

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

ALUMNI NIGHT OF EXCELLENCE

May 19, 2023

- Thank you, Judy.
- And thank you to the Oakland University Alumni Association and our Advancement team led by Mike Westfall for your tireless work to reach across Michigan and the country to connect with OU graduates.
- Our team does a great job in keeping connected to our more than 135,000 alumni who are the backbone of the Michigan economy, making a positive difference in their professions and communities around the country.
- We come together annually at the Alumni Night of Excellence as a way to demonstrate your connection to Oakland University...
 - ... and our ongoing appreciation for your achievements and how those achievements offer a bold and impressive testimony to the power of an Oakland University education.
- In many ways, you are the university's greatest ambassadors.
- Three quarters of our alumni live in Michigan.
- Two-third live in the tri-counties.
- And those of you who are active alumni play a vital role in making Oakland the university of choice....
 - Your selfless contributions as mentors, volunteers, donors and role models make up our many points of pride.
 - Thank you for your passion, support and proudly representing Oakland University.
 - You will hear about tonight's honorees who have made their mark, and represent the finest examples of dedication, hard work, and selflessness....
- There are so many wonderful stories of the impact our alumni.

- I'd like to share few inspiring stories:
 - Kendell Jefferson is a 2018 graduate of our criminal justice program.
 - She advanced from a Rookie Officer to a Neighborhood Police Officer with the Detroit Police Department and now helps run the Detroit Community Closet.
 - Kendell is working with a team that is providing food and clothing to those in need in the local community. It's part of fostering a healthy relationship between the police department and the neighborhood.
- Another example of an OU alumni making a difference....
- Dr. Peter Schihl serves as the United States Army's Senior Research Scientist in Ground Vehicle Propulsion and Mobility at the Combat Capabilities Development Command Ground Vehicle Systems Center.
 - He is among the top propulsion engineers in the US Army.
 - Peter received his masters and his bachelor's degrees in Mechanical and Systems Engineering from Oakland University.
- Kendell and Peter's stories are just two examples – and tonight you will hear many more - of the ways our alumni are making positive differences in our communities and beyond.
- I also want to take a few moments to give you an overview of some of the many exciting developments at Oakland...
- There are exciting transformations occurring that I think will make you quite proud.
 - Construction is progressing rapidly on South Foundation Hall, a place where all students during their time at OU have attended class.
 - Classrooms and rehearsal space are being added to Varner Hall, and when the renovation is completed, Oakland will offer performing arts students a more enriching learning experience.
 - A state-of-the art Welcome Center is also planned to complement Meadow Brook Hall, one of the country's cultural jewels.
 - A new façade and renovated interior at O'Dowd Hall will make the OUWB Medical School a distinctive campus landmark.
 - A month ago, the engineering research building opened, where our talented faculty are collaborating with a range of industries.
 - Our west campus, which features an expansive 140,000-square-foot building strategically positions OU to elevate our reputation as a talent pipeline for the region's healthcare industry.

- **We have partnered with Corewell on a nearly \$21M in scholarships to attract and graduate nurses, and a few months ago, we announced a partnership with Easterseals MORC to increase the number of social workers in the region.**
- **On June 2, Oakland will host the annual climate summit. At the event, we will announce a gift that will allow us to establish a director of sustainability position. And in the near future, we hope to create a blueprint for a more sustainable university campus.**
- **These are just a few of the many reasons to be encouraged by our progress and connected to Oakland University.**
- **We take great pride that we were there at the beginning of your journey...and we consider it an honor to be with you every subsequent stage of your life.**
- **We are so proud of each of tonight's honorees -- along with OU alumni everywhere – for representing the promise and legacy of Oakland University.**
- **Now, I'd like to invite you all to enjoy dinner and we'll begin our awards program shortly.**

Event Schedule

6 Reception

7:15 Begin program with remarks from Erin, Judy and Ora

7:35 Dinner

8:45 Begin award ceremony

9:45 Ceremony concludes

I now request DEAN MEWA to come forward to assist with the investiture.