

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

APPRECIATING INSPIRATION OF ARTS EDUCATION

March 2024

Two decades ago, the Max M. Fisher Music Center opened. Today, there's no question that it has truly lived up to its billing as a venue that brings together musical traditions, people, ideas, cultures and dreams.

Tonight is no different.

Tonight, we celebrate our talented music students, the musical traditions that have inspired them, and in turn, inspire us.

In this evening's program, you will hear a quality of musicianship that reflects the quality of music education at Oakland University, a true testament to our dedicated faculty and talented students.

Those of you who have come out to support our students must know that in many ways, tonight is possible because of you, and your generous support to the School of Music, Theatre and Dance.

In our ongoing effort to provide a first-class performing arts education, there have been extensive renovations to Varner Hall, which enhance our musical education offerings, including impressive rehearsal and performance spaces.

Beyond your support for arts education, your generosity is a vital part of building Oakland University.

At the end of January, we gathered to celebrate achieving the fundraising goal of our "Aspire. Advance. Achieve." campaign that began in November 2018. We aspired to raise more money than any other time in Oakland history. We advanced the mission of the university and enlisted the support of more than 60 percent of first-time contributors, a rate that far exceeds the average for first-time donors.

And, of course, we achieved the funding necessary to fund key initiatives, scholarships, endowments and programs; all while broadening our foundation of supporters, and making sure Oakland is affordable and accessible to students from all backgrounds and social strata.

Our successful campaign positions the university to respond to the inevitable and unforeseen challenges ahead as we continue to transform Oakland University as a preeminent 21st-century institution of higher learning.

Teamwork is at the core of building a university. And while our great teamwork and success of “Aspire. Advance. Achieve.” campaign can be judged in numbers, we must keep in mind that numbers alone do not tell the story.

Our story in which you play a central role is about the dedicated people who are determined to make a difference in writing the history of Oakland University.