



Thursday, April 22, 2004

Wilson Fund bestows \$7 million to restore MBH

Oakland University has received a \$7 million gift from the Matilda R. Wilson Fund, a charitable trust Matilda Dodge Wilson established in 1944, to help repair and restore **Meadow Brook Hall**.

"Oakland University is thrilled by the Wilson Fund's very generous gift," said Oakland University President Gary Russi. "As the former home of Oakland University's founder, Matilda Dodge Wilson, Meadow Brook Hall is an important, special part of our heritage and this gift will ensure the survival of this community, state and national treasure for future generations to enjoy."

The gift will be used for restoration of the hall. Much of the architectural infrastructure will be refurbished, including foundation and structural repairs as well as repairs to the roof, chimneys, parapets, gutters, windows, doors and stone floors. Original tile work, wall hangings and plasterwork will be restored, and upgrades will be made to the building's plumbing, HVAC, mechanical and electrical systems. Work also will be completed on the grounds of the hall, including its gardens, as well as Knole Cottage – the built-to-scale, fully functioning playhouse of Frances Dodge.

"Even after her death, Matilda is helping to preserve Meadow Brook Hall, and this should be welcome news for all who have been concerned about the hall's future," said Penny Crissman, vice chair of Oakland University's Board of Trustees. "This generous gift will help make much-needed repairs and allow the hall to focus on building endowment funds moving forward.

"Matilda has given so much to southeastern Michigan, including the establishment of Oakland University as well as the bequest of her home to be used as an educational and cultural center by the community. Her fund has contributed millions to deserving cultural institutions throughout the area. Her legacy is enormous and will be long lasting."

The Wilson Fund has donated more than \$5.7 million to Oakland University with \$5 million going directly to the hall for past restoration and preservation projects. This brings their total giving to \$12.7 million

"As the hall celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, this gift assures that it will be around for the next 75 years," said Sally Victor, director of Meadow Brook Hall.

Meadow Brook Hall is the fourth largest historic house museum in the United States and is especially renowned for its superb craftsmanship, architectural detailing and grand scale. Built in the 1920s as the residence of Oakland University founders, Matilda Dodge Wilson (widow of auto pioneer John Dodge) and her second husband lumber broker Alfred G. Wilson, the 110-room, 88,000-square-foot, Tudor-revival style mansion is complete with vast collections of original art and furnishings.

Matilda and Alfred Wilson donated their 1,500-acre Meadow Brook estate, including the hall, and \$2 million in 1957 to establish Oakland University.

For more information on the hall, visit the **Meadow Brook Hall** Web site.

SUMMARY

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