

Longtime employee Beth Talbert honored with Googasian Award

Beth Talbert, a longtime Oakland University employee and community leader, recently earned the 2017 Phyllis Law Googasian Award for outstanding contributions to the advancement of women.

Talbert was honored April 11 during the 25th annual Phyllis Law Googasian and Women and Gender Studies Award Luncheon. Members of her family were in attendance, along with university leaders, colleagues, and university trustee emerita Phyllis Law Googasian, for whom the award is named.

Award presenters Valerie Palmer-Mehta and Maura Selahowski lauded Talbert for her leadership efforts on campus and in the Rochester community, where she resides. Her 28-year career at OU includes a variety of leadership roles in faculty and administration. Currently, she is a special instructor of communication, chief adviser for the communication program and co-chair of the Experienced Professionals subgroup of OU's Women's Employee Resource Group.

"Beth is the type of person who inspires others through the sheer force of her positive example," said Palmer-Mehta, an associate professor of communication and a past recipient of the Googasian Award. "In all things, Beth gives the best of herself as she seeks solutions to the problems that we face and works earnestly to make whatever she's part of better."

Talbert is also director and founding chair of OU's Women's Leadership Institute, which creates unique, research-based leadership learning opportunities for women. The institute held its inaugural conference in 2016, bringing local and national women leaders to campus to share their experience and knowledge on leadership and career-related topics.

Along with her service to OU, Talbert has served on the Rochester Board of Education since 2007. She was previously elected president, president and treasurer of the organization and currently serves as its secretary. In addition, has served as a board member for the Rochester Downtown Development Authority, Rochester Area Youth Assistance, Rochester Community Schools Foundation and the Young Leaders Initiative. She is active with the Women Officials' Network, a community-based advocacy organization dedicated to encouraging women to become involved in public policy through elected and appointed office.

"She makes people grow beyond their own expectations," said Selahowski, assistant director of Marketing and Business Operations for University Recreation and Well-Being. "It's just part of her DNA."

Quoting from a nomination letter, Selahowski added, "We are fortunate that there are a number of people on campus who champion women's leadership, but there are few people who put that passion into action like Beth Talbert. She is a treasure to the university."

Talbert was also cited as the "driving force" behind a campaign to officially designate November 4 as Matilda R. Dodge Wilson Day in the state of Michigan. This effort culminated in a resolution being passed in the Michigan legislature, bringing more visibility to Wilson's pioneering leadership, not only as the founder of Oakland University, but also as the first woman to serve as a lieutenant governor in the United States.

In her acceptance remarks, Talbert reflected on her career and urged others, especially women, to get involved in public service, pursue their dreams and stand together.

"Don't be afraid. Figure out what you want and then go for it," she said. "We don't have to be afraid, because we are formidable when we stand together."

Established in 1992, the Phyllis Law Googasian Award is jointly presented by Oakland University and the American Council on Education Network for Women Leaders. It recognizes a member of the university community who has contributed to advancement of women through distinguished leadership, scholarship, advocacy, mentoring and program development.



Googasian award winner Beth Talbert, left, is pictured with OU trustee emerita Phyllis Law Googasian, for whom the award is named. Presented since 1992, the award recognizes members of the OU community for outstanding contributions to the advancement of women.