**50th Anniversary Talk, May 3, 2014**

Thank you Bob. Thank you Enrique. Good evening everyone. It is truly wonderful and exciting to see such a big, enthusiastic crowd. This is indeed a testament to the loyalty that Davis instills upon us all. I know that some of you have come from afar and have been on a journey for a long time. It is a pleasure to welcome all of you now at this time and at this place to help create a special memory in the history of the Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science at UC Davis. This is the first Anniversary event that the Department has organized but I can assure you it will not be the last. We are greatly encouraged and inspired by the terrific response we got for this special 50th Celebration and stay tuned for others in the years ahead. This two-day event moved from simply being a nice idea to an exciting planning process just about a year ago. Just like we do for everything at Davis, we formed a committee. It consisted of Alan Jackman, Jim Shackelford and Bob Kiss along with departmental staff Jeff de Ropp, Kate Shasky and Eugenia Luu. They are truly behind all the wonderful things you have been witnessing during the Celebration and they certainly deserve a big applause.

By now all of you probably met or at least exchanged emails with Eugenia Luu. She is the boss, the commander, the enforcer, and the problem solver all in one. We certainly would not have been here having a great time if it were not for her tireless efforts and dedicated hard work. Thank you, Eugenia!

Our staff support for this event was simply outstanding. We have gotten so used to the level of excellence with which our staff performs, we just don’t acknowledge them often enough. Big thanks to all our Departmental staff and thank you all our student volunteers!

No doubt that it is the shared history that unites us all. It is a history that started all the way back in 1964 when Joe Smith made an eloquent case for the establishment of the Department of Chemical Engineering as part of the newly minted College of Engineering at UC Davis. It was Joe’s vision to start a Department that would offer first-rate programs in research and teaching. The seeds planted in those early years clearly charted the course for many years to come. That relatively small and modest program that drew strength from Ben McCoy, Dick Bell, Alan Jackman, Ruben Carbonell and Steve Whitaker in those years, has now grown into a Department with 33 faculty members, 600 undergraduate students and over 100 graduate students, without compromising the standards of excellence that define us. Joe would have been proud. On this occasion, we are also honored to have Joe’s daughter Becky Conrad and her husband Bruce Conrad with us tonight.

I should also note that in the early seventies the Materials Science and Engineering program had been developed into a Division within the Mechanical Engineering Department with the inaugural hires of Amiya Mukherjee, Zuhair Munir and Jim Shackelford. And in 1993, with the support of then Dean Mo Ghausi, seven materials science and engineering faculty members joined the Department of Chemical Engineering to form the formidable alliance that is now the Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science. Earlier I said, “Our history is what unites us.” Our history is also one of unification and each time this happens we surge forward with renewed optimism. Case in point, in 2011, 5 faculty members from the then disestablished Department of Applied Science joined the Department, bringing even broader expertise and depth of scholarship. You all can be proud of the Department as it stands today. With 5 National Academy members, research programs that address some of the world’s most challenging problems, innovative teaching initiatives, faculty that influence not only the campus but the UC systemwide governance, and the graduates that inspire the nation and the world, the Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science at UC Davis is a force to be reckoned with.

This is my 30th year on the Davis campus and I am proud more than ever to be part of the history of the Department and having served as its Chair for the last three years. This is a special place and you are special too! I see here tonight those of you who graduated in the early years along with those expecting to graduate in the next few years and a few others who may join this family as they are pondering which schools to attend. Such a wondrous place Davis is. That’s why we can hardly leave it and always keep coming back to it! As we pay tribute to Joe and also to Dick Bell whom we lost just about six months ago, I can tell you that the future of the Department is bright. Thank you for your wonderful presence, we hope to stay in touch much more effectively in the future and promise to get together like this as often as it is practically possible. Please enjoy the rest of the evening. Thank you and Go Aggies!