

Memorial service for 'Doc' Walker set for Sept. 9

9/01/05

Alfred University faculty, staff and students, as well as alumni, will hold a memorial service in honor of Dr. Gail Walker, a professor of psychology who died June 7, 2005, after a nearly four-year struggle with ovarian cancer. The service is planned for 4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 9, in the Union University Church in Alfred. "When Dr. Gail Walker was first diagnosed with cancer, she met with me to discuss arrangements for a memorial service saying that, though she hoped such plans would not be needed for some time, she wanted to begin thinking about the most appropriate way to honor the gift of a life when it comes to its conclusion," said the Rev. Laurie DeMott, pastor of the Union University Church as well as interfaith advisor for the University. "She wanted a service that would reflect all of the parts of her life that brought her joy -- her family, her friends, her colleagues, her church, and her students -- and that would be as much a celebration of life as an acknowledgement of our grief." The Rev. Ms. DeMott said the service will include readings, hymns, and prayers chosen by Dr. Walker and reflections on her life by members of the Alfred community. Friday afternoon was selected as the time for the service with the hope that alumni would be able to return to Alfred to pay tribute to Walker, who won the Excellence in Teaching Award 12 times during her 24 years as an AU faculty member. Walker, according to Dr. Charles M. Edmonson, AU president, "was one of the most-beloved" professors to current students and alumni. A nationally recognized expert on death and dying, Walker taught "Introduction to Psychology," "Human Sexuality," and "Death and Dying." Over the course of her 24 years at Alfred, she estimated she had taught more than 12,000 students. Even though she knew during the spring semester that she had exhausted her options for treatment, she continued to teach until the end of the semester, just a month before her death. In her memory, Alfred University has established the Gail C. Walker Memorial Fund. Those wishing to contribute to the fund should make their checks payable to Alfred University, and send them to Alfred University, University Relations, 1 Saxon Drive, Alfred, NY 14802. In the memo line on the check, please make sure you indicate that the money is to be used for Dr. Walker's memorial. Additional information about the memorial fund may be obtained by contacting University Relations at 607.871.2144 or by e-mailing the Alumni and Community Relations office at alumni@alfred.edu