

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

MBH VISITOR CENTER CAMPAIGN RECEPTION

March 28, 2022

- Welcome to the campaign launch of the Meadow Brook Estate Visitor Center expansion project.
- We are so pleased that Ann Nicholson, a great friend and patron to the university and former trustee, is Thank you, Ann for all you have done and continue to do for Oakland.
- Thank you to our supporters, including many cornerstone members, for your support and annual gifts to the university.
- And my deep appreciation to Mike Westfall, our vice president of Advancement, and Bill Matt, executive director of Meadow Brook Hall for their leadership.... and for guiding us through the exciting changes ahead for our great estate.
- Also here this evening are Gene Hopkins and Tamara Burns, architects and historic preservations from the architectural firm Hopkins and Burns.
 - In a few minutes, we'll learn about their designs to enhance the visitor experience at Meadow Brook Hall, a design that is essential for us to expand our audience, educational programming and take our great cultural treasure to the next level.

< P A U S E >

- There really is no other audience that better understands the need and potential for the development of the Meadow Brook Hall Visitor Center than those of you gathered here this evening.
- Those of us here tonight know the incredible treasure that we have in Meadow Brook Hall....and what it could mean if and when we make it more accessible to a greater audience of people.... and a new generation.
- It's worth noting that the mansion was built between 1926 and 1929 by Matilda Dodge Wilson.... and is the fourth largest historic mansion museum in the United States.
 - Meadow Brook Hall is classified as one of America's castles.... and was designated a national historic landmark in 2012.
 - We are surrounded by history.... and a great building that reflects excellence and cultural significance.... A building that represents greatness and inspires us.

- Given that March is “Women’s History Month,” I think it’s timely to note that Matilda Dodge Wilson was an extremely strong and visionary woman.
 - She was the first woman to serve as Lieutenant Governor of a S. State (as Michigan’s first lieutenant governor).
 - After all, it was Matilda Dodge Wilson’s vision for higher education that has led all of us to be here today- to the foundation of Oakland University.... Her vision continues to guide us.
- And, it’s important to mention that our vision for Meadow Brook Hall is to preserve and share the story of the Wilson-Dodge family... and their legacy.
 - We are here tonight to invite you to participate in preserving our historical heritage.
- Oakland University’s history, identity, and in many ways, our future is tied to the elevated presence of Meadow Brook Hall as one of the great cultural jewels in Michigan and America.
- As stewards of place, we have a responsibility....
- As stewards of place, we have a challenge...
- So, as stewards of place, we must understand there comes a time when we must work together to make sure that the Meadow Brook Hall that has been handed down to us will be handed down to inspire future generations.
- Before us is an opportunity to further elevate Meadow Brook Hall, and by doing that, to raise the long-term profile and prospects of Oakland University.
- We ask you to invest in a tangible way in our future.... An investment so that we can enhance the “inspiring experience of visiting Meadow Brook Hall.”
- In making an investment, we will expand our audience, increase the scope and reach of our educational programming and preserve the stories of Matilda Dodge Wilson and her family, whose vision and generosity established the foundation upon which we stand.
- Thank for being such loyal supporters...