

Ferris State University Commencement

May 10, 2008 – 12:30pm

Honorary Doctorate John Hare

**Thank you Dr. Eisler for that kind introduction.**

**And my heartfelt thanks to the board of trustees and all of you at Ferris State University for this recognition. I must admit that it's a bit humbling to stand before you now as Doctor Hare. I'm not sure my words and my wisdom will be up to the level of my new academic title going forward. But I'll try my best.**

**As I look out among you – the 2008 graduating class of the College of Business – it's hard for me to believe that it's been 40 years since I was where you are now ... waiting to pick up my diploma and leaving the campus of Ferris State here in Big Rapids for the last time as a student. I now know that my education at Ferris was two-fold: academics and my social life.**

**Both prepared me for the next chapter in my life...a career in the broadcasting industry. And I don't think I would have been as ready for my career without both these important learning experiences at Ferris State.**

**They say time flies when you're having fun. And yes, since leaving Ferris State in May 1968, I've been lucky enough to enjoy a terrific ride in a very exciting industry...radio....**

**I saw the best of it working at local radio stations, in corporate positions at ABC Radio, and most recently, for The Walt Disney Company.**

**Of course, any career lasting four decades naturally presents its fair share of ups and downs. You've got to expect some bumps along the way – and, I can tell you I had plenty of them, and I have the white hair to prove it. But, overall, I wouldn't trade away any of the business experiences I've had ... and any of the people I've met.**

**What I found in my industry is what I wish for all of you here today – regardless of the specific career you are pursuing ... and the individual talents and interests you bring to the job. I hope you'll discover that ... to a large extent ... we all have the opportunity to be lucky and fortunate in business. That is, only if we're willing to work hard to make ourselves lucky and fortunate.**

**I'd like to briefly share some quick lessons I've learned over the years that hopefully will apply to your future endeavors as well.**

**First, of course, is to get a good business education....and, you've done that already, here on the campus at Ferris. Second, you also have to work hard, and harder still to prove yourself, not only when you are starting off in your career....but throughout your career. Business is not easy today and it's likely to be even tougher and more competitive in the future. As you move ahead, the challenges become greater. So do the expectations.**

**The challenge, of course, begins with finding your first job, and then determining if you've chosen the right field – one where you can find satisfaction, reward and advancement....and that usually takes a little time to figure out.**

**You have already experienced the hard work it takes to earn your degree, and many of you took on the additional load of earning a living at the same time. Not an easy task....but no**

**doubt you're doubly prepared for the business world because of it.**

**One of the reasons I take such pride in my own degree from Ferris State – and now, of course, my honorary doctorate – is because Ferris men and women are usually self-made. We don't have success just handed to us. As mentioned, we mostly create our own luck.**

**Ferris provides the jump-start. The academics and socialization learned here on campus position Ferris students for success. But, ultimately, it is up to each of you graduating today to find your own doors of opportunity to open. The diploma you're about to receive is important – don't get me wrong – but no piece of paper automatically entitles you to a job or guarantees your future or entitles you to success. That remains up to you.**

**It's a competitive world out there – we all know that -- whether you're looking for your first job or any kind of career advancement. To keep your edge, you must work hard at establishing and maintaining high standards... you must work hard to the best of your abilities ... you must work hard to**

**outperform the competition and sometimes your peers ...and you have to work hard setting realistic and attainable goals that you think you can achieve.**

**In short, you must follow the highest standards of excellence that Ferris State has sought to nurture in you. Pursue those ideals in the business world, and I'd venture to say luck and good fortune will likely follow you throughout your career.**

**I'd now like to offer four fundamental career principles that should prove to be very important to you, as they were to me, over the course of your future career.**

**The first principle is trust. Trust is the glue that holds the best organizations together. If you can't trust and rely upon the people you work for, or they cannot trust or rely upon you, it's time to move on. The element of trust holds true to your personal life as well.**

**The second principle deals with the people around you. Work for people you can learn from, both in terms of career skills and personal character. Surround yourself with people who recognize that success must be built upon excellence and**

**integrity. Find mentors who will challenge and cajole you and help you grow and develop your skills as a business professional. We all continue to need great teachers even after we leave the classroom at Ferris State.**

**Over the course of your career you'll be known by the company you keep, and the people you associate with. When all is said and done, it's your reputation and your good name that count most in business. Reputation is what gets you through the door at any stage of your career.**

**The third principle deals with how you conduct yourself on the job. Plan ahead, always be prepared, strive for world class performance each and every day; be accountable for both the good and the bad; and be passionate about what you do. If you lose your passion, find another job. Lack of passion detracts from your personal happiness and from a company's performance. On these 5 points..... planning, preparation, performance, accountability, and passion, I would like to quote Aristotle, whose words are as valid today as they were thousands of years ago.**

**“We Are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then is not an act, but a habit.”**

**The fourth and final principle is: Find the right balance of work and play. Any business can be demanding. It frequently involves long hours and the pressure of risks and rewards. Make sure you find at least some degree of pleasure with what you’re doing. Work hard ... and play hard if you like. You’ve got youth on your side. But always carve out the time to refresh yourself.**

**For me, that balance over the years has come first and foremost from the real superstars in my life, my family. That includes two people here with me today: my wife Joanne, who is also a graduate of Ferris, and Jamie, the oldest of my four children.**

**In closing, my congratulations to each and every one of you new graduates. You’ve got an exciting journey in front of you. Enjoy the ride.**

**So, Good Luck and may Good Fortune follow you.**