

10-14-2002

Remarks, delivered at the Memorial Service for Howard Stein on October 14, 2002

Arend D. Lubbers
Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/presidential_speeches

 Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#), [Education Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lubbers, Arend D., "Remarks, delivered at the Memorial Service for Howard Stein on October 14, 2002" (2002). *Presidential Speeches*. 236.
https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/presidential_speeches/236

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Presidential Speeches by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR

HOWARD STEIN

OCTOBER 14, 2002

I looked forward to an opportunity to pay tribute to Howard Stein because in his life and career he was the ideal University Professor. All during my career I repeatedly spoke about the crucial importance of the Faculty as the major determinant of a University's quality. A good Professor is one who knows his field and keeps current. A good Professor is one who is committed to the success of his students, and prepares well for teaching them. A good Professor engages in the life of the University and gives time to research, colleagues, students, preparation, and there is no indolence in him. All of these characteristics apply to Howard. But there was more in the mix that made Howard so special. I think because he possessed a deep reservoir of good will, all he did was conditioned by it. Though like all professionals he undoubtedly held views that didn't match those of all around him, his work, his attitudes, and his relationships carried with them a positive hue. Positive thinking and feeling always won out in Howard's approach to life, and was apparent as he and his family approached his death.

When you consider his high quality of professional conduct, his abiding loyalty to the institution, and the positive aura that surrounded the ways he expressed himself, you begin to understand the eminent contribution he made to our University. In The Education of Henry Adams, Henry Adams wrote, “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” Imagine Howard’s contribution through secondary and elementary teachers of science to the learning of generations of girls and boys. That will affect individual lives and our society through the contributions some of them will make through science. The ripple effect of his work has no defined ending. Think of the numbers of students he taught and guided at Grand Valley over his long career. Like all good teachers, he left his professional and personal mark on many. I think Howard was energized by his work and the contacts with people that were integral to it. I also think lurking in his subconscious, maybe on occasion coming into the light of consciousness, was the sacred quality of the profession he chose for himself.

But Howard made to the University what I believe is a transcendent contribution, one that may not have occupied his mind, and came as much from his spirit as his competency as a Professor. The circumstance of his choosing Grand Valley for his life’s commitment in the early years of the

institution made it readily possible for a person of his character and talent to make the contribution. Howard affected the ethos of Grand Valley. He is prominent among those who prominently gave our University its characteristics, our distinguishing attitudes, our habits, and our beliefs. I don't know if the ethos of a place can or does prove itself, but I know ours is special. I know it calls us to a high level of performance. I know it pushes us always toward civility. I know buried deep in it is the good will that Howard's persona embodies. I am thankful for it, and filled with a gratitude directed to Howard for his part in creating the soul of our University.

A person's influence is a result of who he is, and who he is is made manifest in what he believes. An aspect of Howard's beliefs impressed me. I never talked with him in depth about religion, but I think Howard might find favor with Julian Huxley's statement in his Essays of a Biologist, quote, "It is the task of Rationalism to see that religion, this fundamental and important activity of man, shall neither be allowed to continue in false or inadequate forms, nor be stifled or starved, but made to help humanity in vigorous growth that is based on truth and in constant contact with reality." Though we did not talk in depth, we spoke about his Jewish heritage, and its meaning for him. He also found family covenant in the Methodist church. The exclusivity of each religion is part of our background, but in a shrinking,

diverse world, Howard could bridge a gap most cannot or many dismiss. Perhaps he could do it out of love, but I am sure it fit his rational mind and his concept of reality. It was from this belief structure and practice he could bring to a proudly secular University those qualities of religion that humanize, forgive, respect, and appreciate. He could help cultivate within the University a faith in itself and a faith in its future.

It is not known necessarily to us the meaning of the life given to us, or for us to understand fully the meaning of the lives of those whom we know or know about. Yet we are gathered today to attest to the meaning Howard's life had for each of us. I don't think any of us have regrets about Howard's life. We regret only that it ended among us earlier than we expected. I think we all feel contented in his goodness.

I close with a few personal comments. I liked Howard. I liked Howard a lot! It was Howard and others with similar commitments and loyalties that made it possible for me to have the same commitments and loyalties. Can some of you say the same? Howard added to the enrichment of my life. Did he add to the enrichment of yours? To Rose and the family, I want you to know we share in the pride you have in your husband and father. He was a fine and special person. You will cherish his memory and we will too. Your

love for him you will carry with you always. For those of us who worked closely with him, affection for him will always linger. We will miss him too.