

# Presidential Remarks

## Varner: Act II

**October 21, 2022**

- Thank you Elaine, for your leadership in elevating the College of Arts and Sciences, and for your advocacy of arts education and the invaluable role the arts and humanities play in teaching and reminding us of our common humanity.
- And I, too, would like to especially thank our generous donors.
  - Teresa and George Gamboa (attending)...
  - Nancy and Craig Valassis. (Nancy only attending)
  - Richard Sonenklar and Greg Hayes (not attending)
  - Enid Bienstock and William Goldenberg (?)
  - And Dr. Miriam and Dan Medow
- I am grateful to our provost, Britt Rios-Ellis, for her leadership, and my traveling companion, Mike Westfall, whose commitment and hard work as vice president of OU Advancement is at the heart of our university's ongoing transformation.

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- Varner Hall.... Act two.
- What an appropriate title for our gathering, and description of the next phase for the College of Arts & Sciences.
- For those who have studied dramatic writing, Act Two is the development phase of a dramatic story....
  - And when Varner Hall's top-to-bottom renovation is considered in the context of Oakland history, we can imagine the stories that will be told within these walls...

- ...and the stories told by the students inspired by the experience of performing music and theater.
- As someone who was inspired as a young girl by the music of Chopin – and had a dream of becoming a classical pianist – I feel a deep connection to the power of the arts to open minds and hearts to the diverse range of human experiences, emotions and the many ways we express the meaning of our time and place.
- The renovations to student practice rooms, costume shop and the Varner Recital Hall and Studio Theatre lobbies just aren't necessary enhancements.... It's about creating a new and compelling experience for audiences and students.
- And it's a statement that an investment in the arts is an investment in building a community that values our great performing arts traditions and cultural diversity.

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- Certainly, the building and naming of Varner Hall is Act One.
- And now, as the curtain rises on Act Two, let's find our prominent roles on the stage.
- As Elaine noted earlier, tonight we are coming together to support the Student Opportunity Fund to benefit undergraduate and graduate students in the School of Music Theatre and Dance.
  - Each dollar will support students in their journey to explore the arts, themselves and the world.
- Along with all of you, I look forward to the Music Gala Concert and grand reopening of Varner Recital Hall on March 25th.
- Thank you all for being here, and supporting arts education and Oakland University.