

**Remarks by David C. Hollister  
City Hall Naming Celebration  
August 14, 2017**

Thank you for your kind remarks, Tim, Mayor Bernero, President Spitzley and Paula. More importantly, thank you for friendship and support over the years.

Mayor Bernero and City Council, a special thank you for making this happen.

Mayor, I speak for many Lansing residents when I say how grateful we are for your many years of public service and leadership. Your many accomplishments have helped secure the region's economic and social well-being for years to come. And I wish you well in all your future endeavors.

I'm humbled and honored by this designation. Never in my wildest imagination did I think a building would be named after me. It does seem entirely appropriate that you waited until you put it up for sale before you put my name on the damn thing!

I grew up in Battle Creek, was an average student from a middle-class family. I graduated from high school in 1960. John F. Kennedy was my hero and model as I grew to adulthood in the turbulent 60s.

In the spring of 1965 I was handed a flyer announcing that Dr. Martin Luther King would be speaking at MSU. I attended that speech and sat in the balcony of the auditorium and met him for a brief moment as he exited the stage. I was so moved by his vision and non-violent direct action plan that I volunteered to teach in the Freedom School at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi.

That experience changed my life, and I moved from being a traditional teacher to a community and political activist. I want to acknowledge Rev. John Duley, who is here today, as the person who handed me the flyer and became my mentor during those two summers and throughout my career.

As a kid, I always loved U.S. history and was moved by the ideals, individuals and events leading to the Revolution and the writing of the Constitution.

As a teacher, I spent months exploring the Preamble, Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

My traditional role teaching and intellectually challenging students to think about a citizen role in self-government and policy making changed dramatically in 1968 with the assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy.

I, along with a group of friends, considered moving to Canada, giving up on this violent, war-torn, divided country that was falling far short of its ideals and promises, but was persuaded by the words of Thomas Jefferson who said that THE BEST CURE FOR AN AILING DEMOCRACY IS MORE DEMOCRACY.

I, as well as many of my friends, decided to stay and try to change the direction of the country by becoming a candidate myself.

I ran for and was elected to be a county commissioner, state legislator, and mayor. I have spent my entire career trying to make this community a more perfect union, a world class city, where "we the people" means

- being inclusive and welcoming everyone,
- where justice for all prevails,
- where we place as much of our resources on providing for the general welfare as we do for common defense, and
- where the blessing of liberty are shared by all.

My 50 plus years of public service have reaffirmed my beliefs and taught me many lessons:

- I believe that each one of us can make a difference.
- I believe that small everyday acts of kindness, volunteerism and participation have enormous positive consequences.
- I believe that elections have consequences.
- I believe that leadership matters and having a vision and plan is critical.
- I believe that successful leaders embrace diverse partners and function collaboratively and transparently.
- I believe that the process is as important as the outcome and must be open, fair, and inclusive.
- I believe that TRUST is democracy's most precious commodity and must be preserved, nurtured, and maintained by honest debate, compromise, and willful and faithful keeping of one's word.
- I believe that the measure of one's success is not the number of accomplishments one can list but, more importantly, the fidelity of one's actions to one's ideals.
- I believe that competitors and adversaries are not the enemy and must be listened to and accommodated as much as feasible.
- I believe that education and lifelong learning are key to one's self-fulfillment and our community's economic security.
- I believe that public service is not a virtue in itself, but when combined with stewardship, becomes one of society's highest callings.

Finally, never lose your humanity in order to save humanity. One of the most important assets of a change agent is a sense of humor. Learn to laugh at yourself and with others. Strive to make this world a better place in which to live, work and love. In doing so, remember that no single issue---no matter how important it may seem today---is as important as your commitment to each other and your commitment to the integrity of the process.

Who could have ever predicted that John Duley's simple act of handing out a flyer would lead us here today? Yes, the best cure for an ailing democracy is more democracy. So have faith in our ideals and institutions, and know that your engagement does make a difference.

I want to thank my wife Chris, my family, and every staff person, intern, volunteer, task force member and voter who participated in my journey. Every success I've had is due in large part to your involvement, commitment to excellence, hard work and dedication.

Thank all of you for being here today and taking part in this celebration.

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