



**OAKLAND  
UNIVERSITY™**

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*Celebrating the Inauguration of  
Oakland University's Sixth President*

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**George W. Hynd**

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April 29, 2015



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**Oakland University** is a doctoral research university located on 1,443 acres of scenic land in the cities of Rochester Hills and Auburn Hills in Oakland County, Michigan. The University offers 135 bachelor's degree programs and 135 graduate degree and certificate programs. Oakland is a nationally recognized public university enrolling more than 20,500 students. Academics include programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Business Administration, School of Education and Human Services, School of Engineering and Computer Science, School of Health Sciences, School of Medicine and School of Nursing.

## Mission

Oakland University is a preeminent metropolitan university that is recognized as a student-centered, doctoral research institution with a global perspective. We engage students in distinctive educational experiences that connect to the unique and diverse opportunities within our region and beyond.

Through faculty-driven and student-engaged research, scholarship, and creative activity, Oakland University advances knowledge and art in a diverse and inclusive environment. Oakland University is an active community partner providing thriving civic, cultural, and recreational opportunities and valuable public service.



## Our Presidential History

**Durward B. “Woody” Varner** was the first president (1959-1970) of Michigan State University–Oakland (MSU-O), modeled after MSU’s Honors College. He recruited premier faculty from across the nation and worked side-by-side with Mrs. Wilson to help make her vision a reality. MSU-O was renamed Oakland University in 1963.

The Michigan legislature granted Oakland University autonomy in 1970. During President **Donald D. O’Dowd’s** tenure (1970-79), the University grew in size and shape.

The University forged collaborative ventures and alliances with regional health care, technology, school districts, and business and labor organizations during the presidency of **Joseph E. Champagne** (1981-1991).

President **Sandra P. Packard** (1992-95) increased state funding, introduced a capital improvement program, and a School of Engineering master’s degree program.

Under President **Gary D. Russi** (1996-2013), the University added more than 65 academic degrees, joined the NCAA Division I Horizon League and invested in new environments for teaching, research, learning and living.

On July 9, 2014, the Board of Trustees appointed **George W. Hynd** as the sixth president of Oakland University, following an extensive national search.

Dr. Hynd was officially inaugurated as president on April 29, 2015. Coinciding with his inauguration, the University is reaching new heights in alumni and



student population, academics and capital enhancements.

A significant example is OU surpassing 100,000 new alumni as of December 2014. That is 100,000 teachers, engineers, nurses, business entrepreneurs and other successful professionals contributing their skills, knowledge and talents to improving the quality of life in communities across Metro Detroit and beyond.

Dr. Hynd welcomes the opportunity to tell the Oakland University story – locally, in Lansing, across the country and globally.

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### Presidents of Oakland University

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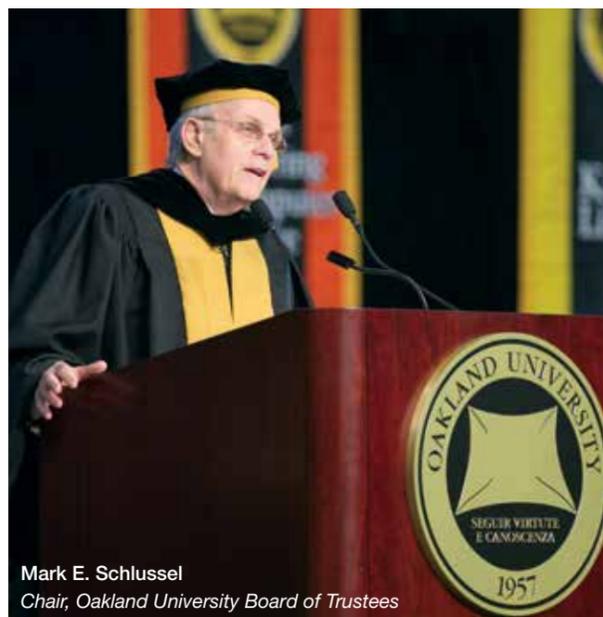
- George W. Hynd** 2014 -
  - Gary D. Russi** 1996 – 2013
  - Sandra P. Packard** 1992 – 1995
  - Joseph E. Champagne** 1981 – 1991
  - Donald D. O’Dowd** 1970 – 1979
  - Durward B. “Woody” Varner** 1959 – 1970
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“... we have placed our confidence in a man who by temperament and training is poised to balance the competing needs and pressures faced by university presidents.”

**Remarks by Mark E. Schluskel, Chair, Board of Trustees | Oakland University**

We welcome Dr. George W. Hynd to lead Oakland into a new era of distinction – one that focuses on how we can build on our existing strengths and fulfill our mission with the highest levels of excellence.



Mark E. Schluskel  
Chair, Oakland University Board of Trustees

We have gathered at a propitious time in Oakland’s history – a time in which several longstanding endeavors bolster the promise for a future in which this University will thrive.

First, we have adopted a new strategic plan, mission statement and institutional goals. These, I am proud to say, integrate our highest academic aspirations with the laudable and innovative vision of our founders.

We have identified Oakland as a metropolitan University with a global perspective.

We are vigorously working to create a diverse campus community.

And now we have the great fortune to officially install a president who has built an honorable and distinguished career contributing generously to our knowledge of human thought and interaction.

**Growing, Evolving and Improving**

As this ceremony will symbolize, we are investing our highest trust in a respected scholar who has also demonstrated exemplary skill in leading colleagues to impart critical knowledge on our young generations.

As we place this great responsibility in President Hynd, we also acknowledge with him that this is his challenge to inspire and lead. As John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States, said:

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more; you are a leader.”

Today we have opportunity to reflect on Matilda Dodge Wilson’s vision for a center of higher learning that welcomed preeminent scholars, diligent and aspiring students, and support staff dedicated to the mission of liberal arts education.

As most of you know, this vision has not changed. What has changed is that over the last 58 years, Oakland University has been growing, evolving, improving.

We are in the process of defining precisely who we are, where our greatest strengths and assets lie, and exactly where in a great sea of potential we will set anchor.

As Emily Dickinson said in her famous poem, “The Brain is Wider than the Sky”:

“The brain is deeper than the sea, for, hold them, blue to blue. The one the other will absorb, as sponges, buckets do.”

There are questions we must answer.

- What will most significantly define us and shape our reputation?
- How will we fit in and contribute to the evolving state of higher education in this country?
- How will we fully embrace and benefit from the global perspective we seek?



I believe we are well situated to find answers to these questions.

This is a community of remarkable people from all walks of life, and we have a new leader uniquely qualified to evoke all our greatest strengths and contributions.

### Prolific and Respected Scholar

Indeed, Dr. George W. Hynd has impeccable credentials.

He holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in psychology from Pepperdine University, a master's of education degree from the University of Guam, and a doctorate of education in psychology from the University of Northern Colorado.

Before joining us, he served as provost and executive vice president of academic affairs for the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina.

He also served:

- as senior vice provost for education and innovation at Arizona State University;
- as dean of the College of Education at Purdue University, and;
- as division chair, school director, associate dean and distinguished research professor at the University of Georgia.

As a prolific and widely respected scholar, he has garnered numerous honors and awards for the tremendous work he has done.

Clearly, this is an extraordinary academic leader we are inaugurating today.

### Maintain the Essence of Education

Before we begin the investiture, however, I would like to share my thoughts on the challenges higher education faces. These illustrate what I believe are among the greatest challenges Dr. Hynd will face.

Many would like us to turn our universities into category-specific trade schools. They want us to produce technicians – whether they be engineers, nurses, doctors, teachers, architects or lawyers.

We, on the other hand, still believe we need to produce young adults for whom the values of our society are important. Our democracy will not long survive if we, the universities, cease to produce the leaders of tomorrow imbued with a sense of values and respect.

To quote Kenneth Ruscio, the president of Washington and Lee University, in a 2014 speech:

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*“The story about higher education these days sadly is more about confusion than disruption – confusion about what colleges and universities contribute to democracy.”*

*“It is the story of defining education down, reducing it to a purely instrumental pursuit and overlooking historic responsibility that universities have been assigned to preserve, define and develop the virtues a democratic society requires.”*

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Real education is the process of ambiguity and not of absolutes. We need to embrace our differences. Dissent with reason is the essence of education.

The dogma of absolutes threatens both our educational process and our democracy. We see this playing out in



*“We are in the process of defining precisely who we are, where our greatest strengths and assets lie, and exactly where in a great sea of potential we will set anchor.”*

Washington on a daily basis. It is within this environment that our university presidents need to manage the myriad of constituencies that make up university families.

The future of the university and of our society rests in the humanities. In each of our chosen fields, our skills will need to evolve and remain relevant. The change in technologies is moving at warp speed.

Yet our core and foundation must remain steady in the values that our students take with them into the world at large. These values are what will sustain our society and our democracy.

I believe that without question, the values and virtues of the young men and women we nurture through a liberal arts education are far more valuable than the diplomas they will hang on their office walls.

### Guided by Integrity, Honesty and Compassion

In choosing Dr. George Hynd to lead Oakland University, we have placed our confidence in a man who by temperament and training is poised to balance the competing needs and pressures faced by university presidents.

I know him to be a man who will do this while being guided by the very values I am speaking of – integrity, honesty and compassion.

I believe that in leading this University, President Hynd will help all of us mentor our students to become successful graduates and exemplary citizens. I believe these alumni will use the values they embrace to make remarkable and valuable contributions to our state and our nation.

– **Mark E. Schlüssel**  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Oakland University

## Honoring Our Past, Inspiring Our Future

Good afternoon.

Thank you all for coming to share what will undoubtedly stand among the most meaningful and memorable experiences of my life.

Let us share a special thank you and round of applause for the Inauguration Committee for all of their hard work in planning the many details for the inaugural events!

I am hard pressed to explain just how humbled I am to stand here before you, and yet, how immensely proud I am to join this accomplished academic community.

I am grateful that all of you have welcomed me so warmly and with such enthusiasm.

In that same vein, I would like to express special appreciation to:

- former Board of Trustees Chair Michael Kramer;
- current Chair Mark Schluskel;
- each of their colleagues on the Board;
- the presidential search committee and;
- each member of the campus community for having the faith in me to lead this University.

Most of all, I would like to extend my undying appreciation and deepest love to my brilliant, talented and beautiful wife. Alison, you have brought so much meaning and fulfillment to me. Please know that I will always love you and thank you for choosing to share your life with me.

To my very smart and beautiful daughters, Elise and Erin, and also to April; and my son, Brian; and to my grandchildren – the joy that you bring is absolutely indescribable.

At this time, I would also like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to all of our honored guests here today. Thank you so much for taking time to show your support.

And to those who were unable to attend, but sent letters, proclamations and other forms of tribute, I thank you.

Now as many of you might imagine – and probably expect – it has been a challenging and enriching professional journey that has brought me to this day.

### Epiphany

I can actually recall when and where it began quite vividly.

It was a beautiful fall day in Southern California at Pepperdine University and I was standing outside the bookstore. Curious about the classes I had registered for, I was leafing through a textbook on physiological psychology.

I was entranced with what I read. Something happened. Something clicked.

I remember sitting down and starting to read my new textbook. Hours went by before I looked up.

Now, I promise to spare you from a dissertation on the empirical foundation of epiphanies as psychological phenomena. I will tell you that at that moment, I saw clearly that the study of human behavior would be my passion.

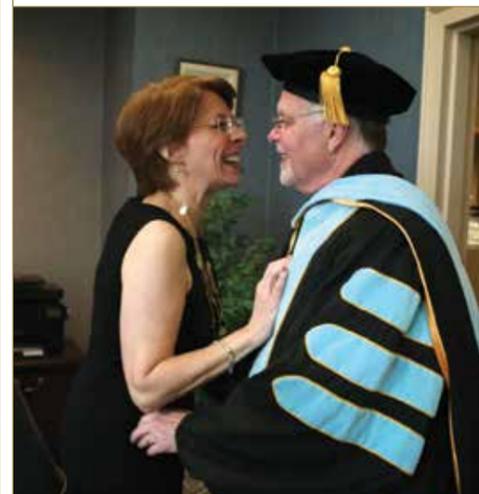
It would be a passion that forcefully carried me through an active research career in which I had an opportunity to work with students who likewise found their calling.

Now I cannot help but wonder if Matilda Dodge Wilson and Alfred Wilson had a similar experience prior to founding this institution.

I wonder if at some seemingly unexpected moment, Matilda realized that establishing this University was to be a great milestone in her lifelong commitment to being a steward of her community.



*“... at that moment, I saw clearly that the study of human behavior would be my passion. It would be a passion that forcefully carried me through an active research career in which I had an opportunity to work with students who likewise found their calling.”*

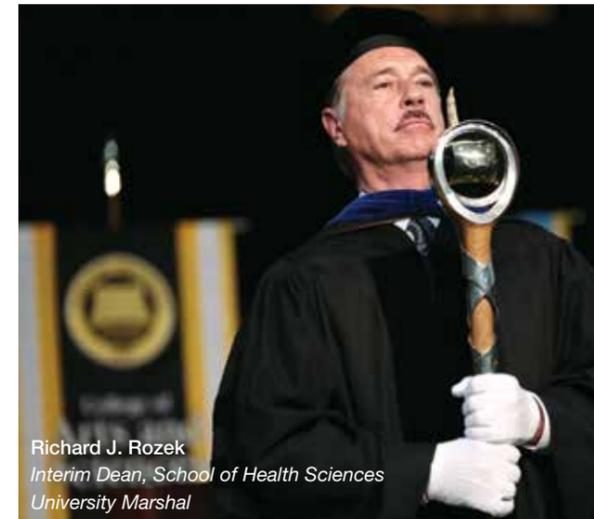


*“...I am resolving to do all in my power to help Oakland University stand out among the top, student-centered, research institutions in Michigan, as well as among the best in the nation.”*



*“I am also resolving to enhance Oakland’s status as a first-choice destination for college-bound high school graduates in the metropolitan area we serve.”*





Richard J. Rozek  
Interim Dean, School of Health Sciences  
University Marshal

I guess I will have to await the pending historical publication of my new friend and colleague, Graeme Harper, to learn the answer to that question.

In the meantime, I have absolutely no doubt that Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were driven by a deep and sincere passion to donate the Meadow Brook Estate and \$2 million to what would become Michigan State University-Oakland.

That passion was evident in what is embraced in a proposal that ultimately led to Oakland’s founding.

A quote from the University’s founding document reads:

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*“Thus, it would appear that the opportunities to here develop an institution of higher learning of great significance to the region, the state, the nation and the world are almost without bounds.*

*Here again in the words of Andrew Carnegie, who did so much to define the social responsibility of wealth, there would be erected 'ladders upon which the aspiring can rise.'”*

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### Commitment to the Liberal Arts Endures

Alfred and Matilda Dodge Wilson, along with the visionary men and women who came from across the country to collaborate and bring life to her noble ambition, thoroughly

understood the value of a liberal arts education. They were clearly visionaries.

At this point, we should probably pause and define what is meant by the liberal arts.

In ancient Greece, education in the liberal arts was considered a requirement for a free person. The subjects included grammar, logic and rhetoric.

In modern times, this pedagogy typically incorporates education in literature, languages, art, music, philosophy, psychology, mathematics and, of course, the physical and natural sciences.

It is coursework in these subjects that is reflected in our general education requirements.

### So what has become of Oakland’s early vision and mission?

Well, in our nearly 60-year history, we have grown from a small, honors-inspired, liberal arts institution to a student-centered, doctoral research university. We have maintained an abiding commitment to our liberal arts foundation, as well as to an expansive offering of professional degrees.

### And why is our commitment so strong?

Because we know that graduates prepared with a liberal arts foundation, whether or not they pursue a professional

degree, are over-represented in leadership positions among the Fortune 500 companies.

They are over-represented in graduate and medical school admissions and are recognized for their ability to communicate and for their adaptability.

They have an education that encourages them to respect broadly divergent perspectives, think critically and welcome creativity.

Now, I did not describe our founders as “visionaries” on a whim.

The liberal arts curriculum they developed has weathered substantial change in the aims and action plans of academia, and quite clearly continues to be effective in achieving the institution’s founding mission.

This is despite occasional criticisms by those who do not understand the need for a broad and rich education in a world that most often allows people with unfettered adaptability and creativity to be successful.

Matilda Dodge Wilson and her founding colleagues understood while constructing the early curriculum that, as C.S. Lewis suggested, “The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.”

Or, as the famous anthropologist Margaret Mead suggested more directly, “Children must be taught *how* to think, not *what* to think.”

There is no question that our founder’s vision and today’s curriculum will continue to enable aspiring learners and educators to impact the world around them in remarkably beneficial ways.

### We Have a Wonderful Story to Tell

On this note, you may know that I came to Oakland University roughly eight months ago with the notion that this place is a hidden gem. We have a wonderful story to tell about our rich and vibrant history, and the contributions our students are making to society.

### Consider, for example, our outstanding students:

Medical student **Florence Doo** used her capstone project to develop a means of using Google Glass to project medical imaging data that surgeons can reference in real time during surgery.

Or consider our outstanding faculty, such as **Dr. Lisa Welling**, an evolutionary psychologist who studies hormonal influences on behavior, sources of variation in adaptive preferences and mate choice selection in romantic relationships.

### And how about our incredibly successful alumni?

A perfect example is **Alan Pinnick** (’81, Mechanical Engineering), who just received the National Aeronautics Association’s highest award, the Robert J. Collier Trophy. Working at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, he and his team successfully launched the first unmanned, tailless aircraft and managed its recovery from an aircraft carrier!

As a culturally and intellectually rich institution, we have also attracted some the most gifted individuals in the world to come here and share their inspirational and informative stories.

In addition to Madeline Albright, Thomas Friedman and Jane Goodall having visited campus, we recently welcomed the extraordinarily talented Morten Lauridsen, an internationally recognized composer who is most widely known for “*O Magnum Mysterium.*”

While on campus, he took time to both work and perform with our music students.

I believe that we need to make widely known all that has been achieved here at Oakland, as well as the great potential that lies before us.

### Rich Potential Before Us

Now, I assure you that I am not Pollyanna-ish in assessing the value and impact of this institution, nor in envisioning the rich potential that lies before it. I am well acquainted with the fact, for example, that we do not have the benefit of the same resources as the nation's large research institutions.

We *do* have talented students, faculty researchers, scholars and alumni with unequaled passion, commitment and ambition.

In fact, I am so confident of this that **I am resolving to do all in my power to help Oakland University stand out among the top, student-centered, research institutions in Michigan, as well as among the best in the nation.**

Through a strategic planning process, we have resolved to make Oakland's presence widely known and respected as a metropolitan university with a global perspective.

We will serve as a resource for neighboring communities by engaging in initiatives that foster the development, exchange, and application of knowledge and talent.

We are already doing this through countless initiatives, just a few of which include:

- a collaboration between our School of Nursing and Focus: HOPE to educate and place working licensed practical nurses in the city of Detroit;
- a collaboration between our School of Education and Human Services and the Pontiac School District to create innovative laboratory schools in which students, teachers and student teachers use current, research-based best practices to maximize student achievement, and;
- on a broader scale, a dynamic that has more than 71,000 of our 100,000+ alumni dedicating the knowledge, talents and aspirations they developed here at Oakland to the revitalization of our state.

We are doing a great deal, but I believe we can do more. I am resolving not to *rest* on our successes, but to *build* on them.

**I am also resolving to enhance Oakland's status as a first-choice destination for college-bound high school graduates in the metropolitan area we serve.**

How can we achieve this? Well, we can:

- continue to invest available resources in the University's strongest academic, enrichment and outreach initiatives;
- continue to expand the resident student population on campus;
- increase and diversify the international experiences available to Oakland students – both by recruiting greater numbers of international students and by expanding study abroad opportunities.

We can:

- create more exciting and more diverse campus life experiences that students are looking for;
- expand our engagement in our metropolitan communities in ways that meet the needs of our community partners and provide learning opportunities for our students, and;
- engage our many friends and supporters to help us make our vision a reality.



Kenneth R. Kroesche  
Associate Professor of Music  
Conductor, OU Brass Band



*“We will broaden access to the attainment of an Oakland University degree by marshaling financial, academic and other support resources that will open doors of opportunity to students from all walks of life.”*

While I am clear about sustaining our vision and realizing our strategic objectives, I acknowledge that we are confronted with a number of daunting challenges. Perhaps most disheartening is that we find ourselves in an era that increasingly demands that college graduates only be ready to hit the ground running in highly specialized career fields.

We live in a society that has largely devalued the liberal arts disciplines and, to a significant degree, has decreased its public commitment to higher education. On the latter note, the rise in student debt has predictably followed and is directly correlated with public disinvestment in higher education.

There has been an evolution from viewing support for higher education as a public investment in our state and the nation's future to viewing it as a cost that students should bear, regardless of their means.

Now, despite what I have just shared, I will still argue that Oakland can and will overcome the obstacles we face. How?

We will continue to emphasize the importance and tremendous value of a college education – and particularly one from Oakland University. We will broaden access to the attainment of an Oakland University degree.

We will do so:

- by marshaling financial, academic and other support resources that will open doors of opportunity to students from all walks of life;
- by seeking new resources that will lower the cost of attendance and reduce student debt, and;
- by studying, understanding and addressing the many different ways that individual students are able to achieve the successes they seek.

In essence, Oakland University will be known for providing students with access to an exceptional education, whether undergraduate or graduate, that results in a life-long return on their investment.

While it is likely already obvious, I will note that we are gathered here for an inauguration – or in laymen’s terms, a ceremonial induction of an individual into a leadership position.

What I would like to suggest, however, is that the theme of this event should not center on a particular individual.

### **Renew Our Commitment to Those We Serve**

Rather, it should focus on what can and should be a new era for Oakland University: a new era focusing on strategic advancement; a new era defined by the contributions of an entire community of unique, gifted and talented individuals.

I humbly suggest that as a community, we renew our commitment to work together in the interest of enhancing the lives of the individuals we serve.

At the same time, let’s recommit ourselves to broadening the beneficial impact of this institution on the communities and the world around us.

I understand that there is hard work and risk involved.

But if and when we settle for anything less than the very best in preparing our students to contribute and serve, we are losing sight of what ultimately brings meaning to any individual’s life.

We are also losing sight of what is at the heart of the most transformative forces in society.

We need to embrace passion, ambition, knowledge and the potent ability to impact the world around us.

In fulfilling Oakland’s mission, I am resolving to not settle for giving our students, our faculty or our community anything less than the very best.

The existential psychologist Rollo May once said:

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*“The opposite of courage in our society is not cowardice, it is conformity.”*

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Conformity has no place in a leading metropolitan university.

Let us not betray our founder’s aspiration for Oakland University. Let us not sacrifice opportunity that can only manifest in the light of passion, courage, knowledge and hard work.

Let us have students across Michigan, the U.S. and in other countries know that Oakland University is a place to find and cultivate one’s passion.

### **Need to Be Strategically Focused**

In closing, please allow me to share a short story.

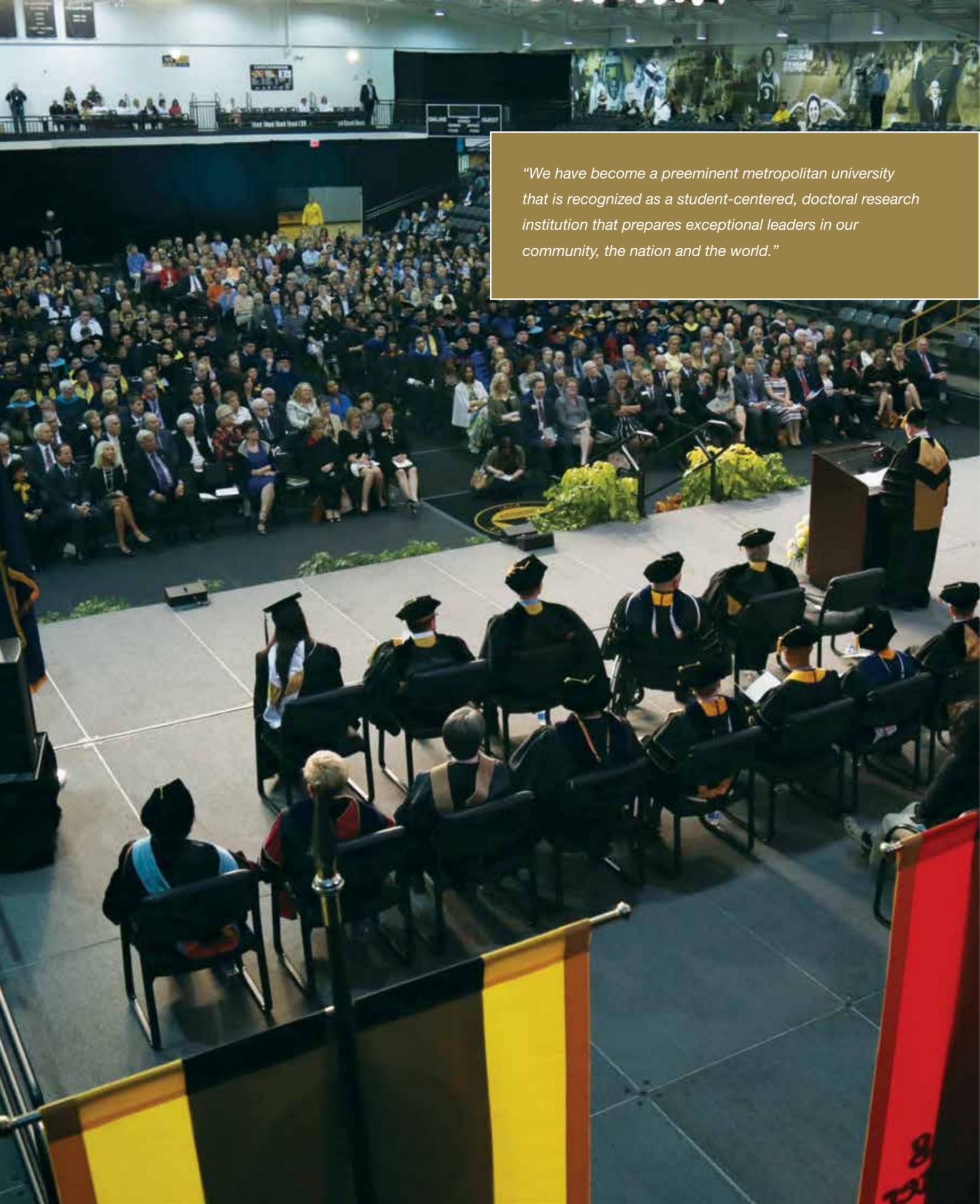
Early in my career, I worked as a psychologist in Guam. Not unlike other psychologists I have known, one of my colleagues was an accomplished musician and spent much of his spare time playing with local groups.

Several decades after we parted ways, he was retired and came to visit me. I was stunned when he told me all of the musical groups he played with, and how much he traveled to play in so many different places.

He was incredibly busy, and I had to ask him how he managed to do it all? Wasn’t he exhausted?

He answered that when he was a younger musician, he thought he had to play all the notes. But with maturity he

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*“We have become a preeminent metropolitan university that is recognized as a student-centered, doctoral research institution that prepares exceptional leaders in our community, the nation and the world.”*



had figured out which notes were the most important notes to play.

He said that at that point, what might appear as work became a lot easier, and that he enjoyed it all the more.

Now, I can only guess what my musician friends might think, and his story does challenge my ideas about retirement.

Still, I think there may be a valuable point to consider here.

Oakland University is almost 60 years old. We continue to mature and evolve. Like my former colleague, we have figured out that we do not need to do it all. Rather, we have figured out that we need to be strategically focused on where we came from and who we have become.

We have become a preeminent metropolitan university that is recognized as a student-centered, doctoral research institution that prepares exceptional leaders in our community, the nation and the world.

With this recognition, the value of a college degree from Oakland has never been higher.

**Today, I am resolving to commit us to an exciting, engaged and vibrant future as one of Michigan’s, and our nation’s, finest universities.**

Today, I humbly ask you to join me.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude for this great honor to serve with you.

***Thank you.***



## **George W. Hynd President, Oakland University**

**President George Hynd arrives at Oakland University with 40 years of educational experience and outstanding credentials as a leader and clinical child neuropsychologist.**

He has held leadership roles at several nationally recognized colleges and universities. Most recently Dr. Hynd was provost and executive vice president of Academic Affairs at the College of Charleston (South Carolina) for five years.

At Arizona State University, Dr. Hynd was the senior vice provost for education and innovation and dean and director of the Mary Lou Fulton Institute and Graduate School of Education. He also served as dean of the College of Education at Purdue University. At the University of Georgia, Dr. Hynd served in faculty and administrative roles, including chair of the Division for the Education of Exceptional Children.

Additionally, he has served as a clinical assistant professor of neurology at the Medical College of Georgia and an assistant professor of psychology at Northern Arizona University.

Dr. Hynd began his career in education as an elementary school teacher in Los Angeles. Upon earning his master's degree in psychology from Pepperdine University, he was offered a job as a school psychologist in the Territorial Government of Guam. While there, he earned a master's degree in educational administration and supervision from the University of Guam.

It was while testing a young girl with autism that Dr. Hynd was to experience what he calls "a genuine epiphany" that directed his path: "I needed to learn a great deal more to better serve children like her."

He earned a doctorate in psychology from the University of Northern Colorado, concentrating his research on attributes of memory (acoustic, associative and orthographic) that help children develop the cognitive structures necessary to learn to read. When magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans became available in the late 1980s, Dr. Hynd focused his research on understanding the development of those brain structures that might be implicated in reading disabilities.

Dr. Hynd conducted innovative research on the neurobiological origins of reading disabilities, ADHD and childhood behavioral disorders. This set a foundation for genetic research and further investigations in brain-behavior relationships in children and adolescents.

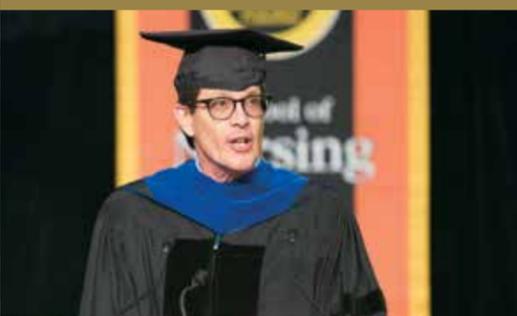
He has authored, co-authored and edited 11 books, authored 57 book chapters and published 153 refereed journal articles, most of which focus on theoretical and clinical issues in clinical child neuropsychology.

Dr. Hynd was born in Portland, Oregon, and grew up in southern California. He has four children and three grandchildren. Dr. Alison R. Hynd, his wife, is a child neuropsychologist who worked with preschool children with autism and language delays. ➤



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