

Benefactor to build new theater at Alfred University

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Dr. Marlin Miller Jr., a 1954 graduate of Alfred University and chairman emeritus of the AU Board of Trustees, has agreed to build a 500-seat proscenium theater at Alfred University. The new facility will expand and complement the existing Miller Performing Arts Center that opened in 1995. "We are very grateful to Marlin Miller for this wonderful gift. His generosity and his love for the arts are truly inspiring," said Dr. Charles M. Edmondson, Alfred University president, who made the announcement to campus at a faculty meeting Friday afternoon."A theater of this size and quality, when combined with the other facilities available at the Miller Performing Arts Center, will allow us to expand our programs in performing arts quite significantly," said Edmondson. "The facility will be exceptional for a university of our size, and it will be far superior to anything currently available in this region. The addition of the theater will give Alfred University performing arts spaces on a par with those found in major universities."The theater will be able to accommodate main stage performances in dance, drama and music. The University's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences offers a major in theater, and minors in dance and music. The new facility will make it possible for the University to offer a broader range of academic programs in the performing arts, as well as to build summer programs for the general public. "We believe that the expanded Miller Performing Arts Center, combined with the planned Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art, will make Alfred a cultural center for the Southern Tier, and that it will contribute greatly to the quality of life and to economic development in this region," said Edmondson.Independent sources estimate a cost of \$10 million for the new facility. That would make Miller's gift the largest every received by Alfred University, surpassing previous gifts for the Miller Performing Arts Center, the Powell Campus Center, and the Olin College of Business. Architect for the project is Bruce Wood of Kallman McKinnell and Wood, Inc., Boston, MA, who designed the original structure. His original building has won numerous awards, including an "excellence in theater design" award in 2003 from the United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Inc. (USITT). "We hope to begin construction of the new theater in the fall of 2005, and to complete it within about 18 months of the starting date," said Edmondson. Stephen Crosby, professor of theater and chairman of the Performing Arts Division, said the new theater will help the division to become "one of the truly outstanding unified educational programs of theater, music and dance in the country."Miller retired last fall as chairman and chief executive officer of Arrow International, Inc., a medical devices manufacturing company that he founded in Reading, PA, in 1975. The company was honored by Forbes magazine in October 2003 as one of "America's Best Small Companies," a list of what the magazine called "200 Hot Shots." Also in 2003, Arrow International was named the "technology company of the year" by the Technology Council of Central Pennsylvania, and the Council honored Miller as the recipient of its "outstanding leadership in technology" award.After graduating from Alfred University in 1954 with a B.S. in ceramic engineering, Miller earned his MBA from Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration in 1956. He served with the U.S. Army Finance Corps in Germany, and then joined the Glen Gery Corporation, a manufacturer of building products, in 1959. He rose to the position of executive vice president before leaving in 1972 to become a vice president of Connor Investment Services. Miller joined the Alfred University Board of Trustees in 1972, and chaired the board from 1983-89. He has been chairman of the Academic Affairs Committee, as well as a member of the Executive, Investment, Strategic Planning and Human Resources and Compensation committees.He is Alfred University's most generous donor, best known for his support of the arts. In addition to his commitment for the new theater, and the gift that allowed the University to build the Miller Performing Arts Center, Miller created the Marianne Miller endowment for the Division of Ceramic Art in the School of Art & Design, in memory of his first wife, who was an alumna of the school. He and Ginger Miller, his second wife, have supported a dance residency program that each year brings well-known dancers and choreographers to the AU campus. They are also major supporters of the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred.Miller in 1992 created the Fred H. Gertz Chair in English in memory of a professor who had a significant impact on his life.Miller is also a member of the Board of Overseers of the Harvard School of Business; past chairman of the Reading Hospital and Medical Center; and a member of the Berks Business Education Coalition. He has been a member of the Bucknell University Parents Council, a past president of the Hawk Mountain Council, Boy Scouts of America, and the Manufacturers Association of Berks County.