


# Student leaders to be honored for breaking down racial, cultural barriers

Oakland University will present Keeper of the Dream Awards to seven students at a celebration on January 20



The 2020 Keeper of the Dream Award recipients pictured from left: Zakia Ali-James, Jennifer Medrano Delacruz, Maya Ford, Mikal O'Neal, Raneen Allos, Donovan Hernandez and Isaias Cruz

 December 20, 2019

---

## SHARE THIS STORY

For helping break down stereotypes and promote racial and cultural understanding, seven students will be recognized during Oakland University's 28th annual Keeper of the Dream Awards Celebration. The event takes place from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 20 in the Oakland Center Founders Ballrooms on OU's campus.

The 2020 Keeper of the Dream Award recipients are:

- **Zakia Ali-James** (Psychology)

- **Raneen Allos** (Exercise Science)
- **Isaias Cruz** (Political Science)
- **Maya Ford** (Women and Gender Studies)
- **Donovan Hernandez** (Mechanical Engineering)
- **Jennifer Medrano Delacruz** (Psychology)
- **Mikal O'Neal** (Health Sciences)

### **Keynote Speaker**

This year's event will be keynoted by Lisa Leslie, a four-time Olympic gold medalist and three-time WNBA MVP who led the Los Angeles Sparks to league championships in 2001 and 2002.

Before becoming the most-recognized player in the WNBA, Leslie attended Morningside High School in Inglewood, California, where she led the team to two state titles. In college at the University of Southern California, she was the all-time Pac-10 leader in points, rebounds, and blocked shots.



*Lisa Leslie, former WNBA player and Olympic Gold Medalist, will be the keynote speaker at the Keeper of the Dream Awards Celebration on January 20.*

She spent her entire WNBA career with the Los Angeles Sparks, being named to the All-Star Team eight times. In 2001, she was the first WNBA player to win the regular season MVP, the All-Star Game MVP and the playoff MVP in the same season. She is a member of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, and U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Hall of Fame.

Following her retirement, Leslie received her master's degree in business and became an author, releasing her first book, "Don't Let the Lipstick Fool You," in which she spotlights her remarkable life off the court, where being a confident champion was not always simple.

In addition, Leslie became a commentator for ESPN in 2004, covering the NCAA Women's Tournament, and had the privilege of covering the 2012 Olympics for NBC. Currently, she's an in-studio co-host of CBS' first all-female sports talk show, "We Need to Talk."

Leslie later became co-owner of the Los Angeles Sparks and in 2013 joined her husband, Michael, as a UPSer, being named the UPS brand ambassador while sitting on the advisory board for Capital One for five years.

### **About Keeper of the Dream**

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.

This year's event is sponsored by Oakland University Credit Union, Autoliv, Flagstar Bank, Willis Towers Watson, Meritor, Oakland University Alumni Association, Marshall Family Scholar Foundation, Lynne and Lia McIntosh Scholarship, KeyBank, Saint Joseph Mercy Health System Oakland and the Alice Shotwell Gustafson Keeper of the Dream Endowment.

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