



We hope you are enjoying the unseasonably mild weather this month. Faculty, staff and students are relishing the warmer temperatures with leisurely strolls across campus and casual lunches beneath Elliott Tower. Please take a few minutes to catch up on the latest [campus news](#) and [calendar of events](#)!

Group Lunches

The Pioneer Club meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. at Nick's Country Oven in Rochester (Adams and Silverbell). These lunches are very casual, so please stop by when your schedule permits.

Golden Opportunity

Do you have a great idea for a future Pioneer Club event? The planning committee needs your help! The group meets on a monthly basis to discuss campus happenings as well as organize activities for Pioneer Club members. If you are interested in joining the planning committee or would like more information, email oupioneerclub@oakland.edu or call (248) 370-4325.

Newsworthy

Oakland University wins! A fun-spirited Giving Challenge between OU and the University of Detroit Mercy raised more than \$84,000 for OU students, programs and campus needs. More than 620 alumni, fans and friends made financial gifts to support Oakland. To read the full story, [click here](#).

Greg Kampe celebrated his 1000th game as OU's basketball coach - a feat achieved by only 12 other active Division I coaches. [Click here](#) to read about Kampe's career with the Golden Grizzlies in an article that appeared in the *Detroit Free Press*.

[Click here](#) to read the latest online edition of *OU Magazine*.

Campus Update

To meet the growing demand for parking on campus, OU's Board of Trustees recently approved a \$7.2M plan to add 660 spaces this fall. [Click here](#) to read more about the project.

For an update on the presidential search from Board of Trustees Chair Richard L. DeVore, [click here](#).

Music, Theatre and Dance News

For current news on Music, Theatre and Dance alumni working in the arts, [click here](#).

Pioneer Profile

By Gerry Coon



John Henry White

If you should hear a spirited rendition of, “Seventy Six Trombones,” or “Don’t Rain on my Parade,” echoing through the halls of the residential unit of Detroit Children’s Hospital, or see a huge bobbing Big Head of Bo Schembechler going from room to room to bring a little of the parade joy to children who might not otherwise get to see any of it, you can expect to see John Henry White behind the music and hilarity.

Besides entertaining severely ill children and their parents, John takes his “act” around the Metropolitan area, to groups like Blue Cross, Wayne State, the Rochester Community Foundation Tailgate on the night before the MSU and UM game, Kiwanis and Rotarian Clubs to convince people to put some time into volunteerism.

When he retired from Oakland University in 2005, John asked himself, “Where do you want to volunteer your time so you can give back to your community?” His first foray was at the Detroit Zoo as an ambassador, which he found boring, so he took some classes to learn more about the animals and is now a docent. He has taken advantage of several of the zoo-sponsored trips, including Costa Rica, the Galapagos Islands, and two trips to Africa. John also spent two summer sessions with the OU delegation, teaching conversational English at Guizhou University in China. He has also traveled extensively in South America and lived for two years in France.

John’s curiosity and educational background have introduced him to some interesting volunteer jobs. While ushering at a White Christmas program at the Fox Theater in

Detroit, he helped a Cornerstone School student perform on stage and was invited to do more with his music and theater background. Refusing an actual return to performing, he chose to become involved with the Detroit Thanksgiving Parade, becoming first a tour guide at the studio and gradually adding to his repertoire.

Enthusiasm for the subject of retirees as volunteers has led John into giving five or six workshops a month in the Greater Rochester Area on volunteerism. You might say he has a degree in volunteerism. In addition to his hours at the zoo and the Children's Hospital, he volunteers at the bat zone at Cranbrook Institute and is certified to take groups of children out on a double-decker boat on the Clinton, St. Clair and Black Rivers for the Great Lakes Education Project. Sponsored by Michigan State University, the program agrees with the Michigan Science Module. Each spring and fall groups of children from fourth to tenth grade learn navigational skills, water testing, environmental concerns and, "I even teach them knots!" explains John.

Born and raised in a Pennsylvanian Mennonite community, John Henry White nevertheless developed a wandering foot. He left his village right after high school to visit an aunt and uncle on his way to join the navy to see the world. His aunt, however, convinced him to try college first, so he enrolled at Wayne State and graduated in 1960 as a music major with minors in theater, English and social studies.

John loved Detroit, "It was an exciting place to be at that time. There was so much going on." He began his teaching career at Cass Technical High School, and later taught at Osborne High and Cooley. He left Cooley to go to Birmingham after earning a Master's Degree in counseling.

A second master's, in Asian Studies, came to this vagabond scholar after a two-year study at the University of Hawaii, followed by a Michigan State University doctorate in education, majoring in curriculum design and long-range urban planning. Though he has season basketball and football tickets to MSU games, he claims to be a die-hard Tartar from the early days of Wayne State.

John White started teaching off-campus classes at OU in 1961, while also supervising student teachers for Eastern and Central. His career includes counseling appointments in Lamphere, Birmingham and West Bloomfield Schools. He was also a grant writer and wrote the NDE grant for Apple Island for West Bloomfield Schools. He retired from K-12 education as an Assistant Superintendent in Lamphere in 1995. He spent 34 years in public education, 10 of them at Oakland University in Human Resources Development and Curriculum, Instruction and Leadership.

Though he and his wife parted amicably in 1988, John is a devoted grandfather, making sure all four of his grandsons have musical training and many sports opportunities. The season tickets he can't use often go to the youngsters to keep them interested in sports, and John himself never misses any

concert, program, or game involving the boys. He is also a loyal supporter of Oakland University sports activities and is a member of the President's Club, sitting "on the floor" at most OU basketball games. "I got involved in Oakland basketball through the female basketball players in my classes," he says. "I was one of the professors who encouraged them and gave them release time for practice and road trips."

His plans for the future? "To stay alive and healthy," he says. "I come from a family of soldiers and farmers who worked hard for a living and died young. I've already lived longer than most of them and I plan to stay young by being busy and keeping up my health. I think staying active, especially by being involved in helping others, is the best way to do that."

Gerry Palmer Coon served as administrative assistant and adjunct faculty member in the School of Education and Human Services from 1971 to 1991. She retired after eleven years as co-editor of Rochester OPC's (Older Persons' Commission) quarterly publication, Vintage Views, and is a member of the Pioneer Club.

Pioneer Profile is a feature that appears monthly in the Pioneer Club eNewsletter. If you are interested in being profiled or sharing suggestions on fellow retirees to showcase, please provide your contact information and details to us at oupioneerclub@oakland.edu.

Upcoming Events

Altar Boyz

Select dates & times, February 8th - March 5th

Meadow Brook Theatre

Ticket prices vary

[Click here for more info!](#)

Music for Contest: Oakland University Brass Band & Capital City Brass Band

Monday, February 27th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Varner Recital Hall

All seats \$8

[Click here for more info!](#)

Celebrate Carnival with Music and Style

Tuesday, February 28th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Varner Recital Hall

Pay what you wish at the door

[Click here for more info!](#)

Jean and Fred Braun Memorial Lecture

"Pretty Much Everything" by Aaron Draplin

Wednesday, March 1st, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Meadow Brook Hall
Free admission, seating is limited
[Click here for more info!](#)

Wind Symphony with Guest High School Band
Wednesday, March 1st, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
Free admission
[Click here for more info!](#)

Jonathan Retzlaff, baritone
Friday, March 3rd, 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
Tickets \$14
[Click here for more info!](#)

Terrestrial Celestial: Cody VanderKay
March 3rd - April 9th, 2017, Tuesday - Sunday: Noon - 5 p.m.
OU Art Gallery
Free admission
[Click here for more info!](#)

Children's Concert: Regina Carter with the Oakland Jazz Quartet
Monday, March 6th, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
All seats \$6 (children 2 and under are free)
[Click here for more info!](#)

Senior Dance Concert
Saturday, March 11th, 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
All seats \$8
[Click here for more info!](#)

Imani Winds Chamber Music Society of Detroit at OU
Sunday, March 12th, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall
Tickets \$30
[Click here for more info!](#)

Clarinet Studio Recital
Tuesday, March 14th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Varner Recital Hall

Free admission

[Click here for more info!](#)

History Comes Alive Lecture Series

“The Detroit Race Riot of 1943” by Karen Miller

Tuesday, March 14th, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Gold Rooms B & C, Oakland Center

Admission is free, but reservations are requested

To reserve your space, call (248) 370-3511 or email jkessler@oakland.edu

[Click here for more info!](#)

Oakland University Jazz Singers and the Oakland Jazz Quartet

Wednesday, March 15th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Varner Recital Hall

All seats \$8

[Click here for more info!](#)

University Chorus and Oakland Chorale

Friday & Saturday, March 17th & 18th, 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

University Presbyterian Church (1385 S. Adams Rd. in Rochester Hills)

All seats \$8

[Click here for more info!](#)

Flute Studio Recital

Monday, March 20th, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Varner Recital Hall

Free admission

[Click here for more info!](#)

2017 Meadow Brook Lecture in International Affairs

“America & the World Under President Trump”

by Rajan Menon, Professor of Political Science, City College of New York

Thursday, March 23rd, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Ballroom, Meadow Brook Hall

Free and open to the public, RSVPs requested - polisci@oakland.edu

[Click here for more info!](#)

OU Chamber Orchestra 4th Annual Keyboard Concerto Competition

Thursday, March 23rd, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Varner Recital Hall

All seats \$8

[Click here for more info!](#)

A Chorus Line

Select dates & times, March 23rd - April 2nd

Varner Studio Theatre

Tickets \$20

[Click here for more info!](#)

Oakland University Jazz Band

Friday, March 24th, 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Varner Recital Hall

All seats \$8

[Click here for more info!](#)

Pioneer Club Tour and Reception at Sunset Terrace

Thursday, April 6th 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Invitations coming in the mail in early March.

About the Pioneer Club

The purpose of the Oakland University Pioneer Club is to provide social and educational opportunities to OU retirees and their spouses. It is our hope that this group will serve as a way for you to reconnect with former colleagues as well as maintain a relationship with OU. As a retiree, you remain a valued member of the University community.