

**President Judith I. Bailey's remarks
U.P. Reading Conference Luncheon
Prepared by Suzan Travis-Robyns
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Thank you for that kind introduction.

Teaching and learning are ancient arts that we hold dear here at Northern. As primary and secondary educators, you are valued colleagues and our partners in education. You are an important and honored part of our joint learning community. You have what author and educator Parker Palmer calls *The Courage To Teach*.

Palmer evokes the spirit of teaching as the highest calling. Palmer said:

Teaching is the dance of the spiraling generations,
in which the old empower the young with their
experience and the young empower the old with new
life, reweaving the fabric of the human community as
they touch and turn.

Northern began as a normal school whose graduates filled a desperate need for teachers throughout the Upper Peninsula in the late 1800s. Today, NMU is one of the Midwest's top schools where students have quality academic programs and individualized attention in a high-tech learning environment. A powerful combination! Our growth has expanded our commitment to teacher education and our commitment to you, our education alumni.

Many of you have assisted student teachers, giving them experience in different school environments and showing them the unique path each master teacher must find. Among you are also veteran K-12 teachers who have taught in Northern's education department, recreating the dance as experienced teachers learn from new teachers, and vice versa.

At NMU, we are proud that we educate 95 percent of the K-12 teachers in the Upper Peninsula, and of our contribution to the school systems throughout the state, region and nation.

All of you – K-12 teachers, principals and superintendents-- who have made an absolute commitment to students are the true heroes of our time.

You are our heroes. You're on the educational frontlines. Without your hard work and dedication, our job could not be done. You set the foundation that we build upon.

As many of you know, I began my career as a middle school English teacher and became a district level administrator before entering higher education as a career.

My roots go to the heart of education – running deep throughout K-12 schools, connecting with you and others who continue to shape our young people's minds.

Today I'm pleased to announce publication of the booklet *A Time To Teach: 100 Years of Northern Michigan University's Education Alumni*. I'd like to acknowledge the work of Suzan Travis-Robyns, Dave and Mary Lou Blomquist, and Russ Magnaghi whose research made this book possible. The contributions made by Northern's education alumni could easily fill an encyclopedia. This booklet celebrates all K-12 teachers by highlighting some of those who embody the spirit of teaching. A booklet is reserved for each of you and you can pick them up on your way out today. A booklet will also be mailed to each of our education alumni and to all libraries in the Upper Peninsula.

I'm going to list the teachers profiled in the book. This booklet profiles 38 teachers and refers to the awesome legacy of more than 100 others. For those of you who are present, please stand and remain standing:

One of our famous mother-daughter teams:

Ingrid Kilpela and Margaret Goldthorpe

Family teaching teams:

The Schaefer Sisters:

Sharon Green, Susan Goleski, Amy Minard, Virginia Hedberg, Laura Woolard

The Vaara Brothers:

Mel, Bob, Carl and John Vaara

Husband and wife teaching teams:

Gretchen and Blaine Betts

Sally and George Hronkin (pronounced Ronkin)

Others, not in any particular order:

Florence Blair-Lowney

Rollie Thoren

Dr. Sylvia Kinnunen

Marie Sauer

Bill Ostwald

L. Peter Johnson

Dr. June Schaefer

Dr. Irma Hamilton

Deborah Vezzetti

Garry Parrett

Barbara Fox McCurdy

Tom Miller

William Boda

Judy Parlato

Jane Moylan

Lisa Mongiat

Our new teachers:

Ronald Seaberry, Jr.

Traci Maday

Northern's administrators:

Dr. Wil Berg, represented today by his wife Ellie

Dr. Elmer Schacht

Also profiled is Bobbi Ameen, a nationally celebrated art teacher at Aspen Ridge Middle School in the NICE School District. Bobbi died from injuries sustained in a car accident as this booklet was going to press. Her dedication to her students and her teaching by example – she was an accomplished artist – will continue to inspire us.

Thank you all for standing.

Everyone present today has made a personal commitment to teaching. Teaching carries the dual responsibility of serving the compelling public interest and the individual needs of each child. But with the responsibility comes rewards: the joy of a child's "ah-ha" moment; the smile of a young adult mastering a subject – or feeling a part of a learning community. All build our spirits and nourish our souls.

Each teacher who seeks to make a difference in a child's life draws from all the teachers who came before. Whether in the 1900s or in the 21st Century – whether teaching Latin or computer science, no matter how much the curriculum or the technological tools change – the heart of a teacher remains constant.

As L. Peter Johnson, the superintendent of the Breitung Township Schools, has written in a paper called *The Caring Teacher*:

Students want to know how much you care before they care how much you know ... We must teach, but most importantly, we must care.

I'd like to share with you a story of caring and commitment.

Rollie Thoren graduated from Northern in 1933 and taught science at Northern's training school for 25 years before becoming a professor at Northern.

One day one of Thoren's seventh-grade students asked if he could bring his snakes to school. The boy's mother didn't like having them around the house.

"What kind of snakes do you have?" Thoren asked. The response was a rattle snake, a blue darter, a king snake and a hognose snake.

Thoren was game. "Sure," he told his student, "everything but the rattle snake."

Thoren built cages for the snakes and nurtured his student's interest. But the snakes occasionally got out of their cages. How did he know? He would hear a scream from Miss Lucille Payne, who taught English across the hall.

Thoren convinced Northern's administration to buy new cages so Miss Payne wouldn't be disturbed. And the student? He went on to become Dr. Charles Carpenter, a world authority on reptiles. He recently retired from the zoology department at the University of Oklahoma.

That dedication that Thoren showed all of his students -- with no guarantee of what the results would be -- that's the spirit of teaching we celebrate today.

I am also pleased to announce that the Board of Control recently approved a name change from the Department of Education to the School of Education. This name change reflects the fact that the mission of training teachers is an important part of Northern's proud heritage and a vital component of the University's future. This mission of training teachers cannot be contained within a department but affects virtually every department on campus.

Our teacher education program is as essential today as it was 100 years ago. The impact of thousands of Northern's teaching alumni has been immense. Student teachers today build on that record of service, courage, and innovation.

And rest assured that Northern's faculty and staff will continue to educate the teachers of the future and to support and honor our education alumni as you write the history of public education today. Our tradition of innovation means that plenty of changes are in store, but our commitment to teachers will remain a hallmark of this institution.

So, today we celebrate all of you who have chosen a time to teach. We celebrate all of you who have chosen the dance of the spiraling generations. You have changed the world if you have made an impact on even one child. All of us at Northern want to thank you for your daily commitment to students and to learning.

Thank you.