

## 2008 Charter Night remarks, Jay Noren

Thank you, Ernie, and thank all of you for coming tonight and for your commitment to Wayne State. This is my first Charter Night, and it is a great feeling to be in the same room with so many special friends of the University. I'd like to recognize someone who is a special friend of mine—as well as a new friend of Wayne State -- my wife, Dr. Sheri Noren Everts.

Sheri and I feel very privileged to join all of you as the newest members of the Anthony Wayne Society.

The success of *Wayne First* is remarkably impressive, and that is because of all of you.

Although several optimists in 2001 felt the \$500 million goal quite reachable, probably few thought we would raise almost \$900 million. But as we steadily made progress toward that huge goal more and more people channeled their long-held affection for Wayne State into achieving it. We are here tonight to celebrate that wonderful optimism.

I feel fortunate to have become president of this University that benefits from such broad and deep affection and support from alums and friends. *Wayne First* is a real triumph most importantly

for all the people and institutions Wayne State serves in Detroit, throughout Michigan, and well beyond.

David Ripple listed a few of the many *Wayne First* accomplishments. Let me underscore a few:

- More than 42,000 first time donors
- 232 new scholarships
- 13 endowed chairs and 5 professorships
- Major buildings on campus: the Applebaum College of Pharmacy, Marvin I. Danto Engineering Development Center, the Richard J. Mazurek Medical Education Commons, the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights, our part of the South University Village complex, and renovation of the Chemistry building.
- \$20 million came from Wayne State faculty, a dramatic demonstration of faculty commitment that few universities in the country can match.
- The university's endowment, an essential element for long-term financial stability, increased 55% from \$141 million to \$219 million.

And—I think the most important impact of *Wayne First* is this: a powerful force—in fact an essential force—for continuing and accelerating Wayne State's national ranking as a top 50 major public research university. This remarkable success has sustained

and increased Wayne State's excellence despite the state of Michigan's major financial challenges of the past decade. Nationally, since 1998, average state allocations for higher education have risen by about 63 percent. In contrast, Michigan's higher education budget appropriation during these 10 years has been only ¼ the national average and ranks dead last in the nation. For Wayne our state appropriation for fiscal year 2009 will be almost \$33 million less than in 2002, a 13 percent real reduction.

But that's enough of bad news—the good news is this—*Wayne First* has assured our continued excellence and has served as a powerful counter balance to the lack of state support. Your efforts have made the difference for continuing Wayne State's quality.

Of course as everyone knows we will continue to face challenges given the current so called “perfect storm” of economic meltdown. But we have reason to feel strength because of *Wayne First* and what it portends for the future. As you know all research universities depend increasingly upon private support—and we will not rest but will continually work to sustain our excellence through private gifts and thereby help the state of Michigan recover its economic strength.

I will take a few minutes to look forward and comment on some of the major emphases Wayne State will pursue in the years ahead. As you know, the history and character of our University

focuses on intensive engagement with the urban community. This history makes Wayne State distinctive because it ties our academic, research and service resources to issues of immediate significance to America's great cities. It is what makes us one of the nation's foremost urban research universities (and the combination of urban and research is the key connection). There are many urban universities, but very few can bring the research power of Wayne State to the enterprise.

The research, engagement, and education power—**that has been so much empowered by *Wayne First***—and the Universities commitment to urban issues leads to four key emphases and opportunities for the future:

1. Great cities solutions
2. Economic development locally and regionally
3. Instilled lifelong commitment to citizenship in our graduates
4. Access to higher education across the student spectrum.

I'll briefly expand on these emphases:

**First – Great cities solutions: resolution of urban stresses**

America's urban universities like Wayne State must bring their research, education and community-engagement resources to address the stresses of urban life through efforts such as creative city planning, alternative energy, mass transit (light rail for

Detroit), K-12 education (we like to think of it as Pre K to 20), delivery of health care and human services to underserved populations, workforce retooling, economic development, and others.

In fact Detroit is on the launching pad for revitalization. Recently a Detroit team met in Chicago as part of the national initiative called “CEO’s for Cities”—to exchange ideas with teams from other cities including Chicago, Baltimore, Washington DC, Seattle, Los Angeles and others. The Detroit team comprises Professor Robin Boyle from Wayne State (national expert on urban planning) as well as myself, and others from the city including executives from Hudson-Webber Foundation, Kresge, Detroit Renaissance, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, DTE, Henry Ford, DMC, Michigan Municipal League, and others. The team will intensively continue its efforts to revitalize Detroit.

### **Second: Economy Development**

The foundation for our role in this economic renewal is our capacity for innovative and transformational research. Because of our new resources from Wayne First we will be increasing our support for research and development in many fields including information technology, biomedical sciences, engineering, robotics, nanotechnology, creative changes in K-12 education particularly in the inner city, health care, and others. This will pay

off for Detroit and Michigan in new jobs and new businesses and help pave the way for lasting economic prosperity.

And we have an exciting new partnership in Michigan's economic renewal—the University Research Corridor (or URC)—an alliance of Wayne State, Michigan State, and University of Michigan for research leading to economic growth. The alliance has been in development for a year—and we finalized the organization last week by signature of President's Mary Sue Coleman, Lou Anna Simon and me. Our URC is already competitive against six prominent existing research consortia around the country including North Carolina's Research Triangle partnership of the University of North Carolina, North Carolina State and Duke and Boston's beltline 128 partnership of Harvard, MIT, and Boston University. We equal and exceed these other consortia immediately on key measures such as research funding (\$1.3 billion for URC) and economic impact (\$13.3 billion for URC). One of our first emphases is alternative energy, in which Michigan has much untapped potential.

**Third Emphasis: Graduates engaged in lifelong citizenship**

Wayne State seeks to instill in our students commitment to lifelong citizenship through community activism, engagement in the public policy process essential to a democratic society, and informed leadership. We consider this a major educational priority

and accomplish it both as a central focus of our Honors College and throughout all majors by emphasizing service learning and community-based student projects and activism.

**Fourth: Access to higher education**

We are committed to the full range of student success-- including gifted young men and women in our Honors College and students who are disadvantaged economically or educationally, as is common among students who attend the Detroit Public Schools. This is a special role of urban research universities. It's both an educational engagement mission with our partners in K-12 and a major educational research mission of value to all America's great cities with challenged K-12 systems. One of our foremost goals is increasing our ability to fund both merit-based and need-based scholarships. Scholarships keep the university affordable for future generations of students who otherwise could not afford to attend and scholarships also attract the most talented students to our Honors College.

I know personally how much this means to many of you as it does to me. I was a first generation college student and I and my parents depended upon loans and scholarships. I have heard from many Wayne alums that college would not have been possible if it weren't for Wayne State. That is a profound legacy.

I would like to close with a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt which I believe is very relevant to Wayne State. She said, "In a Democratic society we must live cooperatively, and serve the community in which we live, to the best of our ability. For our own success to be real, it must contribute to the success of others." That is a central theme of Wayne State.

Again, congratulations and thanks to everyone on the success of *Wayne First*. It is an honor to be your partner in our continuing pursuit of excellence.

Now I have the special privilege to honor six individuals whose dedicated efforts generated enthusiasm throughout the campaign and who were integral to our success. On behalf of the University, I would like to present a token of our gratitude-- I hope this replica of Old Main that was created at the campaign's anniversary celebration will evoke warm memories of *Wayne First* as well as pride in your participation in such a successful and transformative endeavor.

Would you all please join me at the front of the ballroom.

- Eugene Applebaum, chair of the campaign steering committee and chair of the Foundation Board of Directors;
- Eugene Driker, chair of the Board of Governors and member of the campaign steering committee;

- Vice President John Davis and Dean Paula Wood, co-chairs of the faculty and staff campaign;
- Susan Burns, former Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs and President of the WSU Foundation; and
- Irv Reid—a special thank you to Irv—he is on his way back from Africa so could not be here tonight. But we owe very much to Irv.