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Town-Gown Leader RICHARD LEVIN

Yale president has helped revitalize New Haven.

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When Richard C. Levin became president of Yale University in 1993, the budget was in the red, the endowment was lagging and the city around Old Eli was hurting. He celebrates his 15th anniversary next week with those problems and others well under control.

The nearly \$2 billion annual budget is in the black, and the endowment has risen to \$23 billion. The school has invested heavily in the restoration of the campus and announced plans this summer to build two new residential colleges.

But the most remarkable achievement of Mr. Levin's tenure is his engagement with New Haven. He understood from the start that the university could play a much larger role in the revival of the city if it chose to do so.

In 1994, Mr. Levin started a home buyer program, in which the school would give employees \$25,000 over 10 years to buy homes in the city. To date, the program has spent more than \$21 million to help 835 employees buy homes in New Haven, strengthening the city's middle class.

In 1997, Mr. Levin brought in Bruce D. Alexander, the man who had opened Quincy Market/Faneuil Hall in Boston

for the Rouse Co., to help revitalize downtown retail and arts districts and other economic development opportunities such as Science Park.

As is obvious to anyone walking down Broadway, Chapel Street or Audubon Street today, this has been a resounding success.

It now may be obvious that colleges such as Yale can help turn cities around, but it wasn't obvious in 1993. The school and town had had cool relations in the preceding years. Mr. Levin showed what could be done, and other schools have followed his lead.

If all you know of Yale is boola-boola and Bill Clinton, you are missing a larger picture. The school provides 12,000 full-time jobs and nearly 11,000 spin-off jobs, and has a \$2 billion impact on the state's economy. Let's wish Mr. Levin another successful 15 years.