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Spring Commencement Address, John Stewart, April, 23 2005

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Stewart, John

Commencement Address – EMU 4-23-05

Thank you President Willis and members of the Board of Regents. I want to thank you for this opportunity. President Willis, your staff and you are dedicated to Eastern Michigan University. You are great people and it is wonderful to work with you.

Eastern Michigan University holds a very special place in my heart. I am very glad to say that --- I am a graduate of Eastern Michigan University. Not only did I receive an excellent education at Eastern, but I was able to participate in a variety of different activities such as the University Choir, the Debating Team and Intramural Sports.

I am very thankful for the dedicated professors and administrators at Eastern who prepared me for my future. I took every course that I could from Professor David Hortin, who is also an attorney, and Professor Dennis Beagen, who was the Forensics Coach. As professors, they used the Socratic Method to motivate us to think 360 degrees around a problem.

I was also very grateful for the opportunity to be the coordinator of the Student Orientation Program under Dean Ralph Gilden, an administrator of the highest integrity. Track Coach Bob Parks served as a role model for me, teaching me that "physical fitness and mental fitness go hand in hand."

These four individuals, and the professors and administrators who went before them, have provided the solid foundation for Eastern Michigan University to be the great institution that it is today.

Eastern Michigan University is a great institution:

- Eastern Michigan University's College of Business was ranked as one of the "Best 143 Business Schools" by Princeton Review in 2005.
- Eastern Michigan University was ranked as one of the top 10 schools for entrepreneurship by *Entrepreneurship Magazine* in its April 2005 issue.
- **Eastern Michigan University was the top university in the nation in graduating professional educators during the 1990s and continues to rank near the top.**
- The 2004-05 Michigan Teacher of the Year is an Eastern graduate.
- And in the year 2004, The National Student Teacher of the Year was an Eastern graduate.

Eastern Michigan University educates the teachers who take care of Michigan's children.

My State Representative District - Plymouth, Canton, Northville and western Wayne County has more high school graduates attending Eastern Michigan University than any other district in Michigan.

This year, it is my privilege to be Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education. I would like to talk with you about integrity in public service and to give you some encouragement, hope and inspiration.

As members of the Class of 2005, the challenge before you will be to maintain your integrity in an increasingly complex and pluralistic society. The "real world," which you are about to enter, will test your ethics. You are responsible and accountable for the choices that you make. All of us have a voice inside that will speak to us if we let it. It is called - - your conscience. We know the difference between what is right and what is

wrong. Sometimes we just need to be still and listen for that “still, small voice.” That voice will help us live by our conscience and live a life with honor. To live a life with honor is to live forever.

I hope some of you have had an opportunity to enroll in the Merlanti Corporate Ethics Seminar in the College of Business. This seminar prepares undergraduate students with the knowledge and skills for resolving problems in business ethics and corporate social responsibility. This is a course that should be replicated in all of Eastern’s colleges and in all of our universities across the state.

Formal education can develop character when it merges with experience and integrity. A college education is not a quantitative body of memorized knowledge stored away in a computer. It is the ability to think, to reason and to analyze the most important things in life. **We must always strive for the closest approximation of truth.** A college education should promote an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and a hunger for a philosophy of life.

Today, as I reflect on my college experiences, I know that critical thinking and critical problem-solving are the most important things I learned in college. In fact, over the last three-plus decades, I have come to understand that my formal education, my faith and my practical experiences as an attorney and State Representative have prepared me best for the challenges in life.

Your degree is a passport to the next great adventure that awaits you in life. You will determine WHERE you go from here and WHAT you will BE. What you do with your

God-given talents and the education you received at Eastern Michigan University will determine your place in this life.

I hope you will seek employment opportunities in Michigan. Michigan needs to increase the number of citizens with college degrees if it is going to improve its economic vitality and participate in a knowledge-based economy. Michigan needs your talent and your creativity, your knowledge and your work ethic.

I am well aware that the students and faculty of Eastern Michigan University have many demands on their time. I think of the industrious faculty teaching four classes, advising and mentoring students, performing basic and applied research, volunteering in the community and raising families. I think of industrious students attending classes, working part-time or full-time, in some cases working two or three jobs, while still finding time to volunteer in the community and, in many cases, raising families.

You, the Class of 2005, are the backbone of the State of Michigan. You, the Class of 2005, are the knowledge-based society. You, the Class of 2005, will make it happen in Michigan. (pause) Eastern Michigan University has given you a solid foundation upon which you can build the framework for your future. I encourage you to invest your skills, talents and abilities in our great State of Michigan.

I challenge you to incorporate community service, or beyond that, public service into your daily lives, now that it is no longer a "requirement." And I acknowledge that many of you have volunteered for the internal satisfaction you feel from giving of yourselves to others. But don't let the burdens of life - work, family responsibilities, etc. _ lure you away

from this important social responsibility. Eastern Michigan University graduates are known as “people persons.”

My experiences for 25 years, as a practicing attorney in Wayne County and my five years in the State Legislature have been incredibly rewarding. In my current role as Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education, I have had the opportunity to have a positive impact on college students and professors throughout Michigan. Eastern Michigan University has provided you with the opportunities that will allow you to have a positive impact right now.

I want to offer my congratulations to all the graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Technology. I want to extend my special congratulations to the College of Technology on its 25th anniversary. I also want to thank the parents, grandparents and families of the graduates who have made sacrifices and provided encouragement, patience and love. I hope that each of the graduates of Eastern Michigan University will take time to thank your families for their support which has allowed you to graduate today.

All across Michigan today, at campuses throughout the state, students like you are attending their graduation ceremonies. Remember this day. As you are called to receive your degree, take a moment to look at your family, your colleagues and your friends and savor this day. We must go onward and forward.

Congratulations to the Class of 2005! I wish each of you the best of luck and Godspeed in your journey through the rest of life. **Thank you!**

Date: Thu, 17 Mar 2005 16:20:45 -0500

Commencement 2005

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State Rep. Stewart and Pfizer executive Canter set to speak at EMU's commencement ceremonies April 23

YPSILANTI - State Rep. John Stewart (R-Plymouth) and David Canter, senior vice president of Pfizer Global Research and Development, will be the commencement speakers for Eastern Michigan University during the April 23 ceremonies in the Convocation Center.

Stewart, an EMU alumnus ('71), will be the 10:30 a.m. commencement speaker for the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Technology graduates. Canter will address graduates of the College of Business, College of Education and College of Health and Human Services at 2 p.m.

Stewart, chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education, serves as vice chair of the judiciary committee.

Stewart was elected November 2000 to the Michigan House of Representatives to represent the 20th district and was re-elected in 2002 and 2004. He represents Plymouth, Northville, Wayne and part of Canton Township east of I-275.

Stewart received a bachelor's degree from EMU, a master's degree from Wayne State University and a law degree from the Detroit College of Law.

Canter is a surgeon by training and director of Pfizer's Michigan laboratories. He currently chairs Gov. Jennifer Granholm's Technology Tri-Corridor Steering Committee.

He has been a spokesperson about pharmaceutical research and has been involved with the clinical development of various drugs to lower cholesterol. Canter was the project leader for the development of Lipitor from early Phase 2 through the product launch.

After serving as director of the Institut de Recherche et Development, Jouveinal in Paris from 1997-2000, Canter became site director in the Ann Arbor laboratories of Pfizer & Warner-Lambert in 2000 and of the Michigan labs in 2003.

He received a bachelor of medicine and a bachelor of surgery degree from

Liverpool University, and a bachelor's degree in natural science from Cambridge University.

For more information, go to <http://www.emich.edu/commencement>.

Eastern Michigan University is a public, comprehensive university that offers programs in the arts, sciences and professions. EMU prepares students with the intellectual skills and practical experiences to succeed in their careers and lives, and to be better citizens.

For more information, contact Carol Anderson
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