

Monday, April 19, 2010

MBA alum values degree, gives back to OU

For David Sokol, supporting Oakland University with a bequest was a way to say thank you to the many generous donors who had given before him and helped build the programs that gave him so much as a graduate student in the late 1990s. "To me, Oakland University exists not just because of the tuition that people pay, but because of the many people who contributed to create OU so that it was there for me and other students when we needed it," Sokol says. "Great schools don't happen with just tuition dollars."

After earning his undergraduate degree in engineering from West Point, Sokol began working in the field of human resources. After relocating to Michigan in 1996, he became interested in OU's then newly-conceived MBA program and enrolled in 1997. While working full-time, Sokol earned his MBA, specializing in human resources, and immediately saw results. "It helped me gain a lot of credibility as an HR professional, especially with my employer," Sokol says.

Today, he is a vice president with Humana, one of the nation's largest health and supplemental benefits companies. "If I'd just had my engineering degree and not the MBA from OU, I never would have been considered for my current role at Humana."

A resident of Rochester, Mich., Sokol believes that Oakland University plays a significant role in the community's quality of life and is grateful to work for an employer who encourages community involvement. As a result, in 2006 when he was invited to join the School of Education and Human Services (SEHS) Resource Development board, he immediately agreed and now serves as vice chair.

Giving back to OU in the form of a bequest made good financial sense for Sokol. "I'm a single dad with three kids, trying to save for my kids' future right now but through planned giving, whether it's a life insurance policy or investments, it's a sign of commitment to the organization. And hopefully, my gift will grow as we get past these family milestones."

And in the future when his unrestricted gift comes to fruition, Sokol says he hopes it adds to the university's continued success "I hope OU does well, grows and thrives because it's part of my community."

This article was originally published in the Fall 2009 issue of *OU Magazine*. To read it, and other articles, click [here](#).

SUMMARY

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