

Presidential Remarks

Barry M. Klein Center for Culture and Globalization

January 14, 2021

Gift elevates OU's global reputation.

Thank you Linda (Klein) for your presence, and thank you to Tom (Sweeney) for helping to realize Barry's vision.

I did not have the pleasure to know Barry personally, but I feel like I knew him as a unique individual, a fearless adventurer, and someone who had a deep sense of gratitude for his family... and, for his community.

We are so proud and thankful that Barry played a central role in the progression and growth of the Oakland University community. Through his engagement and generosity, Barry has made a memorable and lasting contribution.

Linda, I really wish I had known him. I know we would have hit it off. I know because everything I hear about him tells me that we share the same values....

The values of community, collaboration, compassion and giving back.

And giving back is something Barry began in the days after graduation in 1968 when he joined and served on the board of the OU Alumni Association, and then later, became a director of the OU Foundation.

In 1984, he received the OUAA Distinguished Alumni Award, and in 2003, he was presented with the OUAA Spirit Award.

Barry had an indelible character and presence. His friends fondly recall his appreciation for Rockabilly music, fine wines, physical fitness and half-marathons, and, of course, golf. He was a familiar presence on the Katke-Cousins and Sharf golf courses.

In 1997, Barry provided the gift to establish the George R. and Helen Klein Memorial Scholarship in the School of Education and Human Services – an endearing gesture to demonstrate his love and appreciation for his parents.

It was Barry's way to say thank you to his parents for their support in finding his path in life -- a path that at one time took him to the Haight-Asbury district in San Francisco during the "summer of love" in 1967.

It didn't take long for Barry to find his life's calling as a "real estate expert."

Today, as we celebrate his life and passions, we express our appreciation and gratitude that he chose to make a lasting connection with Oakland University.

To Linda and Barry's children -- Jason, Jacquelyn and Jeffrey -- please know that Barry's contributions to Oakland University make it possible to further cultural understanding at a time when we all must seek a greater understanding of the changes rapidly redefining our world.

We need to be tolerant. We need to take the time to be civil and respectful. And, we need to come together to understand the emerging global trends transforming culture.

Barry Klein knew all of this in his heart, and now, because of his gift, his passion will be translated into the Barry M. Klein Scholarship Endowed Fund and the Barry M. Klein Center for Culture and Globalization.

Together, the fund and center provide the foundation for a legacy of a man who sought to broaden his perspective of the world, and through his generosity will enable our students to also broaden their perspectives of the world.

As you heard from Dean Corcoran, the Barry M. Klein Center for Culture and Globalization will be a dynamic "meeting of the minds," a place where renowned scholars will deepen our understanding of the world...and a place that elevates Oakland University's impact on our community...the region... the state... and the world.

Barry recalled that his appreciation as a student was rooted in the intellectual freedom and diversity on the campus.

I'd like to think that today OU remains an inspiring place for the exchange of ideas for our students.

Barry is an example and testament to what is possible with an OU education -- he was a person who defined success by the lives he impacted and the path he traveled.

Today, in the midst of the pandemic, our highest priority is the safety and health of the OU community -- our students, faculty and staff.

But we also have another obligation, and that is to make sure Oakland University continues to develop and grow as a higher education institution.

In this regard, we owe our gratitude to Barry and his family for realizing that supporting higher education has a direct impact on the way people think about themselves and the world.

Your generous gift to Oakland University will touch many, many lives, and open up many, many minds.

We are all travelers in life and in the world. To see life as a journey cultivates a sense of wonder, curiosity and possibility. Those traits – along with his passion for future generations – sum up the spirit and ambition of Barry Klein.

Again, thank you to the entire Klein family.

We look forward to a long and lasting connection with you as we carry on Barry's legacy.