

Thank you for that introduction.

I am humbled by your remarks and humbled by the naming honor that Michigan is bestowing upon me today. Thank you to the Natural Resources Commission, to the board of the Natural Resources Trust Fund, to Chairman Keith Charters and Director Becky Humphries. I am grateful and honored by your kindness.

This day cannot be about just me. It is also a day to recognize the vision of those who years ago could look past abandoned industrial sites and cement silos and see the potential for a new riverfront that could lead the way to a new Detroit. People like Coleman Young and Peter Stroh, friends of mine who are no longer with us. People like Governors Engler and Granholm, who fought to make

certain that state resources were there to help. People like Keith Charters, whose tireless commitment to this project helped make it happen. And people like Matt Cullen, who was instrumental in General Motors' move to the riverfront as well as its financial commitment to the entire riverfront and who shepherded the creation of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy. Without the vision and commitment of these and many other people, we would not be here today.

I have to say this: for me, having a park in downtown Detroit associated with the name Milliken is a lot better than a building somewhere in Lansing. Buildings come and go, but this magnificent riverfront will endure.

This honor also is symbolic of two of the issues on which I focused much effort during my tenure as governor and

which I continue to care deeply about today: Conserving our natural resources and providing the public access to those resources, and the desperate need to return our urban areas to a position of prominence in the world.

The simple truth is that if one cares about the future of Michigan, it is not enough to care just about the Great Lakes or our undisturbed areas. To care about the future of Michigan means we all must care about the future of Michigan cities, particularly Detroit.

For far too long, the politics of division have played too large a role in Southeast Michigan and throughout the state. Division by race, division by economic status, and division by geography have all been exploited—and continue to be exploited—by some for their own short-term political gain.

But in pursuing their own narrow personal interests, they only hold Michigan back.

To me, the measures of real leadership have never been associated with promoting our differences. To me, the measures of real leadership involve searching for common ground as we work to develop responsible public policy.

That means not spending our time and energies in armoring our issue differences, but in forging common solutions.

In his timeless “I have a Dream” speech, Martin Luther King said “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

He went on to say “I have a dream that one day. . . little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.”

I hope that this park and this magnificent riverfront can be a place in Michigan where little white, black, Latino, Native American and Asian boys and girls— where people from every race and background – do join hands. A place where we can dream together about a new Michigan built around a new Detroit in a new century.

Our state seal carries the Latin word, Amoenem, which translated means “Look about you”. Take a moment. Look about you. Michigan is truly blessed. Detroit is truly blessed. We are truly blessed. We must embrace, honor, and build upon those blessings.

To do that, we must embrace and honor each other.

Thank you.