

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS

A RITE OF PASSAGE COMMENCEMENT MESSAGE TO UNDERGRADUATES

April 2024

On behalf of the Oakland University Board of Trustees, welcome to Oakland University and the spring 2023 commencement ceremony. While the commencement ritual takes place every fall and spring, it is never taken for granted or considered perfunctory... and is anything but routine.

These events mark a great accomplishment in the lives of each graduate and their families.

For all of us, the ceremony serves as a resounding symbol of our shared values in the power of education and our common purpose to create opportunities and progress through knowledge.

The ceremony also reflects our belief that we can achieve a better world through understanding the great diversity of people, culture and ideas that shape our times.

Your Oakland University degree is a statement about your academic success and a testament to your character...

In earning your degree, you have demonstrated the hard work ethic, perseverance, and commitment to excellence that will be hallmarks of success in your careers...and in your lives.

We are so proud that you have chosen an Oakland University education.... And today, we welcome you proudly into our alumni family.

We share a belief in the power of education.

We have a passion for the possibilities of education.

And, we are a community of advocates promoting education as the path toward a more humane, just, inclusive, and equitable world.

So... look at it this way: You have just made the most important investment you can make into yourself.

Oakland University has provided you with a foundation – an educational base – upon which to build your careers and a broader understanding of the world....

Hopefully, your time at Oakland University has inspired you to become engaged civically...and has fostered your curiosity to become more culturally literate about the great diversity of our world.

As you now enter the next stage of your lives, we hope you take with you the values we cherish at Oakland University...

The values of integrity, respect, compassion, inclusivity, collaboration, stewardship, tolerance, curiosity and creativity.

You will need these values in the days ahead.

After all, the future will be shaped by those who think creatively and act boldly.... These are the innovators and entrepreneurs who are fearless in forging their vision into reality.

So, graduates...a bit of advice:

Think of yourselves as innovators and entrepreneurs.

And may you be courageous as you pursue your true selves and a successful and rewarding future.