



Tuesday, October 14, 2003

## Alumni and friends honored at OUAA banquet

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

The **Oakland University Alumni Association** welcomed alumni and friends back to campus to celebrate the achievements and generous contributions of those who represent the heart and spirit of the university at its ninth annual OU Alumni Awards Banquet. The event was held Oct. 11 in the banquet room in the recently-dedicated Oakland Center expansion. The event is one of the most prestigious on the university calendar, and continues to be strongly supported by alumni, the university, and the surrounding community.

"We had over 250 guests at the event, which was more than last year," said Jamie Simek, assistant director for alumni relations. "We were very glad to see so many people come out to support the award winners. The banquet raises awareness of the outstanding achievements of our alumni. It's also a fabulous networking event, and a great way to bring alumni together on campus."

Mike Lewis, reporter and weekend anchor for WDIV-TV in Detroit and visiting instructor of journalism, served as the evening's master of ceremonies and introduced each of the award winners. This year's honorees include:

- **Distinguished Alumni Service Award** – Dennis Pawley
- **Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award** – George Jackson
- **Odyssey Award** – Monica Emerson
- **Odyssey Award** – Jack Parker
- **Spirit Award** – Barry Klein
- **Honorary Alumnus Award** – Hugh and Nancy Elliott
- **Honorary Alumnus Award** – Patrick Nicosia

"I believe OU is the singular most important university in the metro Detroit area," Klein said in his acceptance remarks. "Ninety-two percent of our students come from this area. And, 85 percent of our graduates stay in this area. We deliver people, education, culture and business alliances to the area.

"Much of OU's success over the last few years has been directly attributable to its leadership – its deans, vice presidents and President Gary Russi. They have added 32 more degree programs, 45 new faculty positions (while not increasing the student-to-faculty ratio of 19 to 1) and invested more than \$200 million in the university's future."

In addition, the student recipients of the most recent OUAA scholarships were introduced. The money for these scholarships are provided through the generous donations of OUAA members and raised through OUAA events and programs. The number and value of these scholarships has increased in recent years, bringing the total endowment to slightly more than \$750,000. Scholarship recipients are current students who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement, student leadership, and university and community involvement. This year's recipients include:

- **College of Arts and Sciences Alumni Affiliate Scholarship** – Shelley Aurit
- **School of Business Administration Alumni Affiliate Scholarship** – Ronald Grant
- **School of Education and Human Services Alumni Affiliate Scholarship** – Monica Sroka
- **School of Engineering and Computer Science Alumni Affiliate Scholarship** – Kevin Boose
- **School of Health Science Alumni Affiliate Scholarship** – Lucy Van de Putte
- **School of Nursing Alumni Affiliate Scholarship** – Jeri Buckley
- **Black Alumni Affiliate Scholarship** – Stephanie Marshall
- **Honors College Alumni Affiliate Scholarship** – Elizabeth Long
- **Frances C. Amos School of Business Administration Alumni Scholarship** – Kristy Piper
- **Thomas A. Yatooma Alumni Memorial Scholarship for the School of Engineering and Computer Science** – Mark Mazzara
- **Legacy Scholarship awards** – Kurt Andrews, Aaron Pallas, and Kathleen Pernak

In his remarks, OU President Gary Russi cited some of the many ways in which the value of an Oakland degree is getting

stronger, including the **University Research Scholar Program**, a record \$12 million in grants and funding for faculty research efforts; growth in students, and bachelor's and graduate degree and certificate programs.

"It is gratifying for me to see so many alumni who truly care about their institution and who feel an ongoing interest in and sense of connection to their alma mater," Russi said. "Today, Oakland University continues to reach new heights in areas of instructional innovation, focused academic degree programs, research accomplishments – from both faculty and student researchers – and in campus life...With your ongoing support – and the support of others like you – Oakland will continue to progress toward its vision for 2010 and beyond, becoming known as one of the universities that best prepares leaders for success in the workplace and society."

The nomination process for the 2004 OUAA awards will begin next spring. For more information on alumni events and the benefits of membership, visit the **Oakland University Alumni Association** Web site or contact them at (248) 370-2158 or [ouaa@oakland.edu](mailto:ouaa@oakland.edu).

#### **SUMMARY**

The Oakland University Alumni Association welcomed alumni and friends back to campus to celebrate the achievements and generous contributions of those who represent the heart and spirit of the university at its ninth annual OU Alumni Awards Banquet. The event, held Oct. 11, is one of the most prestigious on the university calendar, and continues to be strongly supported by alumni, the university, and the surrounding community.

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