, and triumphing over it. There is no point in smuggling in education under the guise of play. Sooner or later we shall have to learn that all learning is not entertaining, that everything we shall have to do in life, for our own or for another's *good*, will not be pleasurable — except in terms of results, and not always then.

Having said all this, I am bound nevertheless to observe that, as usual, in the paradox lies the truth. Rightly considered, your studies will prove to be the richest, the most stimulating, the most delightful part of college life. And what is it, you must now be wondering, that we shall invite, urge, cajole, or otherwise demand you to study? We shall ask you to study your own language, to practice its written utterance with the exactness and intensity that you would practice toward mastery of any fine art. And we shall ask you to practice this in every course you take, not only in something the catalogue calls "Freshman English". By organizing and giving lucid, coherent, and graceful expression to your knowledge, you will prove to yourself that you have power over it — in effect that you know what you think you know. There may be other ways of proving to oneself; I simply don't know of any.

We shall ask you not to sample but to master a second language, not out of any Know-your-enemy approach to education and not because we believe that it will have utilitarian value should you eventually enter into politics or international affairs, but because knowledge of a foreign language is an indispensable preliminary, as such, to any release from mental and cultural provincialism. It is a demonstrated fact that the knowledge of a foreign language improves anyone's command over his own language and thereby of all subjects, since language is their natural vehicle of instruction. But beyond that pragmatic sanction we are concerned that you become educated citizens of the world, and not remain mere residents of a locality, that you do not leave college with the quaint notion that God and the holy angels speak only English.

To that modest peroration I must add a feeble footnote, one that may seem and in fact does contradict what I have just said; namely, for purposes of formal course instruction and satisfaction of graduation requirements, we shall permit you to choose *between* a foreign language and the study of mathematics. This represents, I cheerfully admit, a tactical curricular compromise at best — one that permits science and engineering majors to get on with their business faster and to complete it sooner than would be possible if they were compelled to log foreign language tickets along with the rest of the students. Frankly I have an imperfect sympathy with the educational or philosophic sense of the option. It is one that I hope will in time dissolve itself as American educators gradually grow up and see to it that all students commence their study of a second language at the only sensible starting point; namely, kindergarten, and that they stay at it continuously through the next twelve grades. When that day arrives — and it is a perfectly realistic and realizable one — we shall not have to bother in the college with uneasy truces and compromises that violate the nature of liberal education. For the moment the only partial justification I can offer to you is that each discipline — language and mathematics — represents one of the two fundamental ways whereby man has taught himself to think symbolically, and to that extent they are alike. Granting you the right to choose between them amounts, by this view, to a recognition that the contribution of each to the development of the mind differs in degree but not in kind.

Some of you, I dare say, are uttering silent sighs of relief that you will not have to study the calculus, others that you will not have to master the subjunctive in French. And yet I would apologize to all of you; any fool knows that if we are to call ourselves educated, we should all study both. And I hasten to add that the privilege of choosing between them does *not* mean that you are not free to study both.

We shall ask you to study history, which has been defined in a paraphrase of a famous Latin sentence: "History is the memory of man. Without a knowledge of it, we would be lost, just as a man would be with amnesia — without his memory." If education concerns itself exclusively with what have been called the felt needs of young people, with preparation for democratic living, with adjustments to the society in which they find themselves, education will simply prevent them from growing up. The person who knows only his own age — and I intend the pun — remains forever a child. The question may be asked, How shall we decide where we are to go unless we possess knowledge of where Man — and I do not mean only Western Man — started, where he has been, what prices he has had to pay for certain choices he has made, as against others he could have made? How can we know how far we have come unless we discover where and what we have been?

To knowledge of man in and through time we shall further ask you to acquire knowledge of man and the world through measurement, namely through study of the natural and physical sciences. All men — and not only scientists — are now destined to live under the shadow of the suspended cobalt bomb and within range, for all we know, of falling moons. I shall not, therefore, carry coals to Newcastle in elaborate justification of this requirement except to say that like the science graduate who is insensitive to the kinds of meanings yielded by art and philosophy, the arts graduate who has



not been adequately subjected to the hard precision and objectivity of scientific methodology leaves the university ill-equipped to live effectively in modern society. It is our hope, in other words, that you will secure reasonable full and firm working grasp of the experimental, self-corrective, and genuinely progressive nature of all scientific knowledge. It is our additional hope that you may develop some critical and historical understanding of science, a critical appreciation of both its power and its limitations.

Finally we shall ask you to study the humanities and the arts, by which I mean philosophy, literature, painting and music. We shall do this in part because we are as much concerned for the cultivation of your sensitivity, imagination, and taste as we are for the development of your abilities to solve analytical and empirical problems. Courses in the humanities will serve to remind you, among other things, that the accumulation of facts and the methods of scientific investigation, impressive as their achievements have been, are not the only ways of apprehending and investing experience with meaning, nor are they the sole and final tests of human action. It is well to remember that the kinds of problems generated by scientific and technological advance are not themselves scientific and technological problems; they are human and social problems, and therefore not inherently susceptible of scientific and technological solution. And if we are facing the problem of having to colonize planets in outer space, we had better have not only a notion of, but rich and varied feeling for, the culture we endeavor to transplant. As Howard Mumford Jones has said, "All our studies of decision-making come back in the end to this: somebody has to decide, whether he live in the White House or anywhere else. But decisions are the products of imaginative projections into points of view of other men and women; they are imaginative calculations of future events. They are good decisions only in proportion as they come from a decider whose life has been enhanced by an experience of what the best and happiest minds can tell him." To give the name "humanities" to history, philosophy, literature, art, and music is thus to call these things by their right name: the common and necessary property of all men.

In drawing to a close, which I now promise mercifully to do, let me remind you of Abraham Lincoln, whose entire formal schooling came to less than a year. Listen to what he tells us:

*"My father at the death of his father was but six years of age and he grew up literally without education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, Indiana, in my 8th year. We reached our new home about the time the state came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools so-called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond reading, writing, and ciphering to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity."*

What did Lincoln "pick up" under the pressure of necessity? He picked up Gibbon's HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, Shakespeare, the Bible, Bunyan's PILGRIM'S

PROGRESS, Aesop's FABLES, and when he became a Congressman he mastered Euclid. No teacher told him to study elementary grammar, or worried about how to motivate him; and yet few men have been so liberally educated, in the traditional and noble sense of that phrase, as was he. Literally "liberal education" means "the arts appropriate to a free man". In ancient times these were seven: grammar, rhetoric, logic, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. Today a liberal education includes what we now call the arts and sciences. And their purpose, I submit, is not to stuff, but to discipline, the mind. Neither is their purpose that of training you for specific jobs as mechanics or business men. This can be done in training centers more efficiently, and if that is all we want, we might as well abolish colleges as places of education. But we don't want to abolish them, and our reluctance is a confession of our belief that there is a powerful something in the liberal arts that adds education to training, and without in the least lowering the efficiency of training itself. That powerful something I choose to call the liberal arts or liberal education generally. Its purpose is to season the timber before it is built into the ship, to prepare the apprentice before he becomes apprenticed, to give the engineer a humane conception of the society he is supposed to be serving with his technological devices and practices, to give the lawyer historical and philosophical breadth — to give all of these enlightenment, taste, virtue, and imagination. All of these are subtle qualities, hard to isolate in a laboratory, impossible to get at in a questionnaire, but they are indispensable to the life of civilized man.

I should like to conclude on an inspiring note, but, as I have remarked on another occasion, that requires quotation from somebody else. The following paragraph is from John Stuart Mill. It occurs in his 1867 Inaugural Address to the students in St. Andrew's University, to which he had just been elected rector:

*"Men are men before they are lawyers, or physicians, or merchants, or manufacturers; and if you make them capable and sensible men, they will make themselves capable and sensible lawyers or physicians. What professional men should carry away with them from an University, is not professional knowledge, but that which should direct the use of their professional knowledge, and bring the light of general culture to illuminate the technicalities of a special pursuit."*

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— Chancellor Varner

To our guests, we are grateful for your assistance in the past, for your attendance here today, but particularly for the role that you shall play in the future.

To the students, we wish you well. This is the beginning of the period of your life which should be the most satisfying, the most productive, and the most rewarding. To this end, we in the faculty and the administration of Michigan State University Oakland dedicate our full resources and our full energies.

Will you please rise for the benediction to be given by Reverend Robert F. Hermanson, Pastor, University Presbyterian Church, Rochester, and remain standing for the recessional.