



Thursday, April 8, 2004

OU trustee gives the gift of opportunity

By **Liz Lent**, contributing writer

Making things happen is second nature to Oakland University Trustee Henry Baskin. He's changed laws and now he's changing lives with a \$500,000 gift. The gift will provide scholarship assistance to children of single-parent households in financial need and support the College of Arts and Science's Judaic Studies course.

As one of Michigan's top family practice attorneys, Baskin has seen firsthand what can happen in single-parent households. The difficulty many mothers have in collecting child support and the fact that fathers are not required to contribute to the cost of their children's college education often means the financial burdens faced by children of divorce can be insurmountable when it comes to higher education.

"For young people not to have the opportunity to go to college because of situations beyond their control is heartbreaking," Baskin said. The scholarships will cover tuition and all college-related expenses for recipients.

Opportunity rests at the heart of Baskin's support for the Judaic Studies program. The gift was designed to expand understanding of "a culture and religion that has had a significant historical impact on the world," Baskin said.

Baskin has been making a mark on the metro Detroit community for years. His early work in entertainment law put him at the center of the Detroit music, radio and television scene, representing Motown artists, including Marvin Gaye, The Temptations and The Miracles, as well as The Rolling Stones and others. He has represented virtually all of Detroit's on-air television talent and now represents personalities such as Dick Purtan, Jerry Hodak, Fanchon Stinger, Glenn Haegi, John Mason and many others in contract negotiations.

But the work of which Baskin truly seems most proud is what he refers to as "my legacies in the law." He drafted the Michigan Child Custody Act of 1970, which is still in effect today, and chaired former Governor John Engler's 1994 Domestic Violence Task Force. The work done by that task force led to the creation of Michigan's Personal Protection Orders that provide an increased level of safety for endangered women. As Baskin told "HOUR Detroit" magazine, "We had clients who were getting killed. We held public hearings, and I sold this package to the governor. It took nine months from start to finish to get it through the Legislature and passed into law...I am so proud that I could quit today and just smile about that."

Thankfully, Baskin seems a long way from retiring. In addition to his law practice, he serves on the Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission and is a special assistant to the Michigan attorney general. He also continues to serve as the chairman of OU's **Board of Trustees**, a position he's held since 2002, after serving since 1996 as a board member.

Despite work that often puts him in the public eye, Baskin prefers life outside the spotlight. His gift to Oakland was made not for recognition, and while reluctant to have the gift publicized, he is determined to encourage others to give to the best of their ability, supporting the university, its programs and its people.

SUMMARY

Making things happen is second nature to Oakland University Trustee Henry Baskin. He's changed laws and now he's changing lives with a \$500,000 gift. The gift will provide scholarship assistance to children of single-parent households in financial need and support the College of Arts and Sciences' Judaic Studies course.

Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, April 8, 2004
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Thursday, April 8, 2004
Article Start Date: Thursday, January 13, 2005