

**Durfee Dedication Luncheon**

**November 7, 2019**

I am so proud to be a part of this dedication of the Levin–Comer Club, and to have an opportunity to be at an event that brings together so many people that have made such a great impact in Detroit.

On behalf of Oakland University, we are very excited about our connection with the Metro Detroit Youth Club, and appreciate the invitation to be a part of the community.

At the core of our work is a valued partnership that very much resembles a seed.... A seed that we nurture and foster together as we work to find the most effective way to serve the needs of Detroiters.

Thank you to the Levins and Jim Comer, whose generous philanthropy have been a critical part of opening the newest Metro Detroit Youth Club.

For many years, I, along with many of you, have been an admirer of the Levin brothers. Sander and Carl Levin are among the greatest of the

America's greatest generation. Your lifetime of service to the people of this region is truly legendary, inspiring and the type of contribution that paves a road for future generations. Your accomplishments as voices for the people during the time you held positions in city, state and federal government are only surpassed by your exemplary integrity and passion for justice.

On many levels, the testament of the impact of our lives is revealed in the legacy we create.

Based on that standard, Jim, Sander and Carl, your impact is immense.

It can be felt in the love and admiration of the lives you've touched, and it can be witnessed right here at the Durfee Innovation Society, the grounds where the Levin brothers attended intermediate school ... let's just say a few years ago.

Those of us in higher education working for greater engagement in our communities deeply appreciate the work performed here at the Durfee Innovation Society, which hosts nonprofit agencies and offers social

services and opportunities for neighborhood residents to develop their jobs skills.

At Oakland University, we are firmly committed to having an impact and playing a vital role in the continuing development of Detroit.

There is no question that Detroit is heartbeat of this region and state.

And, there is no question we will continue to search for innovative ways to support the agenda of community and neighborhood organizations in the city.

As we all know, there is much work to be done.

The scars of racism and the alarming economic disparity between city and suburbs must be addressed.

At Oakland, we strive to be a catalyst to promote education as a means to opportunity and closing the economic gap.

As a university, we might be located in Oakland County, but we do not see any geographical boundary line or otherwise separating us from the challenge and the mission we are committed to fulfill.

At Oakland, we believe it is paramount to further develop the city, and find ways to cultivate the talents of Detroiters, whether that is through degrees or certifications. Through recruitment, scholarships, student success initiatives and our debt-forgiveness program, OU is focused on improving education outcomes, including the results of people with low incomes and under-represented racial and ethnic groups.

Based on our urban-engagement model in Pontiac, we have proven ourselves as active partners in the ongoing development of business, workforce and entrepreneurship along with the health and culture of urban neighborhoods.

In building the OU-Detroit partnership we aim to demonstrate our expertise and experience in fostering broad coalitions to support education, economic, health-care and wellness initiatives...and we are committed to work collaboratively to improve the lives of the people we serve.

Congratulations on celebrating the newest location for Metro Detroit Youth Club, appropriately named the Levin-Comer Club.

Thank you, Jim Comer, Sander Levin and Carl Levin for inspiring us to serve and to make a difference.