

Thursday, Jan 04, 2018

## Student leaders to be honored with Keeper of the Dream Awards

For helping break down stereotypes and promote racial and cultural understanding, seven students will be recognized during Oakland University's 26<sup>th</sup> annual Keeper of the Dream Awards Celebration. The event takes place from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 15 in the Oakland Center Banquet Rooms on OU's campus.

The 2018 Keeper of the Dream Award winners are:



*Obadah Asbahi*  
*Biology*



*Kessia Graves*  
*Communication*



*Hansen Karyakose*  
*Social Work*



*Michela Manga*  
*Biomedical Sciences*



*Lakaysha Mitchell*  
*Social Work*



*Farrah Sitto*  
*Biology*



*Blake Walton*  
*Criminal Justice*

This year's event features keynote speaker Ed Gordon, host and executive producer of the nationally syndicated program *Conversations with Ed Gordon*. Broadcast on Black Entertainment Television (BET), this one-on-one program allows Gordon to bring newsmakers and celebrities up-close and personal to viewers. Over the years, guests have included Oprah Winfrey, Denzel Washington, Kevin Hart, Steve Harvey, Janet Jackson, Bill Clinton and Beyonce, among many others.

Through his two stints at BET, Gordon has had many roles at the network, including host of BET Tonight, anchor of BET News, and creator of his signature series *Conversations with Ed Gordon*. Gordon has been a contributing correspondent for CBS' *60 Minutes II*, and a contributor for NBC's *Today Show*, and *Dateline*. In addition to an Emmy, Gordon is the recipient of a NAACP Image Award and Journalist of the Year Award from the National Association of Black Journalists.

Established in 1993, Keeper of the Dream provides annual scholarships of up to \$5,000 for students who have demonstrated strong citizenship, scholarship and leadership. Since the program's inception, more than 100 students from a variety of academic majors have been awarded scholarships.

The 2018 Keeper of the Dream scholarships are sponsored by Autoliv, Beaumont Health, KeyBank Foundation, The Lynne & Lia

McIntosh Scholarship, The Marshall Family Scholar Foundation, OU Black Alumni Chapter and OU Credit Union. Unity Sponsors are Avis Ford, OU College of Arts and Sciences, and St. Joseph Mercy Oakland.

Keeper of the Dream also marks the start of African American Celebration Month at Oakland, which runs through February 14. The campus community will participate in a series of events highlighting the importance of diversity and raising awareness of African American contributions to society. This year's theme is "A Celebration of Culture, Community and Achievements."

For more information, contact OU's Center for Multicultural Initiatives at (248) 370-4404 or [cmi@oakland.edu](mailto:cmi@oakland.edu).



*Journalist and TV host Ed Gordon will present the keynote address at the 2018 Keeper of the Dream Awards on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 15.*