

Monday, January 11, 2010

18th annual Keeper of the Dream Celebration set for Jan. 18

By **Katie Land**, news editor

Oakland University will celebrate diversity, culture and community during the 18th annual Keeper of the Dream Scholarship Awards Celebration at 11:30 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 18, in the Oakland Center's Banquet Rooms.

Each year, these scholarships pay tribute to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his achievements on behalf of civil rights. They honor undergraduate students who have contributed and promoted interracial understanding and good will.

The 2010 awards will go to Chelsea Grimmer, an English major; Juquatta Brewer, a psychology major; and Melissa DeGrandis, a communications major.

All three students have demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities through their involvement both on campus and in the community. They also have helped breakdown cultural stereotypes and promoted interracial understanding.

Magazine publishing legend, Susan L. Taylor, editor emeritus of Essence magazine, will present the keynote address during the awards celebration. For nearly three decades, Taylor was the driving force behind Essence magazine – as its fashion and beauty editor, editor-in-chief and editorial director. She also is renowned for her contributions to the forward movement of the African American community.

"Ms. Taylor's significant achievements make her an inspiration and a dynamic role model for the students receiving the Keeper of the Dream award," said Omar Brown-El, director of the Center for Multicultural Initiatives, which hosts the event. "She began her career at Essence as a single mother working part-time. Through hard work, creativity and perseverance, she eventually became vice-president of the magazine's publisher, Essence Communications, proving that if you set your mind on a dream, you can accomplish it."

A steady increase in corporate contributions has made it possible to increase the initial level of awards from two \$1,000 scholarships in 1993 to several \$5,000 scholarships. More than fifty students from a wide variety of academic disciplines have been awarded scholarships since its inception.

Named scholarship supporters are Beaumont Hospitals, the Keeper of the Dream Foundation and the Oakland University Alumni Association. Other sponsors include Thomas M. Cooley Law School, Watson Wyatt and Company, the OU Branch of the MSU Federal Credit Union and POH Medical Center.

The KOD scholarship presentation marks the unofficial launch of Oakland's African American History Month. The opening ceremony will be held at 1 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 18, ushering in a series of events such as the keynote address of Hubert G. Locke, dean and professor emeritus at the University of Washington; the Taste of Africa Gala; and a performance by the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company.

For more information about the Keeper of the Dream event, please call the Center for Multicultural Initiatives at (248) 370-4404 or visit oakland.edu/kod.

SUMMARY

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