

A New Paradigm For Oakland

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A NEW PARADIGM IS EMERGING between the University of Pittsburgh and the community of Oakland that will lead to a positive future for Oakland residents. When our grassroots movement began more than six years ago, we talked about the need for a new consciousness in this relationship. The changes now occurring across various venues are a forerunner for this new beginning.

One such venue is in the leadership of the city of Pittsburgh. The mayor-elect now has an opportunity to end the social injustices this community suffers due to the university's presence. His status as a political leader within this community will not be determined by the number of jobs created or the amount of revenue raised, but by the quality and quantity of the caring and love he gives to this community in the name of ending injustices.

Another change occurring is in Pittsburgh's media organizations. In the past, many of these organizations were no longer champions for people who had lost their voices; they no longer offered honest leadership. These organizations became preoccupied with maintaining their own existence and protecting the university's image. However, the media are now more willing to pursue and reveal the truth and to face the possible turbulence resulting from those actions.

Oakland organizations are another venue where major changes are occurring. For far too long, community organizations have allowed the University of Pittsburgh to dictate how residents were able to live. Members of these organizations were too reluctant or too fearful to support residents who espoused solutions that university administrators opposed. Their inaction alienated residents, leading some to leave. Others who remained lost their sense of belonging in the community where they were born and raised. Fortunately there is a new consciousness developing in these organizations in which members are willing to speak out truthfully in articulating the numerous problems caused by the university's presence.

The search for a new chancellor at the university is a part of the changes leading to a positive future for Oakland. The days of university administrators dominating Oakland and taking power away from political leaders, media and Oakland organizations are coming to an end.

The community status of this university will no longer be determined by its ability to dominate others. It will not be determined by how many billions of dollars it has in an endowment or capital improvement fund. It will not be determined by how many hundreds of millions of dollars it has acquired in research funds and in earned profits. It will not be determined by its vast numbers of students and assets. Rather, that status will be determined by the university's respect of human dignity, compassion for the community and movement away from fierce independence to interdependence with the community in which it resides.

The domination of the university and the resultant social injustices against Oakland are chronicled in the links of AmericanSpring.me. University administrators, trustees, faculty and staff can never repay longtime residents who passed away or gave up hope and moved away. However, as the new paradigm emerges, longtime residents who have chosen to stay and future residents will experience new beginnings and a positive relationship with the University of Pittsburgh characterized by greater balance and harmony.

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