We have assembled here on a day for launching. On the national scene Shirra, Cunningham, and Eisele have been launched via an Apollo satellite out into space, to come up into the vicinity of the moon.

The launching here today by means of a much older key has some similarities and contrasts. Both involved a lot of preparation. Each involved special costumes. The launchees in each instance are expected to travel a lot and end up about where they started. I am told that in both instances, however, great hazards are involved and that both are increasingly expensive. By contrast, one launching uses the moon for a target and the other adapts it for other forms of scientific study and inspiration.

One outstanding similarity grows out of the number of people involved who were not in the capsule, so to speak. A great many experts were partners in both projects, experts who were not in view on the television screen this morning and who might be a little difficult to find in many other capacities on college campuses.

As with the cast in a play, the actors carry the story line, develop the idea and the characterization, and get the applause, while behind the scenes the stage hands, the prop crew, the scene designer, the author and the others are essential to the enterprise.

A television master of ceremonies suggested the other evening that it took 415 people to produce his program. We shall not explore the point here this afternoon as to how many produced how much, except to say that it is the most expensive of the media. It takes a lot of people to illuminate the tube in your living room.

We thrill to the football team, realizing that in addition to the eleven on the field many others worked in a variety of ways, from the trainers, grounds keepers to the ushers, not to mention the coaches and trainers, to make the production a success.
Partners in Understanding

In contrast, there are many solo efforts in life. The artist traditionally may paint in his garret with only a mouse to nibble at the crumbs on his plate.

The writer may sit alone by the sea and let the waves wash in his ideas. The composer may sit alone by his piano, or an Edison may work in his sleepless laboratory. The lonely guitar player may ponder the mysteries of life on Tallahatchie bridge or count little green apples in Indianapolis. While watching the blast-off this morning at 11 o'clock, I was intrigued by the fact that slowly across the scene as the countdown was down to seconds a lonely buzzard flew on his unpremeditated and unprogrammed way.

On an occasion such as this, however, I would like to talk about partners, for the educational enterprise makes its greatest demands, and it seems to me achieves its real orbit, as it develops its cooperative effort.

True, solo efforts may eventually involve other people and I do not deplore them this morning. True, they may become important and creative happenings, with the artist pretty much on his own. Yet people seldom get college diplomas for solo efforts, only honorary degrees after the fact.

Now some of my former debaters honor us this afternoon by bringing an extra meed of dignity to this occasion, hence I feel an obligation to history to start with a search for a definition; so I went to Black's Law Dictionary thinking the lawyers might have some light to throw on the word "partner." All the first definition was, in typical academic fashion it said, "A member of co-partnership or firm; one who is united with others to form a partnership in business. See partnership." So following the instruction I looked under partnership. I found this definition. "A voluntary contract between two or more competent persons to place their money, effects, labor, and skill or some or all of them in lawful commerce or business with the understanding that there shall be a proportional sharing of profits and losses between them." Then the dictionary writers go on to cite 14 kinds of partnerships.

Now I want to be presumptuous enough this afternoon to suggest a 15th, the one in the teaching and learning enterprise, and I refer to those who are
in this partnership as partners in understanding.

From Solomon's day on, man has considered wisdom and understanding as kind of flip sides of a hit record.

Wisdom is relatively easy to acquire, if you define it properly, whether it be the punch card type, which looks forward to college boards and graduate record exams, or some technical and systematic taping of data.

Some years ago in a chance meeting with the president of a corporation which manufactured teaching machines, he explained to me how in all probability his firm was going to put teachers out of business.

What he emphasized, and with considerable enthusiasm, was that the result of the combination of technology and modern psychology has demonstrated that fact acquisition can be achieved at most age levels with less guidance from teachers than we had formerly imagined.

It was a rather startling experience a few years ago to walk into a laboratory where I had been a graduate student a few years before and see a machine "teaching," if I may use the term, teaching the same content that I with great struggle and effort a few years before had taught as a graduate assistant. Perhaps there was less struggle and effort on the part of the students, I don't know, but wisdom gathering was obviously being carried on rather efficiently.

Consider beyond the memorizing of poetry or formula and beyond the computer what we may mean by understanding.

Understanding brings meaning to the cold figures. Understanding makes operational a theoretical truth. Understanding moves you out of mere contemplation in Plato's cave, out of the garret, away from the Walden ponds to mingle with the people. It is the social application of wisdom that demands that we achieve understanding.

It is my thesis today that the learning situation on a college campus is not merely to give wisdom but to make understanding possible and that in this enterprise it is essentially a partnership situation.
At the risk of being redundant for such a distinguished gathering as honors us today, I would like to identify the partners.

First is the broad participation of the academic world, centers of learning of many kinds and types. It is this sense of common belonging to the educational enterprise, the quest for understanding that has brought you delegates here today and we are honored by your presence and may I humbly say we are grateful for it.

Then on any given campus there are the unseen partners, those who do the housekeeping, who provide the food, who mow the lawn, whom we do not miss until the heat goes off. Mark Hopkins' log has sprouted so much that all of these people have a very real place in providing the set for the modern campus. They are the stagehands in this modern morality play that we call learning.

In a locale such as ours today we cannot be unmindful of the reality of the community in which the person of the college resides. Asking the pardon of our guests today, we must note that we at Wooster are most fortunate to have a community positively committed to higher education, which gives an environment for a campus which makes possible the partnership toward understanding.

Now the more visible operational partners fall into four groups.

First, there are the members of the governing board, our Board of Trustees. They represent continuity and ownership. Their major contribution to the partnership, as Chancellor Tolley of Syracuse observed, is to see "that the university is faithful to its purpose."

Another group of partners in the enterprise consists of the faculty and administration, those who see the students perhaps more than anyone else, the ones who are the most important links in the partnership, and who are often the ones who are on the stage most frequently, the ones who get the applause and the lumps.

Another important partner in the enterprise is the alumnus. Particularly in this institution those who have spent a very brief period of time here -- four years in the term of a life is very brief -- have developed a strong continuing interest. It is difficult to understand sometimes why a person's interest in a
 Partners in Understanding

in a college as an institutional entity is more intense ten years after graduation than the four years before, but this is so often the case. Here at Wooster the alumni, not only the alumni board of directors, but in the inclusive family around the world, are very important partners in our enterprise.

Most importantly, and the one I wish to talk about more at length, is the partnership with the students. As so often happens with our popular use of language, unfortunate dichotomies develop, so that today we have people arguing whether the college exists for students or exists for society, when in reality it must be for both, one through the other. The operation itself is for the students, but the operation functions for the ultimate growth of society.

In the partnership for understanding we each have our roles to play, but one difference between getting wisdom privately and having understanding may be the difference between a solo and the interaction of human beings of diverse interests and talents.

The important question today is not so much does the partnership exist, but what "proportional sharing of profits," what benefits come that could not come in a solo effort.

It is not necessary to review today the values of worth to all the partners in the enterprise whom I have mentioned. To be sure there are days when teachers -- even the best of them -- would like to have a campus without students, and the administration would like the quiet of isolation from both. Perhaps even the trustees, on occasion, wish for the days of the simpler life. More interesting and importantly, there are some student movements which suggest that students go it alone, that they be freed from all requirements, freed from specific goals, and most of all freed from the faculty and administration. Yet it is important for each of the partners to understand what it is that attracts them to this voluntary contract and what anticipated sharing of what kind of profits can accrue to their investment in life.

A trustee must always ask, why take my time and energy for this activity? I have often asked that driving through the snow to a trustee committee meeting where
I have the pleasure to serve on the board. The alumnus needs a motivation and some sense of accomplishment. Why does a person who is called a teacher or a dean invest the days and hours and years of his life in this kind of partnership? Each must find his own answer but whatever statement of belief and aspiration becomes his statement of life, it must give him the reason for his investment in the partnership, some anticipated sharing of whatever life brings for this enterprise.

Let us explore briefly what the return from the partnership is to the student. It is this understanding that becomes the overlay on the otherwise bare mat. Consider first two characteristics of this understanding which I would like to suggest briefly. First, this college has long been dedicated to the thesis that understanding has its spiritual dimension, its intellectual acceptance of the Christian faith as integral to the best that life can be and become. Today we reaffirm the belief that the student has his highest opportunity on a campus where this principle holds as a guiding force.

To be sure, there are many ways for implementation, many implications, and many directions which we shall not explore here. Yet it all comes to what the Apostle Paul said in his letter to the church at Philippi, his pressing on, his search for the power that he found in Christ. It has not been and can never be forced into the cranium or the soul but the campus should pervade with this climate.

The second aspect of understanding is the understanding of ourselves, the kind of self outreach for identity and quality.

One of the recent graduates wrote this fall to one of her teachers: "You excited me about learning and some way gave me affirmation of myself as a student."

She illustrated what I think is the second purpose of the partnership. Students find in the campus community and the opportunities of that community some sense of identity.

We may amass facts, but an understanding of them comes in the extra, and this extra comes as we interact with each other. We acquire then what Friedenburg suggests is the necessity to moor dignity, and in the sense of self, firmly in intellectual
competence, not identity for its own sake but identity with dignity based on achievement.

With this identity is the necessity for the partnership to provide stimuli to go beyond ourselves that provides us with the ultimate opportunity for understanding.

Jack Bobbit (of the class of 1949), both a poet and a teacher of literature, was asked why he wrote poetry. In his reply you can read "teacher" for poet and get what I am trying to say. He said: "I write poetry with the hope that, like love, it does in fact 'begin with delight and end with wisdom,' and with the conviction that often both the reader and the author end by realizing that they're remembering something they 'didn't even know they knew.'"

Let me reread with just a little editing: "I teach with the hope that, like love, it does begin in fact with delight and end with wisdom, and with the conviction that often both the student and teacher end by realizing that they are remembering something they 'didn't know.'"

It is this added dimension of understanding which we give over and above, and is our goal, and becomes the necessity for the partnership of the students. The issue for any student then, anywhere, is simply: Recognizing that I could get some understanding anywhere, even in the desert, under what situation can I find the partners who will help me get understanding, help me remember those things I never really thought I knew?

It is this concept of going beyond our limited dreams, being more than we thought we could be that constitutes our opportunity today as we start a new period in the history of The College of Wooster.

Many trustees I am sure have devoted more time and energy to the college than they thought they would when they became trustees because they saw a task to be done and challenges to be met. Alumni have worked for the college in ways they never envisioned because of opportunities for service that came along the way. Faculty members find their date books getting all cluttered up with things they hadn't planned because they see a student who needs assistance or because of the things that must be done.
But most important of all I would call your attention to the added stimulus, the extra dimension, the going beyond themselves that a college provides for the student to make it possible for the student to get understanding. Here is the crux of our challenge in the educational enterprise.

This is our justification, for example, for our required independent study program. Requiring it of all students puts them in a position where they must go beyond what they thought they might or could do.

There are other ways and devices of bringing this about which we shall not explore here but this is the real challenge of the college.

One student wrote to me only a few days ago in a way which demonstrated this point, and I would like to read part of that letter. Right after Labor Day here on the campus we had a conference of trustees, alumni, administration, faculty, and students. Small group discussions became the basic part of the format, these discussions led by both faculty and students. One student wrote of the experience of serving as chairman in a way which indicates what I am trying to say about this extension beyond ourselves, beyond what we think we can achieve.

"Dear Mr. Drushal:

"It's been nearly an entire month since the 'campus conference' convened, and I am ashamed of my tardiness in writing to express my gratitude for your invitation to participate in the occasion. More specifically I want to thank you for the opportunity to act as a discussion leader. (And here are the two crucial sentences.) I must admit that when Mr. Williams contacted me to ask if I'd be willing to serve as a leader, I felt honored but also quite frightened at the prospect. I really cringed at the responsibility of "guiding" a group of students, faculty, and administration! But the opening session of our discussion group quickly squelched most of my fears. All members actively participated and were full of suggestions and ideas.

"In the last three weeks I have contemplated and reflected frequently about those three days after Labor Day (the student continues) and I have concluded
that without doubt, I gained more from those events than any member of the group. The issues which we debated were thought-provoking, the experience of directing such a group invaluable, and people whom I met I'll not forget. The warmth which radiates (and you guests will forgive this commercial here) the warmth which radiates from Wooster people and the genuine concern which penetrates our campus always makes me proud to be a member of the Wooster community."

Here is an illustration of not letting the cringe stop the outreach and the new growth. Always we must be pushing out beyond what we thought we could do.

We think today of those who have been students here in times past and we feel grateful and find in their past and in their distinctions a challenge for the future. The ladies of the Compton family, if you will pardon my mentioning them, honor us with their presence today. We remember the distinction their husbands brought as graduates. We are honored today by the presence of Mrs. Demarest who came all the way from Redlands, California, the granddaughter of the first president of the College, to share with us this memorable occasion.

We think of those who have achieved in a variety of ways -- Warren Spencer and James Neill in biology; in business and industry -- Robert Wilson and John Miller; in law -- Carl Weygandt; and when you start listing it is hard to stop. In administration and education -- Bob Bone and our beloved Howard Lowry. We say to ourselves, with these distinguished persons having been the results of the earlier partnerships in understanding we ask how can we even hope to do as well? Yet we must commit ourselves in all humility to try to do better, difficult though that may seem. One of my debaters called last evening from Chapel Hill where he is working on his Doctor's degree. Some of you may have been in my office and and have seen this picture of my last debate team that I had before I was demoted to Galpin. The four boys are standing there in this picture and each of them has a trophy. We really swept that tournament clean and we were all standing there with big grins on
our faces looking like demented jack-o'-lanterns, but we were all quite excited over our achievements. Phil called last night out of that group and he began to ask about the others. Where's Dave? Dave finished his theological degree at Yale and is now working on his doctorate. Where is Rich? Rich has left a large bank in Chicago and formed his own investment corporation. Where is Rocky? Rocky is now in the assistant attorney general's office in Minneapolis. And then Phil said, "I guess there will never be another group like that. Never one quite that good."

Maybe so, and maybe for the good of many things it would be well not to have another group just like that and I shall not explore that for the moment. But even with these distinguished young men we face the challenge today to produce people as the result of our partners in understanding who are even better than that laughing group in the picture in my office.

This places an unusual burden upon us, an unusual challenge, because it gives us what we may think in many ways is an impossible task. Looking back, we find that because of the persons who have made this college what it is they have produced the partnership which they may have thought was an impossible task, but which has given us a great heritage.

When we can form a partnership to get to the moon we should not be frightened nor should we cringe from the partnership to bring understandings to the problems and the people of the world today. How many of the people in the past found the opportunities difficult, yet went ahead because of their partnership in developing understanding? And as we look about us on every hand and see the distressing things that occur, see our failures to make progress in a day when understanding seems so difficult and almost beyond our grasp, we find ourselves even so committed anew to this partnership.

As you delegates from other campuses know full well, the spire of understanding ignites in a variety of ways and at many campus centers of learning. It is our responsibility to dedicate ourselves anew to the extra dimension here which takes us beyond our hopes and limited visions, so that students now and in the days ahead
may remember things they never realized they knew, may lose the "cringe" in the outreach. So today we renew our contract with those whose heritage we share, with those who have labored in the past and with those who labor in this time and place, and with all who now and in the years ahead share their student days here as partners in understanding.