Thank you for being here today. I want to welcome you to Ferris State University. In doing so I express my thanks to everyone who has helped make this day of tribute a tradition on our campus and who has worked to plan this ceremony today.

In reflecting of the meaning of this ceremony today it is a time of mixed emotions – pride mingled with sadness. Each of us can be so very proud of the men and women who serve and protect our campus and communities. Yet it is impossible to not be saddened, knowing the danger they can face at any moment of any day or night.

Today, as in the past, we come together to remember those who gave their lives in the line of duty. It is both fitting and moving that we do so. It is and will always be a tragedy that any of these fine men and women should, in order to keep the rest of us safe, be required to make the ultimate sacrifice.

Most of us do not wear a badge that identifies us as someone who will go whatever distance is necessary, at whatever personal cost, to fulfill their duty, someone who moves toward danger when the rest of us rush away. At Ferris we feel this acutely, because students who we have educated and trained to be officers of the law, students who earned their degrees from Ferris and who graduated with the optimism and enthusiasm of every other graduate, finished their careers far, far too early.

The same is true for all officers, whether they serve in local police departments, on university campuses, in state police posts or in federal agencies. They serve knowing that at any time they may be called upon to protect the communities they serve. While each of us cannot understand the risks they will face, we fervently hope and pray that it will never be at the cost of their own lives.

I know that you join me in thanking our officers in attendance here today. My hope is that every day we show them the respect, admiration, and appreciation they so richly deserve. In doing so we remember and honor the officers who fell while in service of our communities, our safety and future. Although that may seem inadequate, it is something each of us can do. And in expressing our heartfelt thanks, we pledge not to forget what they have done for the country, for their communities and for us.

So today we both remember those who have fallen, and honor those who continue to serve. Our world is a much better and safer place because of them.