
Pioneer Club Monthly News-September

OU's favorite fall tradition, Homecoming and Reunion Weekend, is finally here! It was wonderful to see so many of you yesterday at the Retired Faculty and Staff Reunion Brunch, and we look forward to your participation at events throughout the weekend. For a complete listing of scheduled activities, [click here](#). Please take a few minutes to catch up on the latest [campus news](#) and [calendar of events](#)!

Membership Has Its Privileges

Did you know that when you retire from OU you automatically become a member of the Pioneer Club? There are no applications to fill out and no annual dues to pay - just fun and interesting social opportunities to keep you connected to the University.

OU is fortunate to have a supportive, engaged and generous group of retired faculty and staff. In appreciation of your dedicated service to the University, the Pioneer Club provides a variety of cultural, intellectual and recreational programs that encourage camaraderie and foster the Oakland spirit.

Group Lunches

The Pioneer Club meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. at Nick's Country Oven in Rochester (Adams and Silverbell). These lunches are very casual, so please stop by when your schedule permits.

Golden Opportunity

Do you have a great idea for a future Pioneer Club event? The planning committee needs your help! The group meets on a monthly basis to discuss campus happenings as well as organize activities for Pioneer Club members. If you are interested in joining the planning committee or would like more information, email oupioneerclub@oakland.edu or call (248) 370-4325.

Community Partnership

A new monthly lecture series featuring members of OU's distinguished faculty will take place at the Rochester Hills Public Library this fall. The Discovery and Coffee series is complimentary; attendees must register in advance with their library card. For more information, [click here](#).

MTD News

The 2016 performance season of the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance (MTD) is underway. [Click here](#) for a preview. For current news on students and faculty in MTD, [click here](#). To read an update on MTD alumni working in the arts, [click here](#).

Passing of the Mace

Many of you know that longtime School of Health Sciences professor Richard Rozek has served as university marshal since 1995. Rozek retired from OU earlier this month and "passed the mace" at OU's fall convocation ceremony. [Click here](#) to read the full story.

GRIZZ Fact

Do you ever wonder about the college aspirations of OU's incoming students? [Click here](#) to find out. To read archived GRIZZ facts from the Office of Institutional Research, [click here](#).

Pioneer Profile

By Gerry Coon



Pat Nicosia

When I mentioned to friends that the next person to be profiled would be Pat Nicosia, they said, “Oh, the guy with the tickets!” Yes, Pat is still the go-to guy for tickets to the Fox Theatre, the Fisher Theater, the Opera House and several venues in Sarasota, Florida, where he and his wife, Mercedes, own a second condo. But more of that later.

Pat retired in 2003, after 31 years at Oakland University, leaving as Director of Budget and Financial Planning. He received the Outstanding AP Award in 1985 and the Honorary Alumnus Award in 2003. He was also cited as Advisor of the Year several times for his work with Theta Chi Fraternity. But the achievement that he is most interested in is that he co-chaired the Oakland University All-University Fund Drive (AUF) for three years. That function was so important to him that he has continued as retiree representative to the AUF during his retirement years. “I believe strongly that retirees should remember Oakland University during the fund drive and through their bequests,” he told me. He especially promotes the idea of participating in some of the matching programs the university sponsors.

Mercy and Pat met on a blind date some 34 years ago arranged by Kathy Wilson (wife of Jack) and Emily Champagne (wife of Joe). They traveled extensively during the early years of their marriage, but travel became less important as they became more and more involved in affairs at their condo in Sarasota (he is treasurer of the association) and in the theater ticket business, but since 2014 they have been to China and cruised the Danube. They leave for a trip to Italy later this month.

The Nicosias contribute generously to Oakland University, with many of their contributions earmarked for the Music, Theatre and Dance Department (MTD). “Many of those student performers are so good,” says Pat, “that they should make it to the big time. However, the competition is so great in that field that too many of them do not make it, or wait a long time until they do. We want to help them out with scholarships and grants so they don’t start out burdened with a heavy tuition debt. They should be rewarded even when they don’t make the big stage, because many of them perform for little or no money in community programs that greatly enrich people in the area.” Pat was instrumental in raising scholarship dollars for the Meadow Brook Estate, Oakland’s Show Choir, and several scholarship endowments were established through his efforts. The annual MaTiLda Award for a member of the Meadow Brook Estate is named after the Nicosias and they fund the stipend that goes with the award.

As you might guess, the Nicosias are great theater buffs. (The Tony Awards are their favorite awards show). Pat estimates that they go to at least 45 live performances every year, here and in Sarasota, Florida. “We live 10 minutes from the largest theater in Sarasota, but we are also close to many other venues. There are about 15 stages for live theatre in Sarasota and all within 15 minutes of our condo on Lido Beach. Sarasota is the cultural center of Florida—I wouldn’t live anywhere else in the state.” Pat estimates that in the past 30 years he has sold well over a million dollars in tickets at discount prices for prime seats blocked out for him before the general public has access to them. Since his retirement, he has shared this responsibility with the Center for Student Activities. Pat remains the resource for retirees and current faculty and students get the same discounted tickets at the Center for Student Activities Box Office. Pat’s main contact there is Lori Marsh—together they make sure the Oakland community gets great seats at discounted prices.

Discounts vary for the various theaters and programs, with the deepest ones being \$20 tickets to the dress rehearsals at the Detroit Opera House. Sometimes he can obtain balcony tickets for half price for Fisher Theatre productions, depending on the popularity of the program. Though he reserves tickets well in advance (currently working on the 2017 season), for a popular play he and Lori frequently request more tickets as the demand

increases. For *Motown the Musical*, they sold 550 tickets last year, but *Miss Saigon*, when it first came to Detroit for a four-month run, was the most popular with 1200 tickets mailed out to students and faculty. (That happens to be *his* favorite show, relating it to his own experiences in Korea, where he served during the Vietnam War). He sometimes is working on 20 shows at a time, matching purchasers' preferences for dates and seating. It is a daunting task, and he has received no reimbursement for any of his time and trouble, nor does he expect any.

In his free time Pat exercises regularly at the Older Persons' Commission (OPC) in Rochester and at the condo's recreation area in Florida. He conferred with staff at OPC and Oakland's Recreation Center to determine the best equipment for a fitness center and is pleased that his condo association now has one of the best-equipped programs in the area. He also takes advantage of his time in Rochester to resume the piano lessons he began 14 years ago. When in Sarasota he attends Oakland's regional engagement activities (formerly Winter College) each year, and this year is on the planning committee for the reunion dinner in Sarasota.

Pat relishes his relationships with Oakland University, past and present. "It was great working at Oakland, and I miss the people. I'm excited with all the new buildings, especially the Elliott Tower." As retiree representative for the OU Fund Drive he expresses strong feelings about returning back to the University financially, especially through endowments, bequests and annual giving programs, such as the All-University Fund Drive, that provide matching funds. "It's a way to leave your mark on the University," he says.

The "man with the tickets" has left a *big* mark on the University, and he is still blazing a trail.

Gerry Palmer Coon served as administrative assistant and adjunct faculty member in the School of Education and Human Services from 1971 to 1991. She retired after eleven years as co-editor of Rochester OPC's (Older Persons' Commission) quarterly publication, Vintage Views, and is a member of the Pioneer Club.

Pioneer Profile is a feature that appears monthly in the Pioneer Club eNewsletter. If you are interested in being profiled or sharing suggestions on fellow retirees to showcase, please provide your contact information and details to us at oupioneerclub@oakland.edu.

Upcoming Events

Adam Estes, saxophone
Monday, September 26th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
Complimentary
[Click here for more info!](#)

Judd Family Endowed Fund Lecture
"Transwar Design" by Dr. Gennifer Weisenfeld
Thursday, September 29th, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
Meadow Brook Art Gallery
Complimentary
[Click here for more info!](#)

Oakland Symphony Orchestra
Sunday, October 2nd, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
Tickets \$20
[Click here for more info!](#)

Oakland University Chamber Orchestra
Tuesday, October 4th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
All seats \$8
[Click here for more info!](#)

The Scarlet Pimpernel
Saturday, October 8th, 8:00 - 11:00 p.m.
Varner Studio Theatre
Tickets \$20
[Click here for more info!](#)

Juilliard String Quartet with Tian Tian, Piano Chamber Music Society of Detroit at OU

Sunday, October 9th, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
Tickets \$30
[Click here for more info!](#)

2016 Maurice Brown Memorial Poetry Reading
Tuesday, October 11th, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Banquet Room A, Oakland Center
Complimentary
[Click here for more info!](#)

Oakland University Brass Band
Sunday, October 16th, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
All seats \$8
[Click here for more info!](#)

Mary Vanhoozer-Rodriguez, piano
Wednesday, October 19th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
Complimentary
[Click here for more info!](#)

Eisenhower Dance in On the Move
Sunday, October 23rd, 1:30 - 4:00 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
Tickets \$18
[Click here for more info!](#)

History Comes Alive Lecture Series
"Television and the Presidency: Eisenhower to Reagan" by Bruce Zellers
Tuesday, October 25th, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Banquet Room A, Oakland Center
Admission is free, but reservations are requested
To reserve your space, call (248) 370-3511 or email jkessler@oakland.edu
[Click here for more info!](#)

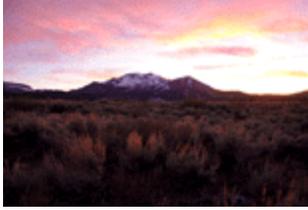
OU Bands Preview
Wednesday, October 26th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
All seats \$8
[Click here for more info!](#)

Oakland University Jazz Band and the Scott Gwinell Jazz Orchestra
Friday, October 28th, 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
Tickets \$14
[Click here for more info!](#)

About the Pioneer Club

The purpose of the Oakland University Pioneer Club is to provide social and educational opportunities to OU retirees and their spouses. It is our hope that this group will serve as a way for you to reconnect with former colleagues as well as maintain a relationship with OU. As a retiree, you remain a valued member of the University community.

SAVVY LIVING



Meal Service Delivery Options for People Who Don't Cook

What types of healthy meal delivery options can you recommend for individuals who don't cook and don't get out much? Since my mom passed away, my dad's diet is terrible and I worry about his

health. [Read More](#)

Oakland University, Office of Planned Giving, Anibal House 630 Pioneer Drive, Rochester, MI 48309-4401

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