



Thursday, April 10, 2003

Graduates celebrate at Senior Send-Off

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

The night before the graduation of Oakland University's charter class in 1963, OU founder Matilda Wilson held a prom in the Meadow Brook Hall ballroom and honored each graduate with a gold, diamond-studded class ring.

Times have changed, but OU continues the tradition of celebrating the achievements of its graduates at its annual Senior Send-Off. Students, faculty, staff and administrators filled the Oakland Center's Fireside Lounge April 8 to recognize the academic work of its graduates and take a few moments to say good-bye.

"Not only have you received mentorship from faculty and staff, you have contributed to the university," said OU President Gary Russi in his address to the graduates. "You have helped position us for greatness in the future. I encourage you to stay connected with OU in as many ways as possible."

While the diamond class ring is a keepsake only for those special few in OU's original graduating class, the **Student Affairs Office** presented each graduate with an OU lapel pin, while the **Oakland University Alumni Association** gave business card holders and a free first-year OUAA membership.

Many students brought a professor or administrator who impacted their academic career. Finance major and OU Golden Key International Honour Society President Emily Fulton invited Office of Equity Director Gloria Sosa.

"Gloria is the person who knows me the best," Fulton said. "She's been a very big supporter and been instrumental in my success as a student and as a leader in the OU community. She opened my eyes to believing in myself and to always going for my dreams."

Political Science major and Student Congress Vice President Michelle Jamian said she hopes to work for a couple years in a local government office before pursuing a master's degree in foreign affairs.

"In having this event, OU is providing a great opportunity for closure," Jamian said. "I've had a lot of very good professors here. (Associate Professor of Political Science) Pat Piskulich is an inspiration to me. He has a way of reaching out to students in class and making them feel on the same level and not intimidated."

English major Debbie Smith invited Associate Professor of English and Department Chair Bruce Mann.

"I love coming to Senior Send-Off," Mann said. "It's an opportunity to say good-bye to some of our very best students. It's one of the nicest traditions Oakland University has."

Commencement for winter and spring 2003 semester graduates is Saturday, May 3. Ceremonies will take place at 9 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. at the Baldwin Pavilion. For more information, see the **2003 Spring Commencement** Web page.

SUMMARY

Students, faculty, staff and administrators filled the Oakland Center's Fireside Lounge to recognize the academic work of its graduates and take a few moments to say good-bye at OU's Senior Send-Off. Many students brought a professor or administrator who impacted their academic career.

Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, April 10, 2003
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, April 10, 2003
Article Start Date: Monday, October 27, 2003