

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF TROY:

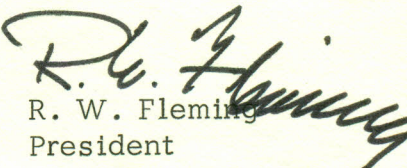
I have been asked to tell you what a library can mean to you. Let me begin by telling you what a library meant to a famous man in the history of our state.

Exactly 145 years ago, when Michigan was still a frontier territory and Detroit was a village of only 1,200 people, there lived in that little community a minister named John Monteith. Now the Reverend John Monteith was a great man for many reasons. He founded the first Protestant church in Detroit, helped draw the plan for a full program of education for Michigan, was instrumental in establishing the first university in the territory and served as its first President. But he knew that churches and schools were not enough for the intellectual life of the whole community. He knew that everyone, young and old, must have access to books. So he also founded the first public library in Michigan.

How simple it sounds to say he founded a library! In those days there were very few libraries in the United States for public use. Books of any sort were extremely scarce in the territory. There were no book stores. In fact, the nearest source of books for Mr. Monteith's library was the East coast of the United States so on April 6, 1807 he set out on horseback to ride through Canada all the way to New York and Princeton, New Jersey in order to buy books for his library. After a month of arduous and dangerous travel he reached his destination and on May 5 he made the purchase of a book collection for Michigan's first public library.

Since those pioneer days books, magazines and newspapers have become plentiful. We have come to take libraries for granted and we sometimes forget that the more books there are the more important it is to have a fine public library which selects and makes available the best books of the past and the present. In such a library our young people can learn to stretch their imaginations with the best stories and the best poetry of our literature. Here, in the library, they can find windows that open on the entire panorama of human history. Looking through them they can begin to understand how we came to be, what we are and where we are. Here they can find the answers to so many questions about the world and man in the world that trouble an active mind.

Whether you seek knowledge or understanding, or whether you want to enjoy the age-old pleasures offered by works of the imagination, the library welcomes you and invites you to share the joy that so many before you have found in the love of reading.


R. W. Fleming
President