

Honorary Degree

June 18, 2020

HONORARY DEGREE

PESCOVITZ: **Welcome and Introductions** of people on the call:
Michelle Piskulich, Interim Provost
Duane Mezwa, Interim Dean, School of Medicine

At Oakland University, we confer honorary degrees to people whose noteworthy accomplishments have a major impact on their communities, industries, and in making the world a better place.

Over the years, we have acknowledged a diverse range of recipients who individually and collectively reaffirm our commitment to scholarly, creative and humanitarian values.

This morning, I am proud to confer an Honorary Degree to Najah Bazy, whose nomination has been reviewed by the University Senate Honorary Degrees Committee, recommended to the provost and enthusiastically affirmed by the president.

I want to take a moment to express my admiration to Najah for her compassion and selflessness as a practicing nurse and entrepreneur.

Her sense of purpose inspired her to find resourceful ways to provide much-needed supplies for her patients living in poverty, and her health-care expertise lead to the creation of a transcultural clinical-care model that fosters better understanding among clinicians and patients.

The conferral of the doctorate, *honoris causa*, on Najah Bazy is Oakland University's recognition of truly distinguished achievement beyond the classroom and campus, and a testament to the power of education, initiative and vision.

MEZWA: **NAJAH BAZZY**, we honor you as

Thank you, President Pescovitz.

Today, it is my privilege and honor to introduce Najah Bazy.

She is an interfaith leader and internationally esteemed health care consultant.

She is a gifted transcultural clinical nurse and diversity specialist leader who promotes cross-

cultural understanding between clinicians and patients.

Najah is also an accomplished C-E-O.

In 1996, she founded a nonprofit agency from the back of her mini-van that is now a 40 thousand square foot warehouse.

Since 2004, Zaman International has supported marginalized women and children.

She offers them more than clothing, food and furniture; she offers these women education and skills training so they can get back on their feet.

Najah's incredible work has reached far beyond our state.

Zaman has funded overseas relief projects bringing safe water and humanitarian relief to impoverished communities.

To date, she has helped more than 2.1 million families worldwide.

She has educated international audiences about Islamic practices and beliefs through her books, documentaries, and talks, including a Ted X Talk.

In 2019, she was named a CNN Hero for helping to break the cycle of poverty.

(Pause)

Last November, Associate Dean Robert Noiva and I had the good fortune to spend a day with Najah at Zaman International in Inkster.

There we found a huge warehouse full of people learning and working together for the betterment of others.

We saw clothes being sewed and furniture being repaired for re-distribution.

Groups of people were stocking canned goods or cataloguing new donations.

In the full kitchen, individuals were doing more than just cooking - they were learning restaurant managerial skills.

It was election day, and we saw a group of women refugees participating in a mock election.

Perhaps the most enlightening part of the visit occurred when we witnessed a young woman come in off the street and simply ask Najah: "How can I help?"

This is the spirit of Najah Bazzy - a CEO, yes - but a truly kind person who cares deeply about the community and others.

More than anything, she wants to make each person's life better than it was the day before.

For this - we bestow on her the honorary degree.

PISKULICH: **NAJAH BAZZY**, you have contributed to the intellectual, cultural, commercial and civic betterment of our community and merit the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities Honoris Causa.

It is, therefore, with great honor and special privilege that Oakland University awards to you, **NAJAH BAZZY**, the honorary Degree of **Doctor of Humanities**.

AT THIS TIME BAZZY WOULD PUT HER HOOD ON (will anyone be there to assist her?)– **NEED VERBAGE TO DIRECT**

PESCOVITZ: Congratulations to our new **Honorary Doctor of Humanities**. Now, I'd like to invite Najah to give her remarks.

BAZZY: **Insert Honorary Degree Speech**

PISKULICH: Congratulations **DR. BAZZY**

MEZWA: Congratulations **DR. BAZZY**

PESCOVITZ: Congratulations **DR. BAZZY**, on your truly outstanding accomplishments. **NEED VERBAGE TO END THE CEREMONY**

