

**President's Remarks,  
American Junior Year 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration  
Heidelberg, Germany  
June 6, 2008**

Thank you, Rektor Eitel, for your kind words of welcome and thanks to all of you for joining us for this joyous celebration.

Today we celebrate a true friendship between the University of Heidelberg and Heidelberg College. A friendship that has lasted 50 years.

It was here at this oldest university in Germany, that the Heidelberg Catechism was penned in 1563 and it was that Catechism that provided us with the name, Heidelberg College.

The University of Heidelberg and Heidelberg College share not only a name, but also a hope. A hope that students who study abroad are fundamentally changed.

Changed to appreciate other cultures. Changed to think with a global perspective. Changed to embody a liberal arts education.

This hope is a realistic one, because our students – and now you, our alumni – have borne out its truth time and time again.

Professor Charles Prugh – an alumnus of both of our institutions – started this program in 1958 and first called it the Junior Year at Old Heidelberg. He and the first nine students (including Jon Marx) were officially received on October 24, 1958, by then Rektor of the University of Heidelberg, Prof. Wilhelm Hahn, in this very hall.

Today, we are especially pleased that Ms. Margrace Prugh Grotfend, daughter of Charles and Mary Prugh, and a Heidelberg College graduate, is here to represent the Prugh family. It is a particularly special day for Margrace because today would be her father's 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

I am also pleased to welcome former directors Dr. Robert Berg and Dr. Al Fink as well as the current director, Dr. Brian Tracy and the Associate Director, Dr. Hanne Heckmann, to this celebration event.

The preparations for today's celebration began almost five years ago because of the vision, enthusiasm and dedication of Brian, Hanne and the other AJY faculty and staff.

Would Brian, Hanne and all of the AJY staff please stand so we can thank you.

For five decades, the University's International Office has given tremendous support to the AJY program. We are particularly grateful to the directors, Mr. Schneider and Dr. Gerke, and to their entire staff for all their support over the years.

We are also grateful that recently Prorektor Nunning has given new direction to the University's International profile and consequently the AJY program.

From 1958-2008, more than 1,800 students from more than 300 American colleges and universities, have benefitted from this partnership between our institutions.

This evening we welcome back to the University a number of those 1,800 alumni from the American Junior Year program and thank them for their continued enthusiasm for the learning experience here in Heidelberg.

We are also pleased to have among our guests representatives from several of our affiliated and partner institutions who through their participation make this program stronger.

Welcome to Lafayette College in Pennsylvania, Longwood University in Virginia, Ohio Wesleyan University and Mount Union College in Ohio, St. Louis University in Missouri, and South Dakota State University.

We are very proud that each year several University of Heidelberg exchange students arrive on the Heidelberg College campus in Ohio and enrich our campus community.

In addition to their contributions to the classroom, these German students sing with the Heidelberg Concert Choir, write for the campus newspaper, act in theater productions, serve in the student senate, and play on our athletic teams.

The friendship between our two Heidelbergs has deepened with 50 years of commitment to our common effort. What is in place today is a treasured legacy that continues to teach students that people an ocean away are their neighbors and friends.

I deeply appreciate the many and varied contributions of our faithful partners at Heidelberg University and the other affiliated institutions, who have introduced generations of students to the German academic experience.

To all of you whom I have named, and to the many I have not, thank you for your untiring efforts to enhance the American Junior Year program.

Because of all of you, we celebrate this longstanding friendship between the University of Heidelberg and Heidelberg College. And possibly even more importantly, we celebrate the lives that have been transformed by the American Junior Year Program.

Thank you.