

'Drawn to Diversity' Feb. 3 event postponed

1/31/07

Alfred University has postponed its annual "Drawn to Diversity" program slated for Feb. 3 due to the recent hospitalization of the scheduled guest speaker, legendary cartoonist Morrie Turner. Turner suffered a mild heart attack on Jan. 25 but is expected to make a full recovery. Recognized as the first African-American to draw a nationally syndicated comic strip, Turner created the art for the AU event poster. The "Drawn to Diversity" program has been tentatively postponed until March, when planners hope to present a panel of numerous artists from the field of comic strip art. Upon hearing the news of Turner's health and the event's postponement, comic artists Charlos Gary (Working It Out), Keith Knight (K-Chronicles), and Cory Thomas (Watch Your Head) have volunteered their time to help fill the void in the program. Details will be released in the coming weeks as artists are confirmed. Each year's program focuses on a specific media or art form and explores diversity and equality within that area. Dan Napolitano, AU's director of Student Activities, has relayed the Alfred community's well wishes to Turner's family. He also expressed hopes that after his recovery period, Turner will once again consider visiting and sharing his inspirational stories. Gary cites Turner as "one of the most respected African-American cartoonists in the country. I, like Aaron McGruder, Cory Thomas and Darrin Bell, have followed Morrie's trailblazing footsteps as current syndicated African-American cartoonists." Napolitano is currently communicating with several other Morrie-inspired artists and expects that the guest speakers will reflect the diversity that Turner bravely ushered in so many years ago. Interested artists can contact Napolitano at napolitano@alfred.edu. Napolitano adds, "At the end of every phone conversation, Morrie would leave me with his favorite message; 'Keep the Faith!' We're all graciously 'keeping the faith' for Morrie's full recovery as well as our continued efforts toward promoting equality."