



AN OU FAMILY AFFAIR

Julie Granthen

I've had the pleasure of serving on the Oakland University Alumni Association Board of Directors twice (1990–1996 and 2003–present.) While representing the alumni association over the years at orientations, recruiting events, commencements, etc, I was struck not only by how many OU graduates and former students encourage their children to attend OU but also by how many siblings attend OU.

As OU enters its 50th year, we should celebrate the abundance of these OU “legacies.” The Dawne Sheridan Long family is a perfect example of the OU legacy at work. Dawne earned a degree in Human Resource Development. Upon graduation, she married Wayne Long, who played on OU's basketball team from 1975 through 1976. Their son Joshua currently attends OU, studying Finance. Dawne's sister, Colleen Sheridan Bruderick, earned a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Education from OU. While an OU student, Colleen sang in the Meadow Brook Estate choir. She and her husband currently serve as missionaries in China. Another sister, Julee Sheridan Fietsam, earned a degree in Communications from OU. Her husband, Randy Fietsam, earned a degree in Computer and Information Science. Julee and Randy were incoming freshmen when I was an Orientation Group Leader. What a great feeling to know that your former students or “charges” graduated. Dawne's brothers, Bruce and Steve Sheridan, both attended OU as well.

Siblings abound in the Honors College. Rose Rohlman Smith, HC class of 1986, and Dr. Christopher Rohlman, HC class of 1984, were our first siblings. Rose is a school psychologist with the Farmington School District, and Chris a professor at Albion College.

Holly Manhire Adams, HC class of 1982, Jeff Manhire, and Denise Manhire Donohue, HC class of 1986, and Scott Edwards and Marcia Edwards Schumacher, HC class of 1985 followed. Sean Higgins, was in the HC class of 1988, and his brother Scott in the HC class of 1990. Sean is an attorney in Texas, and Scott a film professor out East. Annette and Debra Sammut both graduated from the HC in 1992. Amy Clapp also graduated from the HC in 1992, following in the footsteps of her sister Alisa Clapp Intyre, HC class of 1989. Alisa is a professor specializing in Victorian Literature at Indiana University—East.

This fall, twin sisters, Caryn and Jessica Shermetaro, will enter the Honors College. Caryn and Jessica's parents, graduates of Rochester High School, both earned their bachelor's and master's degrees from OU. Mark Shermetaro is currently employed as the Director of Business Development at Methode Electronics. He earned his bachelor's degree in Mechanical and Systems engineering and an MBA. Anne Ahearn Shermetaro earned two degrees from the School of Education, a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in leadership and curriculum development. Anne is currently home schooling their gymnast daughter Alyssa. Unlike many of their classmates who wanted to "go away" to school, both Mark and Anne chose to attend OU. Mark credits the quality education he received at OU for his success in the private sector. Due to the hands-on experiences he received in his engineering and lab classes, he was ready for employment upon graduation. Caryn and Jessica chose to attend OU for the campus environment—to be part of a community. OU offered the programs they wished to pursue and the small class sizes which will allow them to personally know their professors. Caryn plans to study biochemistry; her future plans include at-

tending dental (orthodontic) school. Jessica will pursue an education degree, in the footsteps of her mother and her mother's father. Mark and Anne have six children. Jamie (16), Scott (14), Alyssa (11), and Allie (8) might also attend OU.

Marriages have been a happy occurrence in the Honors College since its beginning. Diane Geffert and Brian McGee, of the charter Honors College class of 1981, were the first Honors College couple to marry. Rose Rohlman, HC class of 1986, married former HC student Michael Smith. Leanne DeFever, HC class of 1984, married former HC student and 1982 graduate, Dr. Steve Swarts. Steve and Leanne now reside in New York. Steve is Senior Scientist at the Environmental Science Center for the Syracuse Research Corporation. Anita Brouns, HC class of 1984, married former HC student Tracy Shagnea. Carol Roan and Jim Schewe are both 1987 HC graduates; they became the second HC alumni couple to marry. Katherine Cron, HC class of 1988 married former HC student and 1989 OU graduate John Griswold. Readers may remember Kate's mother, Elyse Cron, a retired faculty member. Amy Clapp, HC class of 1992 married former HC student and OU graduate David Salmonson. Amy runs the Detroit Conservatory of Music in downtown Rochester.

As the Honors College celebrates its 30th anniversary in September 2007, we are eager to admit the first student whose parents both graduated from the Honors College. Many such stories exist in OU's brief history. While many students, due to our still largely commuter culture, come through the walls of the university, often largely unnoticed, this silent tradition of parents and children attending Oakland is being written. And there is no doubt that the legacy will continue. Given the rich history of our OU "legacies," I hope that the alumni association and the office of admissions find creative ways to provide even more legacy scholarships for the children and grandchildren of our graduates and former students.