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## Faculty couple's gifts show strong ties to students, OU

When New York natives Bob and Jackie Wiggins attended college, they paid very little for their tuition. Times have changed in a big way, say the couple, both long-time faculty members at Oakland University. That's why each has set aside a \$25,000 planned gift to establish endowments at their respective schools.

Bob Wiggins, Ph.D., professor in the **School of Education and Human Services** and chair of the Department of Teacher Development and Educational Studies, says he never could've gone to college if it weren't for the fact that Queens College in New York was tuition-free. His planned endowment will be dedicated to supporting graduate students and teacher education.



"It certainly was more motivating for me to know I could keep going in my education without having to worry about going into serious financial debt," says Bob, "so whatever way our contribution makes that possible for even a small number of students, that's what motivated us to do this."

*Faculty members Bob and Jackie Wiggins each set aside a \$25,000 planned gift to help students in the School of Education and Human Services and the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance.*

Jackie Wiggins, Ed.D., professor of music education and chair of the **Department of Music, Theater and Dance**, regularly contributes to support Oakland's music education and music performance programs. Her future endowment will continue her longtime support of these programs.

The couple has been with Oakland University for more than 20 years, and both have helped shape academic excellence and acclaim at their schools. They have strong ties to OU not only in their successful careers, but within their family as well. Their daughter and son-in-law hold OU music degrees and a nephew also attended.

Bob and Jackie say they decided to give in hopes that others will contribute: their endowments are set up so that others can give to them, much like other faculty who've set up similar gifts. "One of the characteristics of Oakland that is very different from a lot of other schools is the passion that faculty have for this school. It's what makes it what it is," Jackie says. "We are very dedicated to OU and to what it can become."

They hope to help "the students themselves, who might not have the personal funds for doing the things they need to do" in education, says Bob. He adds, "It's not just our personal feelings about the students – it's about what we feel for Oakland University, too."

Angie Schmucker, executive director of **Planned and Annual Giving** at OU, says she is grateful the University has employees like the Wiggins who support causes that are close to their hearts. "What I love about this gift is that it reflects exactly who these two dedicated faculty members are, where they've spent their time and energy and what they truly love about OU. "

To learn more about the Wigginses' endowments and how to contribute to them, call (248) 370-4504 or email [giving@oakland.edu](mailto:giving@oakland.edu).

*by John Turk*