



Wednesday, April 18, 2001

Ground broken, faculty honored at Founders' Day

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Oakland University's sixth annual Founders' Day Wednesday, April 18, featured two groundbreakings and a faculty recognition luncheon honoring OU's outstanding teachers and researchers.

About 200 people attended each of the groundbreakings for the new student apartments and the Education and Human Services Building. Both projects are expected to be completed in 2002.

Besides the groundbreakings, 20 faculty members were recognized for their teaching, scholarship and service accomplishments at the Faculty Recognition Luncheon. The 2001 award recipients for Teaching Excellence, Research Excellence and New Investigator Research Excellence also were announced.

The chilly, breezy conditions didn't stop about 200 people, including several students, from attending the 8:30 a.m. groundbreaking for the new student apartments, which will be located across from the upper playing fields and opposite the George T. Matthews Apartments.

The \$21 million project includes six, Tudor-style apartments and a central clubhouse. The 144 single-bedroom-unit apartments will house up to 459 residents, with two or four residents per unit. Residents can expect computer connections in each bedroom, cable television, kitchens and in-unit washers/dryers. The central clubhouse will have a manager's office, lounge, two fireplaces, a game room and a deck overlooking basketball and volleyball courts. Construction is expected to begin in August, with occupancy targeted for fall 2002.

Groundbreaking ceremonies began with speeches by Mary Beth Snyder, vice president of Student Affairs; Jennifer Wegner, vice president of University Student Congress; Eleanor Reynolds, director of University Housing; OU Board of Trustees member Penny Crissman; and OU President Gary D. Russi.

After ground was broken, the speakers planted an oak tree as a symbol of the university's continued growth and to honor the "Old Oaks," the original OU faculty.

Sophomore Kristen Baker, who is a resident assistant in North Hamlin Hall, was one of about 25 students to attend the ceremony.

"Everyone's excited, but especially all the freshmen on my floor," said Baker, who is majoring in secondary education. "I have a lot of confidence in it because the Business and Information Technology building went up so quickly. I looked at the drawings in the Oakland Center and like the different choices in rooms for two or four people."

The 3:30 p.m. groundbreaking for the Education and Human Services Building was held across the road, within view of the construction site. The four-story, 132,000-square-foot building will be located southeast of Varner Hall between the Varner Hall parking lot and Pioneer Drive. J.M. Olson Corporation of St. Clair Shores began site contouring for the building April 9 and expects to complete construction by August 2002. The project cost, shared by the university and the State of Michigan, is about \$31.5 million.

Speakers and ceremonial groundbreakers included Mary Otto, dean of the School of Education and Human Services; Vickie Pollmann, a Human Resource Development student; Dr. Walter Burt, Pontiac School District superintendent; Ann Nicholson, OU Board of Trustees chair; and OU President Gary Russi.

Luellen Ramey, chair of the Education Counseling Department, said she is looking forward to having all the SEHS programs consolidated under one roof.

"We're delighted at the new clinical facilities and that we'll be able to expand our services to the community and do more clinical research," she said. "Having this building will add more visibility to our programs. It will definitely be nice to bring the Lowry Child Care Center near the academic programs. We also needed expanded space in general. We've been hiring additional faculty members but had no place to put them. It will also be great to have a place for part-time instructors and doctoral students."

Founders' Day commemorates the formation of Oakland University in 1957, when Alfred and Matilda Dodge Wilson donated \$2 million and the 1,500-acre Meadow Brook estate to start a new college in Oakland County. The first classes at what was then named Michigan State University Oakland were held in 1959.

SUMMARY

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