

inside OAKLAND

A newsletter for Oakland University colleagues

September 2001

Larabell wins AP award

Vicki Larabell's name is synonymous with dedication and service to Oakland University, say those who nominated her for OU's Outstanding Administrative Professional (AP) Award. With such testimony and a long record of cooperation and service to the community and university, Larabell, associate director, Information Technology Institute (ITI), won the award on July 10, 2001. A \$1,000 stipend from the OU Foundation and the award are given annually to an administrative professional for outstanding achievement in his or her role. The honor goes to those who have a record of

community and university service and extraordinary effort and cooperation in support of departmental and university goals.

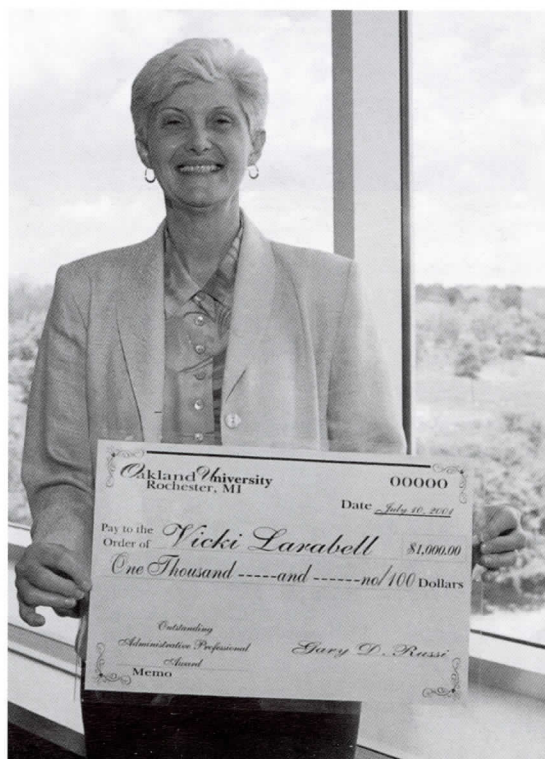
Larabell has served as an AP for 14 years. Before that, she worked for 12 years as a clerical/technical employee. Her nominators say Larabell has met many challenges along the way, including coordinating the launch of Oakland's first 10 Web-only courses.

Supporters cite her many other achievements and contributions, including serving on the AP Assembly Executive Committee, AP Association, and many search committees. She also served

as an adjunct faculty member for OU's continuing education programs, Rochester Adult Education, and currently teaches HRD 309, Information Management Systems, for the School of Education and Human Services (SEHS).

"Vicki has a deep passion for Oakland," supporters say, "and her presence has been to the betterment of its students, staff and faculty in ways few others can match."

"It has been wonderful to have the opportunity to work in so many different divisions on campus, to have been able to do such a variety of interesting things, and to meet so many talented CTs, APs and faculty members," Larabell says. "I learned so much from all of them. When I found out about this award, I just wanted to share it with everyone."



Vicki Larabell

¡Miranos!

Hispanic Celebration 2001 puts Latino achievements in the OU spotlight

Look at us! In English, that's the meaning of ¡Miranos! the theme of Oakland University's Hispanic Celebration 2001 – ¡Miranos!: Building on the Strength of Our Past. What event organizers hope you will see is the growing presence of Hispanics on campus and the contributions Hispanics have made to the world throughout history.

In the last few years, Hispanic Celebration has become a tradition at OU. Held in conjunction with national Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15 through Oct. 15), the event has brought Oakland students, faculty and staff together to celebrate the influence of Hispanic culture in our communities, to recognize the achievements of Hispanics and to deepen our appreciation for diversity.

Lisa Westfall CAS '99, advising assistant, Office of Equity, led a committee of OU students and staff, whose goal for 2001 was to present a creative, exciting event with strong educational components for the entire university community – including Hispanic students.

"I think it's absolutely critical to Hispanic students," says Westfall. "I have not seen a lot of unity among Hispanic students on campus. Sometimes Latino students don't identify that way. The celebration is one way to get them involved with their heritage and with each other."

Raised in "Mexican Town" on Detroit's southwest side, Westfall grew up speaking Spanish at home.

"But I was starved for more of my culture," she says, "especially when I came to OU and learned I was one of only one percent. I'd like to see students join together and educate the university community about the contributions of Hispanics."

Faculty get involved in a number of ways. Several, for instance, have incorporated the celebration into their courses.

"About eight are including it in their Modern Languages and Literatures classes," says Westfall. "And there are several others from Latin Studies and Political Science," she notes. "One of the biggest challenges to putting on this event was creating and finalizing a calendar in advance so that faculty could include it in their curricula."

Others lend their expertise or influence.



State Rep. Belda Garza will speak at the opening ceremony.

"Carlos Borrego was in close contact with State Rep. Belda Garza (D-MI-8) – that's how she came to be invited to deliver remarks at the opening ceremony, and to accept," Westfall says. "She's a dynamic speaker on the subject of Latinos in higher education."

Garza made Michigan legislative history in 1998 when she became the first Hispanic Democrat elected to the Michigan Legislature.

"The Spicer-Escalantes (Juan Pablo and his wife, Maria, both assistant professors of Spanish, Modern Languages and Literatures) lent us the maximum support possible. We get a lot of support from faculty and staff in general," Westfall says.

This year, the celebration

¡Miranos! Events

Sept. 15 Latin Rhythms Night. 7-11 p.m. Oakland Center Gold Rooms A, B and C.

Sept. 17 Opening Ceremonies. Formal kickoff with remarks by State Rep. Belda Garza. Noon-1:30 p.m. Fireside Lounge.

Sept. 19 Cultural Showcase. Learn about various aspects of Latino culture.

Sept. 20 "Are Hispanics from Hispania?" Listen as Latino students share what the term "Hispanic" means to them. Noon-1 p.m. Fireside Lounge.

Sept. 24 La Comida de Las Americas. Enjoy a variety of ethnic dishes and learn about their origins. Noon-1 p.m. Gold Rooms A, B and C.

Sept. 26 Latin politics discussion with Prof. Alan Epstein. Noon-1 p.m. Fireside Lounge.

Oct. 2 Deadline for essay contest. All entries due in 121 NFH by 5 p.m.

Oct. 4 Hispanic Craft night. Design your own set of maracas. 8-9 p.m. Vandenburg cafeteria.

Oct. 5 Closing Ceremonies. Essay contest winners announced. Remarks by OU President Gary D. Russi and Sen. Valde Garcia. Noon-1:30 p.m. Fireside Lounge.

has grown from five to nine days. Scheduled activities include a tastefest featuring a variety of ethnic dishes, a presentation on the legal system in Latin American countries led by Alan Epstein, a special lecturer in the Department of Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences, and a panel discussion on what the term "Hispanic" means to students, facilitated by Juan Pablo Spicer-Escalante.

New this year will be Latin Rhythms Night, where traditional dance performances, a

dance floor and live Latin music will be featured. A student essay contest with a first prize of \$500 also has been added.

What's the best part for Westfall, who has participated for the last three years?

"It's great watching people enjoy what we've planned," she says. "Seeing people take something from the event that isn't food or a mug. We like to see people walk away with something more – like a better appreciation for Hispanic contributions to the United States and the world."



Helen Ellison exercises in the Recreation Center.

bits and PIECES

Heart Walk 2001

Members of the OU community are raising awareness and funds for the American Heart Association Heart Walk to be held on campus Sept. 22.

Dress Down Days have given staffers the opportunity to get comfortable every Thursday and make a donation. And teams of walkers have formed all over campus to help OU raise a record \$1.65 million and attract at least 17,000 walkers to this year's event.

Trustee Henry Baskin has pledged \$500 in support of the Heart Walk. He also has issued a challenge to other members of the Oakland University Board of Trustees to match his gift.

C&M staffers win IABC awards

Jennifer Charney, staff writer, and Debbie Patrick, editorial director, Communications and Marketing, won 2001 IABC [International Association of Business Communicators]/Detroit Renaissance awards for their work on *Inside Oakland*.

Charney won an Award of Merit in the News Writing category. Patrick won an Award of Merit for print communication in the Newsletters 1- to 3-color category.

OUTAS wins national diversity award

The Oakland University Trustee Academic Success program was among seven universities nationwide chosen to receive the 2001 Noel-Levitz Retention Excellence Award. The award recognizes higher education programs that keep students in school and support their efforts to graduate. Students who take advantage of Oakland's OUTAS program have a higher rate of graduation compared to the total population. The retention rate for OUTAS students in the class of 2000, for instance, reached 88 percent compared to 76 percent for the total population.

Softball team captures Mid-Con title

The Oakland University softball team defeated IUPUI to win the Mid-Continent Conference regular season championship for the first time in May. The team ended the regular season with a 24-27 record and was 16-6 in the conference. Freshman Jaymie Voss, a designated player/pitcher, earned the Mid-Con's Newcomer of the Year award. Softball Coach Steve Ogg was named Coach of the Year.



Erika Burns

oakland WAY OF LIFE

Day One

Inside Oakland is partnering with the Meadow Brook Health Enhancement Institute (MBHEI) and three members of the OU community to bring you a special series called Day One. In this series, which will appear in each issue of *Inside Oakland*, from September 2001 through May 2002, you will read about three individuals who have decided to take their health into their own hands.

Inside Oakland will follow the three, from their initial MBHEI evaluations, where health and fitness issues are identified and explained, through their progress with the MBHEI programs and interventions they undertake to resolve or improve health or fitness concerns.

The institute has earned a national reputation for its preventive medicine programs under the leadership of Fred Stransky, PhD, director. Through evaluation, intervention and education, the institute's physicians, dietitians and exercise science specialists help participants assume more responsibility for their health. Programs emphasize exercise, nutrition, weight control, stress management and avoidance of caffeine, nicotine and alcohol to prevent disease and foster the feeling of well-being.

Our primary goal here is to show the OU community that good health, like learning, is a lifelong pursuit that can be fun as well as beneficial. And it can be accomplished right here on campus through resources available at the institute. We at *Inside Oakland* hope this series inspires you to pursue a healthy way of life. The toughest part for many on the road to good health is getting started.

"The final frontier"

Lifestyle Changer #1: Helen Ellison, assistant director, Diversity and Compliance

Age: 49

Weight: 182 lbs.

Goal: To lose 30 lbs.

"The final frontier" is how Helen Ellison once described her weight.

"I've accomplished a lot in my life through determination," she says. "I recognized that my weight was not at a place that felt comfortable, so I made up my mind to do something about it."

What Ellison did was seek out Fred Stransky, PhD, director of the Meadow Brook Health Enhancement Institute. After talking with Stransky, she made an appointment for an MBHEI evaluation and got started.

The evaluation consisted of a stress test, vision and hearing tests, a urinalysis, blood test, a thorough documentation of family medical history, and more. The complete results were shared with Ellison as well as an analysis of the results and recommendations for interventions.

Ellison started a program to bring her weight down and get more exercise. You will now find her at the Recreation Center or walking on campus several times a week. How's she doing? In a journal she agreed to share with *Inside Oakland*, she wrote:

"I entered the program because I needed a lifestyle change. Last September, I started going to the [Recreation Center] and doing weight training. To my surprise, I really enjoyed it – and I still do! I had made major changes in my eating years ago but I knew I still needed to do some additional things, so I contacted Dr. Stransky.

"When I contacted him, I had no idea of the depth of what he had done in writing his book [*The Good News About Nutrition, Exercise and Weight Control*]. It was not until I began the program and read major portions of the book that I realized how beneficial this would be for me. I truly understand the fat content of foods now; it is amazing how much fat is in food. I look at the total fat content now in everything, including when I go to a restaurant. I tell them how I want my food prepared. For example, if I have a grilled chicken breast, I will tell them not to use any oil in preparing it – if [the meat] starts to stick, just add a little water. This knowledge has been great.

"This is not a diet, it is a lifestyle change, and because it is a lifestyle change, it is not easy. I have had to look at not just what I eat, but why I am eating a particular thing at that particular time. I am working on eating always at the table at home and not in front of the TV, which has been a bad habit. But ... I can change and make new ones. I have lost inches more than weight – although I have had some weight loss. It is slower than the diet programs that are on the market.

"My goals are to reduce one dress size and remain there and to stop taking hypertension medication. I am not interested in becoming "Barbie" – only healthy. This is hard work. It takes consistency to make new habits. I hope [sharing my experience] helps someone else."

In October, *Inside Oakland* will introduce you to Gabrielle Stryker, our second participant, and another MBHEI program, and check in on Ellison's progress.

Got a message for Helen? Send words of encouragement via e-mail to ellison@oakland.edu.

Making the grade

Learning Resources helps students succeed

Junior Sasha Archer says she wants nothing more than to become a veterinarian. The OU biology major doubted her abilities in a couple of courses, so in the winter 2001 semester, she sought tutoring at the Academic Skills Center (ASC). Peer Tutor Mychal Thom helped her two to three times a week to learn the biology and chemistry she needed to make her dream come true.

"The tutoring has made an incredible difference in the way I study and take tests," Archer says. "Not only have my grades improved, but my retention skills have doubled. I think I would have been in some trouble without the extra help. Now that I have a better understanding in these subjects, I am more motivated than ever to reach my goal."

Spurring such motivation and improvement is a major goal of the ASC, one of six units of the Department of Learning Resources, Division of Student Affairs. All six – Student Success Services, Project Upward Bound, GEAR-UP, King/Chavez/Parks College Day Program, Wade H. McCree Incentive Scholarship Program and the ASC – provide academic support to students. The pre-college programs also foster social and cultural development.

Led by Lynn Hockenberger, director, Learning Resources has a multifaceted mission: it provides community outreach programs and services that

help pre-college students prepare for higher education; it assists in the recruitment of a diverse student body; and it provides strong retention programs and services for OU students.

During the 1999-2000 academic year, Learning Resources staff won federal and state grants totaling more than \$1.1 million. The 2000-2001 academic year brought new staff, programs and locations.

The ASC has undergone the most significant change; six out of seven of its staff members are new. The center offers services, including peer tutoring in most 100- and 200-level undergraduate courses, Supplemental Instruction in mathematics and chemistry, study skills seminars and specialized services for students who have learning disabilities.

In September 2000, responsibility for determining the probation and dismissal status of students was turned over to the ASC; the Office of the Registrar had performed that duty. Now, Charles Clark, ASC director, works with the OU Senate Academic Standing and Honors Committee to determine probation or dismissal status. At the other extreme, the ASC is now also responsible for notifying students of their honors status.

Clark has plans for the ASC. They include developing new ways to administer Probation Outreach, a mandatory, proactive program for students with a cumulative grade point



Charles Clark Jr.

GET TO KNOW

Charles Clark Jr.

Education:

MA, Counseling Services, 1983, BA, Communication, minor in Sociology, 1981 Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

Experience:

Director, Comprehensive Studies Program, Pennsylvania State University; Chair, Commission On Racial/Ethnic Diversity, Pennsylvania State University; Assistant Director of Student Affairs, Altoona College, Altoona

Contact information:

103 NFH; extension 4215; www2.oakland.edu/asc

average below 2.0.

Clark also plans to start additional classes in Collegiate Communication (COM 101) to accommodate first-year probation students. In that eight-week, one-credit course, students are taught how successful communication and relationship development can improve their chances of academic and personal success.

Among other innovations, the ASC is exploring ways to integrate computer technology into the delivery of services. Online bulletin boards, for instance, may be established to post student questions and strategies for completing work in certain classes.

The ASC also provides valuable experience for tutors, who are among the 150 students employed by Learning Resources. Sophomore Susan Pillars, a women's studies major, tutors students in biology, physical anthropology and rhetoric.

"I get to utilize the skills that I have in these subjects by helping others," she says. "I think that a lot of students may not want to go to their professors because there is sometimes a gap there, perhaps a feeling of inadequacy. By being able to go to a peer for help, I feel that some of these uncomfortable feelings are avoided."

Additional Learning Resources offices and programs

- **GEAR-UP** (Varner House) provides tutoring, counseling, mentoring and Saturday Academies for students at Jefferson/Whittier Middle School in Pontiac and professional development for teachers. The program, funded by a multimillion dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education, is a collaborative effort of the School of Education and Human Services and the Division of Student Affairs.

• King/Chavez/Parks College Day Program

provides opportunities for sixth- through 12-grade students, primarily from Detroit, Highland Park, Oak Park, Southfield, Pontiac and Flint, to meet with OU student mentors, learn about the admissions and financial aid processes and tour the campus and residence halls.

- **Wade H. McCree Jr. Scholarship Program** offers academic, social and cultural enrichment to high school students to help them meet the criteria for the McCree four-year, full-tuition and fee scholarship to Oakland.

- **Student Success Services** (121 VBH) provides supplemental services such as academic, personal and career counseling, tutoring, faculty mentors and a summer bridge program to disadvantaged college students at Oakland to help them remain in school and graduate.

- **Project Upward Bound** (261 SFH) prepares participants to succeed in postsecondary education. It serves disadvantaged students from Pontiac and Royal Oak Township. The project remains one of the largest single-source grants at OU; it also is the oldest grant at Oakland, having been awarded continuously since 1967.

employee of the MONTH



April 2001

EMPLOYEE: Darlene Mathiak

TITLE: Administrative Secretary

DEPARTMENT: Health Sciences

LENGTH OF SERVICE: 13 years

COMMENTS:

"Darlene has worked in the physical therapy program for more than 10 years and although she has always been a dedicated employee, her performance over the past year

has been particularly outstanding. During this time she has taken on additional responsibilities in the absence of our second clerical staff member. Once a new staff member was hired, Darlene was instrumental in the training and orientation of this individual. In addition, she has provided invaluable assistance in the completion of our self-study accreditation report for the American Physical Therapy Association.

"On a daily basis, Darlene provides those little extras that make working at Oakland a pleasant experience. She currently serves as a university ambassador, welcoming new employees to Oakland. On several occasions, Darlene has gone above and beyond, working evenings and weekends, to contribute to the success of program activities, such as our hooding ceremony and pre-PT open house.

"On a more personal note, faculty, students and staff recognize and appreciate Darlene's positive and upbeat attitude in the face of recent changes and challenges."

campus REGISTRY of distinction



Karen Sheridan, above right, in a scene from *Dancing at Lughnasa* with (from left) Kate Willinger and Kelly Pino.

Robert F. Anderson, assistant professor, English, had his essay, "Ruinous Mixture: Godwin, Enclosure and the Associated Self," published in a special issue of *Studies in Romanticism to William Godwin*.

Eddie Cheng, associate professor, and **Marc J. Lipman**, professor and chair, Mathematics and Statistics, had their paper titled "Vulnerability Issues of Star Graphs, Alternating Group Graphs and Split-stars: Strength and Toughness," accepted for publication by the *Journal of Discrete Applied Mathematics*.

Todd Estes, associate professor, History, will have his article, "George Washington and the Art of Presidential Leadership," published in the Summer 2001 issue of the refereed journal *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. He also presented a paper and organized a panel on transatlantic republican political thought at the most recent meeting of the American Historical Association in Boston.

Robert Justin Goldstein, professor, Political Science, has been invited to become a research associate at the Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Michigan. In addition, Goldstein's 1976 book, *Political Repression in Modern America*, has been reprinted by the University of Illinois Press with a new preface and an updated bibliography.

Kevin T. Grimm, associate professor, English, had "The Love and Envy of Sir Palomides" published in *Arthuriana*, vol. 11, no. 2 (summer 2001), pp. 65-74. Grimm also presided at a conference session titled "Arthuriana" at the 36th International Congress on Medieval Studies in May in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Chris Kobus, visiting assistant professor, and Gilbert Wedekind, John F. Dodge chair and professor, Engineering and Computer Science, received the Best Overall Paper Award at the 2001 ASEE North Central Section Annual Conference for their

paper, "Design in the Curriculum: Design of a Concentric-Tube Thermal Energy Recuperator for Optimal Cost Savings."

Don Mayer, associate dean for external programs and assessment, SBA, had his article, "Community, Business Ethics, and Global Capitalism" published in the *American Business Law Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 15-260. It is the lead article in the journal's special issue on business ethics.

Michael Mitchell, assistant professor, Music Theatre and Dance, has been elected director of the State High School SATB Honors Choir for 2002. The choir is sponsored by the Michigan School Vocal Music Association and made up of high school singers from throughout the state who compete to be members. The choir director each year is chosen by a nomination and vote of the school vocal music teachers in the state. Mitchell is the first OU faculty member to be nominated or selected for this honor.

Jude V. Nixon, associate professor, English, presented a paper titled "Proud Possession of the English Nation: Carlyle, Public Philanthropy, and Samuel Johnson's God-Daughter" at the University of Edinburgh's Carlyle, Europe and Great Britain Conference in Scotland in April. He also chaired a session. Nixon then went on to Rome to give two invited lectures at the University of Pescara, Italy, in April titled "Death Blots Black Out: Apocalyptic Anxiety in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins," and "Eternity in the Vesture of Time: Carlyle, Thermodynamic Discourse, and Apocalyptic Anxieties."

Stuart Rose, facilities planner, Capital Planning and Design, graduated from Wayne State University with a master's degree in Urban Planning.

Karen Sheridan, associate professor, Music, Theatre and Dance, won the *Detroit Free Press* Theatre Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role in the Meadow Brook Theatre production of *Dancing at Lughnasa* last season (see photo above).

The Department of Music, Theatre and Dance had several faculty members nominated for Detroit Music Awards this year. Nominated were: **Nadine DeLeury**, for best classical instrumentalist; **Barbara Bland**, for Best Classical Vocalist; **Lettie Alston**, for Best Classical Composer; and **Dave Daniels**, professor emeritus, with the Warren Symphony, for Outstanding Community Orchestra.

Flavio Varani, professor, Music, Theatre and Dance, won a Detroit Music Award in April for Outstanding Classical Instrumentalist.

Robert A. Wiggins, associate professor, Curriculum, Instruction and Leadership, has been named an American Council on Education (ACE) fellow for the 2001-2002 academic year. Established in 1965, the ACE Fellows Program is designed to strengthen institutions and leadership in American higher education by identifying and preparing promising faculty and senior administrators for responsible positions in college and university administration.

The News @ OU

Inside Oakland is changing. In the months ahead, you will find the latest news on the new Web site, www.3oakland.edu/oakland/newsinfo. Feature stories on programs, special events and individuals will be covered in a new *Inside Oakland*. Submit timely news items to: thenews@oakland.edu.



INSIDE OAKLAND is published for the faculty and staff of Oakland University by the University

Communications and Marketing Department (C&M).

Newsletter Staff: Debbie Patrick, editorial director; Sheila Carpenter, editorial assistant; Jennifer Charney, staff writer; Dennis Collins, campus photographer; Lynn Metzker, graphic designer; and Ann Ruppenthal, media relations assistant.

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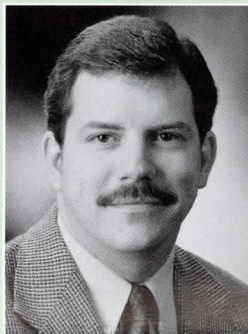
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DEADLINES

Submit items for publication no later than October 15, 2001 for the winter issue.

employee of the MONTH

May 2001



EMPLOYEE: Steve Szalay

TITLE: Electronic Resources Manager

DEPARTMENT: Office of Research and Graduate Study

LENGTH OF SERVICE: One year

COMMENTS:

"Steve has provided a great deal of guidance and technical assistance to the staff of the Office of Graduate Study during our reorganization process. Steve has always given assistance with an enormous amount of patience in spite of his tremendous workload. He is interested in and committed to our goal of increasing graduate enrollment. Improved technology in the Office of Graduate Study will help provide better customer service and contribute to increased enrollment. Steve is a valuable asset to our office and a valued co-worker."

"Steve Szalay deserves the recognition of Employee of the Month for his dedication and drive in providing Research and Graduate Study with the technical tools necessary to improve operations, marketing and reporting. Steve has a refreshingly positive attitude about opportunities for improving our electronic resources. I have yet to hear 'we can't do that' from Steve."

calendar of EVENTS

- Now** Dodge Brothers Motor Cars Exhibition. Through September 30 at Meadow Brook Hall.
New Generation Detroit. Meadow Brook Art Gallery exhibition. Through Oct. 7.
- Sept. 12** *Pump Boys and Dinettes*. Musical at Meadow Brook Theatre. Through Oct. 7.
- Sept. 17** Ernie Harwell. A Student Life Lecture Board presentation. Meadow Brook Theatre. 3 p.m.
- Sept. 21** Alumni Awards Banquet. Meadow Brook Hall.
- Sept. 22** American Heart Association Heart Walk 2001 at OU.
- Oct. 8** Week of Champions at Oakland University [WOCOU]. Through Oct. 12.
- Oct. 17** *Murder on the Nile*. Mystery at Meadow Brook Theatre. Through Nov. 11.
- Oct. 22** Lech Walesa. Student Life Lecture Board presentation features the former president of Poland, *Time* magazine Man of the Year and 1983 Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Meadow Brook Theatre. 3 p.m.

excellence AWARDS 2001

In pursuit of excellence



Todd Estes

Each year, the Oakland University Senate Teaching and Learning Committee and the University Research Committee, honor faculty whose teaching and research efforts have achieved singular praise or recognition. These individuals receive the Teaching Excellence Award, Research Excellence Award or New Investigator Research Excellence Award for their work. Recipients are chosen based on nominations submitted by OU students, faculty and staff; student letters of recommendation; and materials provided by the nominees.

Winners of the 2001 Excellence Awards are Todd Estes, David R. Maines and Kathleen Pfeiffer. They are profiled in this special section.

▲ 2001 Teaching Excellence Award

Todd Estes
Associate Professor,
History, CAS

Todd Estes entered the University of Tennessee on a band scholarship. His instrument was the drums. Prepared to play in support of the Volunteers, he discovered something else put the beat and rhythm in his life – history – and changed his major in his sophomore year.

It soon became clear to Estes that his special interest was Early American History. Now, the walls of his office are lined with shelves of books on the people and the politics of early national America.

At OU, Estes, 37, teaches History 114 and 115 – survey courses that draw large enrollments. He also teaches “Colonial America,” “The American Revolution,” “The Early Republic,” “Jacksonian America,” “Early U.S. Political Culture” and a senior capstone research course, all of which attract good numbers of students.

Teaching has been at the center of Estes’ life for some time. It’s in his blood – perhaps even in his genes.

“My dad was a college professor as well,” Estes says. “He taught library science with a specialty in children’s literature. I taught private music lessons in high school and at summer band camps. When I entered graduate school, I became a teaching assistant, then an instructor.”

Estes won one of five 1990 Chancellor’s Awards for Outstanding Teaching Assistants at the University of Kentucky, where he earned his MA and PhD in history in 1989 and 1995 respectively. He came to OU in the fall of 1995, straight out of graduate school.

Experience led Estes to develop an approach to his subject that brings distant history within reach. He makes his focus the “human impact” of historical events. Instead of a fact-filled lecture about the Great Depression, for example, he has his students read “letters from farmers begging

banks not to foreclose, and view pictures of families living in shacks and lining up at soup kitchens.” These are the kinds of things, Estes says, that transport students through time – that help them make connections that illuminate the past and present.

Making history accessible in such a way demands a lot from Estes. He in turn demands a lot from his students.

“It is better to be over-demanding than to be under-demanding,” he says. “I would rather have them be pushed hard intellectually than left unchallenged. I find this approach to teaching both enormously satisfying and highly productive.”

So do his students and his department chair, Carl Osthaus, who nominated Estes for the award.

“His students describe him as thoroughly professional, extremely knowledgeable, almost overwhelmingly energetic and enthusiastic, and completely dedicated to his courses and students,” Osthaus wrote in support of Estes. “I distinctly recall my 1998 visit to one of his advanced classes in American political culture. I was prepared to be somewhat bored by yet another evening lecture on familiar material. Instead of droning “professor-speak” on old material and snoozing students, I encountered a classroom brimming with enthusiasm

and energy.”

What is the most difficult aspect of Estes’ job?

“The only bad thing about teaching is grading,” Estes says. “The best part – part one – is the preparation, the intellectual work that goes into planning a class. Part two is teaching itself. It’s almost a magical thing for me. ... Part three is seeing students develop. I’ve had students as freshman come back and take classes as juniors and seniors. Quite a few have gone on to be secondary teachers.”

They write him letters and e-mail from time to time, from which he’s come to learn that many pick up in their classrooms where he left off in his.

“It’s flattering to know that something I’ve done in a classroom has been passed on,” he says, “that it made that kind of impact.”

Estes’ research specialty is the development of political culture in Early America. He teaches a course on the subject and has written a book titled, *The Politics of Public Opinion: The Jay Treaty Debate and the Democratization of American Political Culture*.

“My book is a work that will give us a fuller sense of 1790s politics,” Estes says. “[The Jay Treaty] is widely recognized as a landmark treaty and debate. But there’s a lot more that we can learn about it and this book offers some new directions.”

What has been the highlight of his career thus far?

“The Teaching Excellence Award is certainly one high-

light,” he says. “I was very pleased, really honored, to receive this award. Teaching is something I’ve given a lot of thought to and worked hard at.”

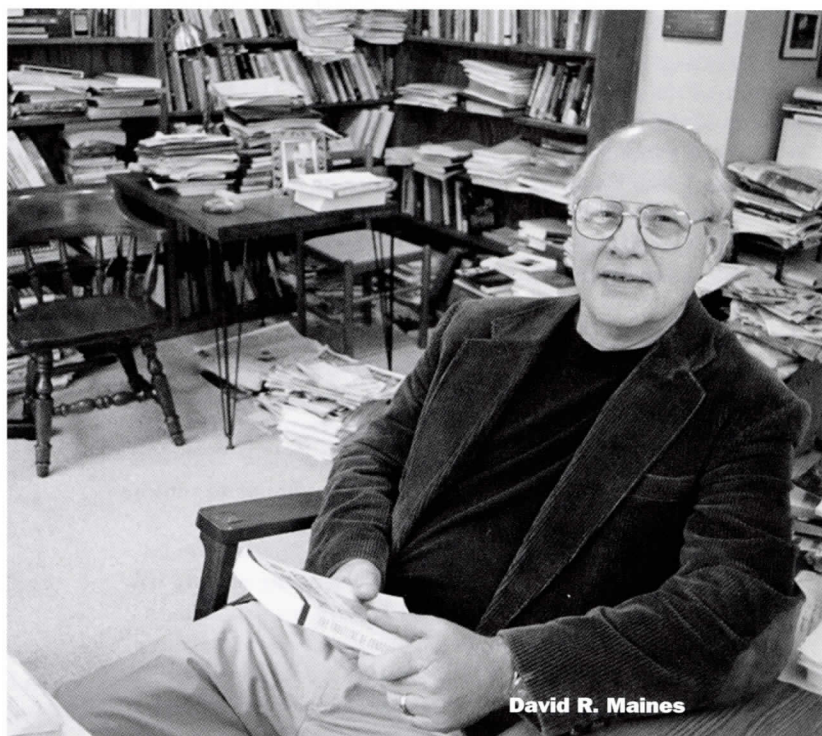
Winning the Teaching Excellence Award in the same year that his wife, Kathleen Pfeiffer, won the OU New Investigator Research Excellence Award he says was “a wonderful accident of fate and luck and chance. It means a lot to me.”

▼ 2001 Research Excellence Award

David R. Maines
Professor and Chair,
Sociology and
Anthropology, CAS

David R. Maines is an internationally renowned scholar who has made significant and widely recognized contributions to the fields of sociology, symbolic interaction and communication studies. His established prominence and continuing scholarly productivity are evidenced by a publication record that includes eight books, five research monographs and more than 90 journal articles, book chapters and essays. Many of the key concepts and theoretical positions that he has entered into the literature are routinely cited and employed by other leading scholars. He defines himself as a sociologist – first, last, always.

“I cannot be David Maines without being a sociologist and vice versa,” he says. “It doesn’t matter what day of the week it is. If you open the



David R. Maines

door and look in, I'm doing sociology."

"Doing sociology" means conducting research, debunking myths and uncovering misconceptions in his field, writing about his discoveries and teaching – something he's done since 1971.

Research interests take Maines down both traditional and less traveled paths. His work explores urban inequality, Catholicism, social change and the narrative aspects of social life.

"A lot of what social scientists study is composed of stories," Maines says. "For the last 10 years, we have been doing research developing a theory about the sociology of narrative. What stories have to do with groups and how they communicate. It's an area that has really grown."

The Maines story began with a BA in sociology and anthropology from Ball State University in 1967. He earned his MA and PhD in sociology from the University of Missouri, Columbia, in 1970 and 1973 respectively. Immediately before coming to OU, he spent six years lecturing at Wayne State University. And before that, he taught five years at Pennsylvania State University. Maines came to Oakland in 1997 as a visiting associate professor. He teaches an "Introduction to Sociology" class and courses in "Urban Sociology," "Social Stratification" and "Social Problems."

Although Maines describes himself as a facilitator in his current role as chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, his peers and colleagues at other institutions have viewed him over the years as something of an intellectual renegade. To be sure, his perspectives have ventured outside the mainstream, but for him, that's where things get interesting.

At Penn State, for example, colleagues labeled him an interactionist at a time when interactionism was not held in the same high esteem as other sociological perspectives. Now, others cite his work and have followed his lead to new understandings of sociology. He is one of the founding members of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction [SSSI], and in 1999 received the SSSI George Herbert Mead Award for lifetime contributions to scholarship.

In his latest book, *The Faultline of Consciousness: A View of Interactionism in Sociology*, published this year by Aldine De Gruyter, Maines provides an explanation of interactionism and expresses his "view of the centrality of interactionism to general sociology," something he says most sociologists fail to see — for now.

Heady stuff from this son of working-class parents. But

that's part of what drives him.

"I came from a family of plasterers," Maines says. "I was the second to go to college and the first to get a PhD. Working-class kids just aren't as secure as others. So they work harder," Maines explains.

Hard work earned Maines a 2000 OU Faculty Research Fellowship and 1999 Faculty Development and Department Scholarship awards, among many other honors. Last year, he was named chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. And in April, he was chosen to receive the 2001 Research Excellence Award.

"It's been a good year," says Maines. "My first reaction [on learning of the award] was, this is very good for my department. This literally is the most decent department I've ever worked in," he says.

Many say Maines has added something special to his department's recipe for success — the Maines ingredient. It has meant the addition of new faculty, needed space and program growth.

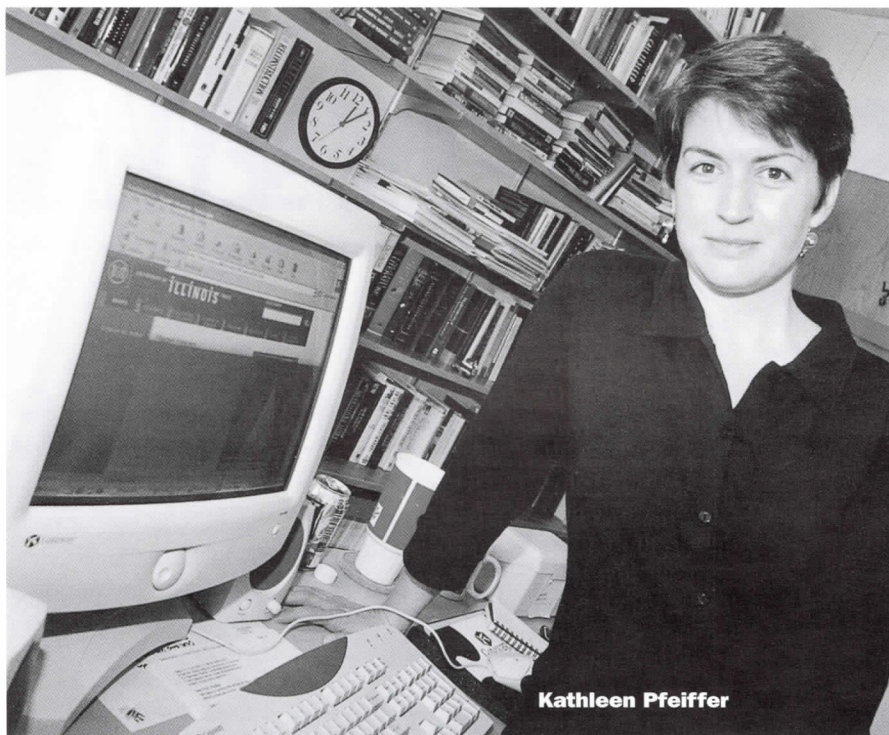
"In the fall, we will go from 12 to 16 professors," Maines says. "That's a reflection of growing enrollment in the department and at the university. We now have the faculty on which to base a master's program."

His ambitions also include making the Criminal Justice concentration a major. Research plans include work on his ninth book, *Creating Catholics*, with co-author, Michael McCallin, on the effects of Vatican II on parishes and dioceses. And, as always, you will find Maines "doing sociology."

"We are fortunate to have a person of David Maines' widely recognized achievements as a colleague," says nominator Gary Shepherd, professor and former chair, Sociology and Anthropology. "His established prominence and continuing scholarly productivity in national and international arenas add greatly to the reputation of our department and to the reputation of Oakland University."

"Other people decide whether or not my work is important," Maines says. "I'm persistently dissatisfied with it. But if I've done something important, it's to think and write about a subject where either there's a lot of myth or complete scholarly misunderstanding. If I can uncover the myth, then scholars have a chance to rethink what we've done."

At home, Maines can be found puttering around the house with his wife, Linda Benson, professor, History, shooting pool [five trophies attest to his prowess] and feeding the deer.



Kathleen Pfeiffer

▲ 2001 New Investigator Research Excellence Award

Kathleen Pfeiffer
Assistant Professor,
English, CAS

Kathleen Pfeiffer has long had an affinity for African American literature, particularly that written during the Harlem Renaissance [approximately 1920 through 1935]. She discovered its gems during her last year at Emmanuel College in Boston where she earned her bachelor's degree in 1986. So fascinated was she by the literature, that she sought out more and more works and writers, discovering treasures she never knew existed — authors like Jessie Fauset, Jean Toomer, and Nella Larsen; books like *Plum Bun*, *Cane* and *Passing*.

"That whetted my appetite for graduate readings on race, which I pursued while reading for my field exam on American literature 1865-1940," Pfeiffer says.

And then it became her career focus.

"I fell in love with it," she explains. "I wanted to stay immersed in it."

Through her reading and research, Pfeiffer developed a focus on race passing — the practice of African Americans with fair complexions passing themselves off as white — and a perspective on the subject that some say lends a new interpretation to the literature.

"I found that the issue of passing in novels was what I had the most to say about," Pfeiffer explains. "A lot of studies of race passing focus on betrayal," she says. "I take a slightly different perspective — the character's impulse to be an individual."

In the introduction to her book, *Race Passing and American Individualism*, soon to be published by the University of Massachusetts Press, Pfeiffer states:

"When we look at the passer as a figure who values individualism, who may be idiosyncratic, self-determining or inclined toward improvisa-

tion, we invite a much richer and more complex reading. ... Understood in this light, passing offers a problematic but potentially legitimate expression of American individualism."

When not engaged in her research, Pfeiffer teaches "Literature of Ethnic America," "American Literature," "African American Literature," "American Culture" and both a senior and graduate seminar on the Harlem Renaissance. She also has taught a graduate seminar on "The Cultural Origins of American Individualism."

"I don't really separate the two — research and teaching," Pfeiffer says. "Every year I have an opportunity to bring my scholarship into the classroom. I have found that students are really interested in this. My enthusiasm for my subject animates what happens in the classroom."

Pfeiffer says the mix of African American and white students in her courses makes for stimulating discussion.

"What I find is there are a lot of white students who have an interest and I can present it in a way that is nonthreatening," Pfeiffer says. "To me it's important to create a safe environment. I find that some of the white students are conservative from having been sheltered, from not having been exposed to African American literature and culture. But many white students are very well aware of and interested in the politics of racial identity. I find that black students are very eager to share their experiences and this is especially helpful."

Pfeiffer earned her MA and PhD from Brandeis University in 1988 and 1995 respectively. Her current research focuses on the relationships of white mentors and African American artists with a particular emphasis on the "complicated friendship of Jean Toomer and Waldo Frank."

Pfeiffer received an OU research fellowship in 1998 and in 2001. She also was a resident fellow at Morse College, Yale University, from 1995-97; a 1994-95 Mellon Dissertation Fellow; and a 1994-95 Guest Fellow, Berkeley College, Yale University. In 2000, Pfeiffer wrote the introduction to the reissue of Carl Van Vechten's 1926 novel, *Nigger Heaven*, a project she proposed and edited. This project is the scholarly work Pfeiffer says she is "most proud of."

In nominating Pfeiffer for the New Investigator Research Excellence Award, Brian Connery, chair of the English department, noted: "Professor Pfeiffer spent hundreds of hours in the New York Public Library and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale reading the various editions of the novel. ... She sifted through and read Van Vechten's voluminous correspondence in order to properly edit the novel and to offer a thorough, accurate and original introduction to the work, and she read all of the original reviews as well as the extant scholarly criticism. ... Professor Pfeiffer's work on this project is substantial, thorough and rigorous."