

**President's Remarks
Alumni Weekend Luncheon
Saturday, June 21, 2008**

Good afternoon and welcome one and all! We are delighted that so many of you have found your way back to Heidelberg.

For some of you it has been a long journey in either miles or years. Alumni are here from Oregon and California on the West coast to Florida and Maine in the East.

I'd like to offer a special welcome to the person representing the earliest class with us today, Dr. Ferris Ohl, from the Class of 1936, as well as the representatives from the earliest reunion class, the Class of 1938.

While Dr. Ohl came from just around the corner to get here today, his journey crossed – and indeed – created many of the milestones in Heidelberg history.

Welcome home, Dr. Ohl!

Thank you, Kathy Venema and your team, for putting together a terrific weekend.

The theme for today, *Journey to Heidelberg*, not only captures the joy of having our alumni return to campus, but it was also used to celebrate the experiences of students, alumni and friends who journeyed to Germany as part of our American Junior Year Program's 50th Anniversary Celebration with the University of Heidelberg.

The American Junior Year program has the distinction of being the oldest in the country.

Our delegation to the celebration included dozens of alumni, trustees and friends, nine students who participated in an honors seminar on Germany, and the 46-member Heidelberg Concert Choir under the direction of Professor Grant Cook.

The Choir gave performances in Vienna, Salzburg, and Munich, in addition to one at the University of Heidelberg for the 50th Anniversary Celebration itself.

Because of the extraordinary planning of Jim and Nancy Getz, our alumni enjoyed everything from festivities in the beer halls of Munich, to the beauty and charm of Bavaria and the Black Forest, to the grandeur of castles on the Rhine River, to the saving of the Medieval city of Rottenberg, to the re-enactment of the burning of the Heidelberg Castle.

Because of the American Junior Year program, students not only learn German language and culture, but they begin to live out the part of our vision statement which speaks to our intention to prepare students to be global citizens who communicate effectively, think critically and serve thoughtfully.

This aspiration in our vision statement was lived out by other Heidelberg students this year by studying abroad in such places as Spain, Mexico, Germany, China and several locations in the United Kingdom.

This fall we will provide another new and unique international experience through a partnership with the Royal Racing Football (Soccer) Club Montagnee in Liege, Belgium. Over this past year – through the hard work of Brian Haley, our men’s soccer coach, Dave Weininger, the vice president for Academic Affairs, and Mike Pratt, Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies, the Heidelberg Academic and Soccer Academy was created.

The Academy when it begins this fall will allow students to earn their degrees in business or sports management and to develop professional-level soccer skills in a “big time” European soccer setting.

This is the only program of its kind in the world and it will provide a remarkable journey in education, athletics and culture for our students.

Last fall, 422 new students began their journey through Heidelberg College. It was our largest incoming class since 1968, and the second largest in college history! That’s good news but this is even better: We are currently on pace to enroll an even larger class this fall and believe it will be the largest in our history.

As that large group of students arrives next fall, they will also find two new majors from which to choose. We have added an interdisciplinary major in criminal justice. And, with Water Resources and Environmental Biology, we have developed a major in Environmental Science in a new Department of Biological and Environmental Science.

In both cases, we are providing new majors that reflect and impact significant social and economic issues.

Today we are not only celebrating the return of so many of you from the 50-year reunion class, we are also celebrating our 50 years of partnership with ARAMARK Food Services.

They have a relationship with nearly 500 colleges and universities, and ours is the fourth oldest in the country. That's a lot of Cheerios, macaroni and ice cream – fortunately not at the same meal!

The dining hall is the family kitchen for our students. It is a place of good times and fond memories. We are grateful to the Dennis Schultice, Karen Shaffer and the entire ARAMARK team for all they do to make our students and alumni feel welcome at Heidelberg.

Our visitors, parents, students, -- and all of you -- often measure our effectiveness by what they see from the curbside. And there is much to be proud of across the campus.

This past year because of generous donations we added: the Dicke Gardens on the south side of Gillmor Hall, the Estep Garden to the front of Adams Hall, the Ashworth Rock Garden on the north side of Gillmor, and of course, just this morning, the splendid sculpture from the Class of 1958.

Another project first conceived way back in the 1980s began last month. Phase I of the Recreation Activity Complex is making dramatic changes to Mayer Field. We are installing synthetic turf as well as a new scoreboard, sound system and lighting. As part of this project, a new soccer “game field” is being constructed in Hidden Valley.

We’ve called the Mayer Field project our “new campus lawn” because this great piece of open space in the center of campus will no longer be restricted in use. We will be welcoming all students to use it for most any kind of recreational activity.

We know that recreation facilities are very important in college selection and student satisfaction. Getting this project underway is a terrific step; getting the full project done is critically important for our continued growth and development.

Future phases of the RAC will include an all-purpose indoor recreation and wellness complex and the eventual renovation of Seiberling Gymnasium.

Last year at this event, I told our alumni that I was excited about our new football coach, Mike Hallett, and that he knows a lot about winning. And what did he do? He went out and won the first game of the season -- and three more after that!

We rang the victory bell in College Hall for the first time in decades and we expect to ring it many more times in the years ahead.

While the victories on the field were important, it was the spirit and enthusiasm of the fans, players and alumni that were most remarkable. A new "Berg Pride" program was initiated by our new athletic director and head baseball coach, Matt Palm, that brought waves of enthusiastic orange-clad fans out to all of our athletic contests.

We had a remarkable year in intercollegiate athletics with Ohio Athletic Conference Coaches of the Year in volleyball, football, men's soccer, wrestling and baseball.

Think of that -- five conference top coaches in the same year.

Five Heidelberg teams appeared in NCAA tournaments: volleyball, men's cross country, men's basketball, wrestling, and baseball. And Judy Bataille was the women's national champion in the 55-meter dash. What a year!

Clearly, winning is contagious. And so is "Berg Pride." Berg Pride is thriving at Heidelberg. On the field and on the court. And also in the classroom and in the laboratory. For the 20th consecutive year, Heidelberg was named as one of the best colleges in the Midwest and a great value in higher education.

And because of a very generous gift from John and Pat Adams, we have started the process of developing a new School of Business that will have the curriculum and facilities required for our students to compete effectively in the 21st century global economy.

You have a terrific senior administrative team at Heidelberg. Dr. Dave Weininger is the senior vice president for Academic Affairs. He is a 23-year veteran of Heidelberg, having served for many years as a professor of mathematics. Our vice president for enrollment and marketing, Thanda Maceo, came from Bethany College 18 months ago. Thanda is an experienced enrollment management professional who has our goal of 2,000 students by 2010 well within reach. You've already met Rita Locke, the vice president for Institutional Advancement, who came to us last summer from the Arizona State University Foundation, where she served as the assistant vice president for development. We are also fortunate that Rick Raymond joined the Heidelberg team in February as the vice president for Business Affairs and CFO. He came to us with 18 years of experience as the vice president and CFO at Mount Vernon Nazarene University.

And of course next week, Dr. Jim Troha, the current vice president for Student Affairs, will become the interim president of the college. Having worked with Jim for the past five years I can assure you that you will have an enormously capable leader at the helm.

It is a great time to be part of the Heidelberg family. Which makes this occasion, for me, as the old song says, a “Sentimental Journey.”

Lisette and I have loved our time with you. We are taking with us many wonderful memories, friends, and a Heidelberg diploma earned by our daughter. You have embraced us with the warmth and hospitality so characteristic of Heidelberg. You have made me a better president and a better person.

What is ahead? In the words of that great Texan songwriter, George Strait, “The last goodbye's the hardest one to say, and this is where the cowboy rides away.”

Lisette and I have a wonderful opportunity at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas (the “Cowboy Capital of the World”), to reconnect with our children, to lead a university of 10,000 students with its own rich tradition, and to live in a town, happily, much like Tiffin.

For Heidelberg, the future is not only bright, but brilliant. We have remarkable students. A dedicated and distinguished faculty and staff. Effective and passionate trustees. Wonderful, committed alumni. And great momentum. I can't wait to see all you accomplish in the years ahead.

I thank you for your friendship and your support. Please know this, that even in Texas, Heidelberg will never be far from my mind and will always be a treasurer of my heart because this will forever remain our “Sweet Alma Home.”

Thank you.