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OU alumnus Charlie Gross keeps the grizzly spirit alive in South Dakota

By **Katie Land**, news editor

With little more information about Oakland University than a recommendation and an acceptance letter, Charlie Gross began an educational journey in the 1960's that still fills him with school pride.

Born and raised in Yankton, South Dakota, Gross heard about Oakland through a friend from Detroit and decided to take the plunge, pursuing a major in English and social studies, with a minor in education.

"I was told that Oakland was an intellectually challenging school," Gross said. "That was a major understatement. My time at school was an outstanding experience and an eye-opening experience, especially for a small town student from South Dakota."

Since his graduation in 1969, Gross has been a bank branch manager, a bank executive vice president, a commercial loan officer and a trust officer. He spent 15 years as a city commissioner and four years as mayor back in his South Dakota hometown, while teaching as a college adjunct instructor for 12 years.

These days, Gross balances a position as financial advisor with Raymond James Financial Services at First Dakota National Bank, continues his work as a city commissioner, and teaches at Mount Marty College.

"Oakland, in the late 1960's, was an incredible place to be during that time in our country's history," Gross said. "Oakland had great professors who took an interest in the personal development of their students, as well as their academic and intellectual development."

Gross keeps those professors in mind while teaching his own students now, recalling many who helped to influence him throughout his life.

"Professor Ahmad admonished us with a challenge to "READ, READ, READ," he continued. "Now I do that with every class. Oakland was a great experience for me."

Always keeping the Grizzly spirit alive, Gross has encouraged his two daughters and any other South Dakotans to consider Oakland in their college searches. This year, he even took the trip to watch the men's basketball tournament finals this year.

For more information about Oakland's programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, visit the Web site at oakland.edu/cas.

SUMMARY

South Dakota alumnus Charlie Gross keeps busy as a financial advisor, city commissioner, college instructor and die hard grizzly fan.

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