



OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY

GOD FIRST!

University Advancement | Office of Alumni Relations
& Alumni Council NETWORK of Alums

Hi Oakwood Alumni of the Reunion Honor Classes of the 3s & 8s --

Congratulations for reaching another class reunion mile marker in the lifecycle of being an Oakwood alum. As you begin to plan and strategize your class's special homecoming celebration, the Office of Alumni Relations and the Alumni Council and its NETWORK of alums wants to be your partner to help make sure your class reunion is a celebration to remember. Our theme this Alumni Homecoming is **"Ambassadors of the Experience."** This document - ***Class Reunion TOOLBOX for Success*** - is a road map to provide you the who, what, where, how, and some best practices to seamlessly plan your class reunion.

The Office of Alumni Relations' goal is to create a culture of engagement and philanthropy toward helping Oakwood University to **thrive to help benefit its current and future students**. The success of YOUR class reunion celebration helps us to achieve this goal and serves to encourage, motivate, and inspire other Oakwood alumni class reunion celebrations in the future.

In observing other successful alumni programs across the country, the Office of Alumni Relations at Oakwood University has discovered the **two greatest desires** of most alumni is first helping their alma mater to thrive, and secondly having a hand in impacting current and future **students' positive experience, like or better than when they attended**. By providing the alumni community many quality choices they **value**, it will naturally increase their **points of engagement, therefore achieving their greatest desires**. In that spirit, this **"Class Reunion Toolbox for Success" Document** will provide your class a **value to engage**.

The following are the **4 MAIN ALUMNI ENGAGEMENTS** the Office of Alumni Relations encourages and promotes each Reunion Honor class to engage in leading up to and during Oakwood Alumni Homecoming 2023.

- **ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SERVICE –**

- On Friday and Sunday of Homecoming, we will be having our *Alumni 360* initiative which is where alumni **circle back** to Oakwood to **network** for their profession and **provide mentoring, internships, and job opportunities** to our current students.
- We would like many alums from our honor classes to help the University get our students "Career-Certified" for today's job market.
- **By using our Engagement Link, we need names of those alums from your class interested in participating with their former department's faculty, and student club leaders and possibly serve as mentors, provide internships, employment opportunities.** (Use you provided ENGAGEMENT LINK) or email their interest to alumni@oakwood.edu.

- **ENGAGEMENT THROUGH OAKWOOD CLASS MEMORIES –**

- Create NEW memories by sitting with your class in the reserved seating on the main floor of the Von Braun during Sabbath Divine Worship Service.
- THEN After Sabbath Divine Worship Service our Oakwood photographers will be taking pictures on the stage of all Reunion Honor Classes.
- Just before Sabbath Vesper Service at OUC we are having a Reunion Honor Class Memories Program which is a video montage of pictures, clips, and narration of your Oakwood experience and stories from ALL our Reunion Honor classes this year. The 15 Honor Classes will have an opportunity to provide our video editors with their personal pictures, videos clips, and stories to place on the program.
- **Please immediately determine and share who will be doing your class memories section voiceover/script and begin to encourage your class to send in their memories now to alumni@oakwood.edu.** Just know the University will be gathering pictures from your class yearbook, but any **additional pictures or videos clips must be submitted by the DEADLINE date of January 31st to be included.**

- **ENGAGEMENT THROUGH GIVING –**

- The last 3 years honor classes have given nearly \$231,000 leading up to Alumni Homecoming through their generous donations toward scholarships, the annual fund, capital campaign projects, or other Oakwood causes of their choosing. With the magic of technology, ALL of our Reunion Classes **have the freedom of selecting anything they**

desire to give to at give.oakwood.edu, and know their gift will increase their class giving totals when they give to their alma mate.

- **If possible, please determine your giving GOAL for this class reunion by December 1st .**
- Some classes like to even setup their own GIVING LINK through the University to give toward their class' established student scholarship or project FUND.
- Because classes are considered an **“alumni organization,”** that has **structure with officers**, they can become part of the **Alumni Council** as an Alumni Organization and **send 2 class representatives to serve on the Council.** **Contact the Office of Alumni Relations at: alumni@oakwood.edu to start the process TODAY.**

As was done during our virtual Homecoming Divine Worship service last year, the Office of Alumni Relations will be sharing class acknowledgments just before offering regarding the following reunion class accomplishments:

- **The Class that raises or gives the most during their class reunion year** (started the day after our last Alumni Homecoming). FYI From YOUR CLASS YEAR GIVING DATA, Oakwood has tracked all donations your class has given directly to Oakwood since graduating from Oakwood. This is **IMPORTANT** to understand as your gifts toward ANY Oakwood cause are posted, like giving toward a particular scholarship, to the annual fund, an *Ignite 10 monthly recurring (annualize credit toward your class giving totals to promote program)*, to the University endowment, your academic department of choice, or to a university building project, **those gifts are measured and tracked both as an individual alum and collective** to the class year an alum is connected to. So, feel free to have **CHOICE in your impact of giving**, because the class you're associated with gets tracked with that impact as well.
- **The Class that has the highest participation in giving.**
- **The Class that reaches or comes closest to its goal**
- **The Class with the Highest number of alumni engagements counts.** We want to celebrate and acknowledge alums **giving** of their time.

- **ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HAVING FUN & FELLOWSHIP –**
 - The value of fellowship from simply meeting together leading up to your class reunion Alumni Homecoming year and during the Homecoming week celebration is unmeasurable.
 - Some classes like to get together during the Alumni Homecoming week, especially Sabbath dinner and/or Saturday Night Fun if they choose -- either an in-person or virtual ZOOM fun event.
 - The Oakwood University Office of Alumni Relations will provide your class with its own ZOOM link to organize, plan, and meet prior to Alumni Homecoming and even use it after Homecoming as well.
 - In our effort to **measure our success in TOTAL Oakwood alumni engagement connections** with your alma mater and also fellowship connections with classmates, the Office of Alumni Relations and the Alumni Council and its NETWORK of alums, are **asking your class to provide a report of the number of times each of your classmates connects** either attending a class meeting, meeting with your reunion organizing team, contacting and working directly with the University, engaging with the University's social media, or **any connections that are Oakwood related that forwards the mission of the institution we love.**
 - We VALUE those points of engagement. The top three classes ENGAGEMENT COUNTS numbers among this year's Reunion Honors classes of 2023 will be acknowledged and celebrated on Sabbath as well.
 - Due to COVID as was done last year, many classes are planning a virtual ZOOM event Saturday night which is part of the ENGAGEMENT THROUGH Having Fun FELLOWSHIP. Hopefully, in 2023 our reunion classes can have in person type events during Alumni Homecoming.
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Answers to Frequently Asked Questions, Ideas, & Suggestions

- **Who are all my classmates and how can we get a list of names and contact info?** We've got you covered. **Determine a contact person, preferably your class President or secretary, to request your class list.** We can provide you a class list of names of what we have. However, with so many alumni moving around, by asking your classmates they may have more recent contact information than we have in the Oakwood alumni database. We ask Reunion

Honor classes to partner with the Office of Alumni Relations and the Alumni Council to update and reach as many of your classmates as possible for this year's celebration and your gatherings in the future. By the using the technology of a Google docs link, **we can setup your ENGAGEMENT SURVEY LINK** for you to share via text, email, and even in social media to your classmates to complete and submit. If you don't have your Oakwood Engagement Link yet, please contact us at alumni@oakwood.edu.

- **How to Reach our Classmates? Upon your request, we can provide a designed Class Reunion flyer for your entire Alumni Homecoming Reunion celebration** for you to text, email, post on social media to attract your classmates and stir-up excitement. **Your class can also request the Office of Alumni Relations to send out an email letter, you provide, to all your classmates as well.** We can help promote your class togethering and events on the Oakwood University website, social media platforms, WJOU, and our weekly InsideOakwood email blast to more than 15,000 alumni and friends.
- **Where can we get the hotel list that has best preferable Oakwood RATES during this Oakwood Alumni Homecoming 2023?** Email alumni@oakwood.edu to request this year's hotel list & rates.
- **Where can we get the SCHEDULE OF EVENTS dates and times for Oakwood Alumni Homecoming 2023?** Email alumni@oakwood.edu to get access to the OU App for UP-TO-THE-MINUTE information and alumni engagement opportunities.
- **Who would our class contact regarding food catering services if our class event is on campus?** If planning an in-person gathering needing food or just refreshments on campus, Sodexo Catering Services is who you will need to connect with. **If you need these type of food services, please reach out to the Office of Alumni Relations initially to receive their pricing list at: alumni@oakwood.edu**
- **What are the Options for On Campus Places to Rent?** Email alumni@oakwood.edu
- **What are the Locations Off Campus to rent for our event?** Email alumni@oakwood.edu
- **What University Projects and Campaigns can our class choose from to donate toward?** Last year the University launched the new Capital Campaign "Enlarging our Territory" Share this GIVING LINK <https://give.oakwood.edu/oakwood-university-capital-campaign/> to direct your classmates to give today. Or they can setup our popular, convenient, and impactful **Ignite 10** <https://give.oakwood.edu/ignite/> recurring monthly

giving program. The Oakwood Ignite 10 initiative funds **student scholarships**, the University **Annual Fund**, and the **Endowment** depending on the giving level selected. It's a one stop shop/give to fund All YOUR favorite Oakwood causes. With our current endowment now at \$27 million, you can help the University reach its endowment goal of \$100 million by 2030.

- **How do we donate to our chosen project or campaign?** Go to www.give.oakwood.edu and choose from any of the scholarships, project, or Oakwood causes you like. As stated before, a class can setup and establish their own giving FUND through the University.
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Great NEWS for all Reunion Honor classes:

Back by popular demand -- especially for Reunion Honor classes -- we will be offering the successful **Oakwood Alumni Homecoming in a BOX for 2023**. In 2021, 152 Oakwood households gave to get their Homecoming in a BOX which raised over \$19,000 toward student scholarships from their giving. Praise God for their generosity.

Alumni in a Box depending on the giving level chosen, your classmates can have their FIRST NAME & CLASS YEAR placed on their Oakwood apparel to wear with pride.

If you have any questions, suggestions, ideas, or concerns please contact the Office of Alumni Relations in the Division of University Advancement.

Blessings and Success to your Class Reunion Plans,

Emile D. Parker

Emile D. Parker, MBA & Class of 1983

Oakwood University

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“Creating a Culture of Engagement & Philanthropy”