

**Alumni Awards Banquet, 25th Anniversary
November 23, 2019**

Thank you, Mayor Barnett.

We, at Oakland, are very proud of claiming you as among our alums, and look forward to continuing our valuable relationship with you and the city of Rochester Hills.

My deep appreciation to the Oakland University Alumni Association for your tireless work to reach across Michigan and the country to connect OU graduates.

Thank you for your passion.

Thank you for proudly representing Oakland University.

And thank you for advocating for the active engagement of all graduates in the broader Oakland community, a community that shares the values of student success, integrity, respect and working together for a common cause.

The dedication of those of you in the OU Alumni Association is a crucial part of building Grizzlies pride, spreading the OU story, and for getting out the word that OU grads have a major impact on their communities and industry, and play a role in shaping a better world.

I want to take a moment to also recognize that the alumni here and everywhere represent the promise and legacy of Oakland University.

However long you spent at Oakland, please understand that we cherish our connection with you, and realize that our success as a university can be measured by the personal success of each of you.

Tonight, I am proud to participate in a celebration and recognition of outstanding Oakland University graduates.

We honor the humanitarian contributions of Anthony Boganey, Class of '88, and Nihal Goonewardene, Class of '72.

We honor an outstanding young alumni, Amy Ring Cebelak, Class of '11.

We honor the exemplary volunteer service of Robert Ray, Class of '05.

We honor the contributions of James Ewing, Class of '92, who exemplifies Oakland's motto to "seek virtue and knowledge."

We honor Ron Kevern, who served as Oakland's assistant vice president of student affairs for 25 years, for his outstanding service to the university.

You will hear more about these honorees and their accomplishments in our program later this evening. But for now we have a very special occasion.

It is my special honor to present an Honorary Degree in the Arts to Jayne Houdyshell, whose acclaimed work in theatre, television and film has certainly made all of us proud.

< READS CITATION >

- Jayne Houdyshell, we honor you as a critically acclaimed and award-winning actress who has maintained a commitment to entertain and brighten the lives of people across the globe.

- You bring to your roles a deep exploration of human nature that allows you to connect to audiences, fulfilling a goal you set at the age of 14 to “make people feel something that was meaningful to them.”

- After graduating with honors in 1974 from the Academy of Dramatic Art at Oakland University, you spent 40 years engaging audiences and gaining the respect of performance experts and your peers.

- The quality of your work has been recognized through numerous nominations and awards for your acting.

- You have won a Tony Award, two Drama Desk Awards, a Theatre World and a Joseph Jefferson award for your work.

- Your remarkable ability to inhabit the lives of the characters you play along with your sense of timing and your comedic abilities on both regional theater and Broadway stages have not only won you enormous praise but also created opportunities for you to appear in television and film.

- During your career, you have been a strong advocate for regional theatre, establishing a theatre in Garrison, Iowa.

- Your career trajectory demonstrates to young actors that passion, dedication and hard work can propel them to successful careers in the arts.

- Your mentorship of young performers helps to elevate the craft of acting, improve your community and advance the careers of your peers and colleagues.

- You exemplify tenacity, pride and drive — values shared by Oakland University.

- In recognition of your outstanding achievements in the arts that have enriched our communities, culture and understanding of humankind, you have merited the honorary degree of Doctor of Arts, Honoris Causa.

Jayne, thank you for being such an exemplary representative of Oakland's values. We will continue to follow your career and share in your success.

