

# ADELBERT 216



## Rooted in Tradition

Victor Hugo, the French novelist, poet, and playwright, once said “Change your opinions, keep to your principles; change your leaves, keep intact your roots.” That sentiment captures my approach to the role I assumed in June—that of interim president of Case Western Reserve University. I am sure by now that most of you are aware of the multiple changes that have been taking place at our university. Since early spring, we have experienced the resignation of a president and four of our deans. Change, it would seem to the casual observer, is indeed the one constant at the university. But I would caution all who care about the Case Western Reserve University to remember Hugo and to understand that our foundational principles and dedication to the university remain undisturbed. It is because of these solid “roots” that we are confident of the future.

I have taken on the position of interim president with the hope that I can assist the Board of Trustees and the university to provide the necessary stability during the time of transition ahead of us. Regardless of what has taken place in the recent past, the university will continue to thrive and move forward. There are directions to be charted and decisions to be made. Thanks to the tremendous support and assistance of the Board of Trustees, the university’s leadership team, the faculty, staff, and students, and the leaders in the community, I already have noted a sense of renewed spirit on the campus and in our community. Part of that sense of renewal is due, of course, to the arrival of students on campus. Their presence is a strong reminder to all who work at the university, both faculty and staff, of the important responsibilities we have accepted on their behalf.

We have made progress in several vital areas over the past few months. The Presidential Search Committee, co-chaired by Board Chair Frank Linsalata (CIT ’63) and Trustee Joie Gregor (GRS ’74), is hard at work meeting with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community

leaders to solicit opinions about the course of the search and the attributes of successful candidates for the university’s presidency. Mr. Linsalata also has convened a Presidents Advisory Committee, which includes Scott Cowen, President of Tulane University; Shirley Tilghman, President of Princeton University; Jim Wagner, President of Emory University; and Chuck Vest, the former President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. These distinguished university leaders are providing counsel to the Board and to me on the issues facing Case Western Reserve University. They also are advising the Search Committee about the qualities and strengths the university needs to find in its next president.

Another area of important progress has been on the alumni front. I am pleased to note that on June 2, 2006, Al Gordon and I signed a joint statement of agreement that re-established a working relationship between the Case Alumni Association and the university. In a nutshell, we agreed mutually to support the goals and objectives of each organization. This, I believe, was one of the important steps we needed to take to “keep intact our roots” and celebrate our past.

We all have had different experiences in our relationship to Case Western Reserve University. Some of us are CIT graduates, like my wife Lynn. Others are alumnae of the Flora Stone Mather College for Women, and still others, like me, know this great university as medical students at Western Reserve University. I am very fortunate to be reacquainting myself with my alma mater on a most intimate and challenging level. I ask all of you to continue to care deeply for your university and to be engaged in our future. I look forward to meeting many of you over the coming months. ☞

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