

Nationally known actor to come to AU as artist-in-residence

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Actor and producer Bill Pullman will reprise an old role - Professor Pullman - when he visits Alfred University as an artist-in-residence Oct. 4 and 5. During his residency, Pullman will teach workshops on acting and screenwriting to AU Performing Arts and writing students and will also speak to a Communications class on how the media deal with celebrities. During the week prior to Pullman's visit, a series of his films will be shown evenings in Nevins Theatre, Powell Campus Center. At 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 4, Pullman will introduce the film for the evening and talk about how it was made and his role in it. There's a possibility, said Dan Napolitano, director of Student Activities for Alfred University, that Pullman's new film, *Iggy Goes Down*, to be released in February 2002, may have a special premiere on campus that night. "I think it will be really exciting for our students to talk with Pullman, then watch the film and perhaps discuss it afterward with him," said Napolitano. "That will add a new perspective to the film for the students, and perhaps a new appreciation for what an actor does." "It would be a big deal in itself to get a name like Bill Pullman to visit Alfred, but this is an even greater deal because he's a local, and he's doing so much," said senior Kyle Torok, captain of "Pirate Theater," a student-run comedy troupe. "Other 'big names' have just trotted onto campus, given a speech, said goodnight and gone their way," said Torok. "But Pullman is doing a lot more: premiering a film, teaching some acting workshops, and giving a Bergren Forum lecture. That shows he is an accessible, everyday guy, despite Hollywood fame." While the residency is primarily for University faculty and staff, there will be opportunities for the public to see Pullman. Plans call for him to conduct a session from 3 to 4 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 5, in Nevins Theatre during which the public will be invited to hear him speak about his career. Also on Friday, the University will host a reception and dinner beginning at 7 p.m. in Powell Campus Center for guests from the surrounding area. Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Tickets are \$20 each and may be purchased through the University Relations office, 607 871 2144. The dinner is co-sponsored by the Wellsville and Hornell Chambers of Commerce. The Hornell native, who wanted to be a construction worker when he started college at Delhi (NY) State College, became hooked on theater when he auditioned for a role in the college's production of *"The Bald Soprano."* He switched to theater, received a bachelor's degree from Oneonta (NY) State College, and then earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in directing from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1979. After graduation, he was offered his first professional role: teaching in the theater department at Montana State University at Bozeman. In 1981, however, he gave up full-time teaching, deciding to try professional acting. He moved to New York City, and worked a variety of jobs between auditions. His New York stage appearances included a critically acclaimed performance as Wesley in Sam Shepard's *"Curse of the Starving Class."* In 1985, he was offered a part in *"Nanataiwai"* for a three-month stint in Los Angeles, and decided to try some film auditions. He made his debut as Earl, a serial killer in the comedy, *"Ruthless People,"* in 1986, followed by a role in *"The Accidental Tourist."* In contrast with his more serious stage roles, Pullman landed a number of comedy roles in films including *"Spaceballs,"* *"Sibling Rivalry,"* *"The Serpent and the Rainbow,"* *"Rocket Gibraltar,"* *"Cold Feet,"* and *"Nervous Ticks,"* while also continuing roles in dramas like *"Home Fires Burning,"* *"Liebestraum,"* *"A League of Their Own,"* and *"Crazy in Love."* He continued working in theater, primarily with the Los Angeles Theater Company, with roles in *"Barrabas,"* *"All My Sons,"* *"Demon Wine"* and *"Control Freaks."* In 1993, he had roles in three major films, *"Sommersby,"* *"Sleepless in Seattle,"* and *"Malice,"* as well as a role in a made-for-cable film, *"The Last Seduction,"* directed by John Dahl, a former student of Pullman's. His film credits now number in excess of 30, and include leading roles in *"While You Were Sleeping,"* *"Casper,"* *"Independence Day,"* *"Lost Highway,"* *"The End of Violence"* and *"Zero Effect."* Pullman turned his considerable stage directing experience to the screen with a new version of the classic western, *"The Virginian."* Pullman and his wife, Tamara Hurwitz, have three children, Maesa, Jack and Louis.