



Wednesday, September 5, 2001

## Students, parents, faculty meet at Convocation

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Newly admitted freshmen, their relatives and Oakland University faculty and staff were formally introduced to each other Tuesday, September 4, during New Student Convocation held at the **Recreation and Athletics Center**.

Convocation is a traditional event on OU's campus where faculty and newly admitted students are officially brought together for the first time.

OU President Gary Russi, Assistant English Professor Kathleen Pfeiffer, Vice President of Student Affairs Mary Beth Snyder and Student Body President Derek Dickow each delivered an address to an audience of about 1,000.

In his speech, Russi spoke of OU's past and the direction it provides for its students' future.

"The success of our graduates has built this institution," he said. "They are our proudest achievement and our greatest ambassadors. Their support guides us and strengthens our academic and extracurricular programs. And, you will benefit from their accomplishments as well.

"Our alumni will offer to help you, to mentor you, and to employ you. Sooner than you think, you will be joining them. In fact, as you leave this arena today, you will have joined the Oakland family, an association that will last a lifetime. Remember that what you are, Oakland University will be."

Students and parents alike enjoyed Convocation, and the vast majority remained afterwards to meet the faculty and staff at a special reception.

"It's comforting to know that the faculty are here to support us," said Michael Banachowski, a mechanical engineering major from Oxford. "It's nice that they are here to greet us and have this reception so we can get to know them."

Dickow's speech was especially appealing to Ashley Holenka of Shadyside, Ohio. Dickow emphasized becoming involved in campus activities to make friends. Holenka came to OU to play for the women's basketball team and is quickly making friends as she adjusts to campus life.

"Dickow's speech was inspiring and he made me feel comfortable," Holenka said. "I can relate to what he had to say, because coming here I didn't know anyone either. But I'm making friends on the team."

Darlene Louisa of Shelby Township has twin daughters (Dina and Gina) entering OU this year. Darlene was impressed with the reception OU provides for its incoming students.

"I have another daughter who attended Wayne State, but they had no ceremony like this," Louisa said. "It's good to see so many people at this ceremony. The kids here have so much energy and everyone has been so welcoming. It's really nice."

### SUMMARY

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