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Distinguished Fellowship Awards Luncheon

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DALE VAN DEN HOLM - Emeritus

ANN Buntz - NU Foundation - thanks to General
Distinguished Fellowship Awards Luncheon
East Campus Union
Noon Friday, Sept. 19, 2008
John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

It's a true pleasure to see everyone here today as we gather for this distinguished fellowship awards luncheon. On behalf of everyone present, I extend heartiest congratulations to each of you who is an award recipient. We are so pleased for you, who ^{are} being honored, and we are so delighted to have you with us.

We know that for each of you who are award recipients, these awards recognize accomplishments you've already achieved in your professional life. Congratulations!

These awards also signal the great expectations we have for you in the future. We look forward with great eagerness to seeing all you will achieve in your careers, and all you will contribute to the world's body of knowledge, ^{professional} and your communities. The potential in this room is exciting. We urge you to maximize that potential in every way you can. And please know -- without a doubt - that we will do our best to help you do so.

We are pleased you've chosen to study and work with us in your various academic departments here in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. When you are here you have the privilege to work and learn with some of the leading agricultural researchers in our world. You may think when I say that that I'm just prejudiced on our scientists' behalf, but let me tell you -- while I am prejudiced on our faculty's behalf, -- that isn't just my opinion!

The ISI Essential Science Indicators Report for 1996-2006 indexes journals, and tracks how often articles are cited by other authors. Our agricultural scientists rank 9th among U.S. universities on their list of most-cited, and 17th in the world.

To illustrate the company, in which we stand, let me tell you the U.S. Department of Agriculture tops the list. The University of California-Davis is the top U.S. university cited. Michigan State University follows us. We are standing - and you are learning and working - in some very good company here!

Another thing I want you to know about this university in which you're studying is that we are a land-grant university. And as a land-grant university, we have a responsibility to our state that we take very seriously.

J. B. Milliken, president of the University of Nebraska, says repeatedly that his goal for the University of Nebraska is that we be the best university in America in terms of serving the interests of the people of our state. That's what land-grant universities do - we take the resources of the university to Nebraskans. In the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources we have a very strong tradition in that. It's our heritage. It's what we do.

A recent independent study of the Institute found that for each state tax dollar invested with us, we provide a conservative 15-to-1 return for Nebraskans. As part of Nebraska's land-grant university, we are at work for Nebraska. That's why we're here. We practice science for life - the lives of Nebraskans, which are bettered by it. This is a noble calling. It is vital to us all that scientists seek and ^{help} find solutions to the concerns that face our world. I'm very glad you have this opportunity to experience the land-grant university tradition with people who further it every day.

Land-grant universities truly are universities of and for the people, and the land-grants ^{have} made such tremendous contributions to science - and ^{to} people's lives -- over the years. Land-grant universities first came into being in this country to provide higher education for people for whom higher education had, until then, been largely unattainable. Until the Morrill Act, signed by President Abraham Lincoln, brought land-grant universities into being, higher education was largely the privilege of the rich.

Today land-grant universities remain vital - in fact, the independent study of the Institute that I mentioned earlier states, and I quote, "*In the 21st century, challenges such as globalization, competitive market pressures, technological advances, and the preeminent importance of innovation and talent are restructuring the economy. Against such a backdrop of rapid and dramatic change, can a system such as agricultural research and extension, established in the late 1800s, be relevant? The surprising answer - that agricultural research and extension institutions may well be more necessary and relevant than ever before - is a testimony to the foresight of those who ensured the creation of IANR ..."*

I urge you, while you study here, to take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way, to explore your science, and exchange views and questions with the very fine minds who work and study here. I hope you will “explore” the scientific issues that concern you. I hope you will “think deeply” about and discuss “often” the ethics of science, with these people who have asked such questions before you. I know they remain open to - and eager to - learn all they, too, may learn.

As we celebrate you today, as we celebrate your awards, we remember “with gratitude” the people who made them available through their generous gifts to the university.

These are people who believed in the promise of the future, which, of course, is you. They had faith in and hope for all the good you ^{will} have the opportunity to do in your lifetime. They are people who keenly understood and appreciated the importance of research and study. They backed their understanding and appreciation with “their dedication” to supporting such work down through the years. We are grateful to them.

Our congratulations, also, to this year's recipient of the Darrell W. Nelson Excellence in Graduate Student Advising Award. This award, named for Darrell Nelson, ^{DEAN-EMERITUS} ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ of our Agricultural Research Division, honors outstanding contributions to graduate student mentoring. It emphasizes the importance of graduate education to the well-being of Nebraska and, I would say, ^{to} our world. _h

Again, congratulations! We extend our best wishes for all you will accomplish in the future. We look forward to those accomplishments with great enthusiasm.

Please join me in giving everyone being recognized here today a hand.

(Lead applause)

Thank you.

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