

NYSTAR head to address Alfred University graduates

4/30/01

Dr. Russell W. Bessette, executive director of the New York State Office of Science, Technology and Academic Research (NYSTAR), will deliver Alfred University's commencement exercises at 10 a.m. May 12 in McLane Center on the AU campus. His speech is entitled "Building Castles in the Sky." Bessette will be among three people who also received honorary degrees during the ceremony. He and Dr. W. Richard Ott, who was provost and vice president of academic affairs at the University from 1988 to 2000, will receive Doctor of Science degrees, honoris causa. Dr. Gene Bernstein, who has been chairman of the AU Board of Trustees for the past six years, will receive a Doctor of Humane Letters degree, honoris causa. Pamela Lavin Bernstein '71 will receive a Presidential Order of Merit in recognition of her service to the University during Dr. Bernstein's term as chairman. Also slated to receive their degrees May 12 are six doctoral degree candidates; 91 master's degree candidates and about 325 baccalaureate degree candidates. Among the graduates will be the first two to receive the University's newest degree - the master's in biomedical materials engineering science. Patrick Clapp of Olean and Molly Kyser of Allegany, both of whom received their B.S. degrees in ceramic engineering from Alfred University, are the first to complete the interdisciplinary program that combines ceramic engineering and biology.

Gov. George Pataki appointed Bessette to head NYSTAR in January 2000. The newly created agency was charged with growing New York State's leadership position in high technology research and economic development, with a critical element in that mission being the recognition that New York's public and private research universities and academic centers are powerful economic development engines. "As a highly regarded medical professional, researcher, and scholar with a proven record as a leader, Dr. Bessette has proven he is eminently qualified for his position as executive director of NYSTAR," said Dr. Charles M. Edmondson, Alfred University president. "In just over a year, he has played an instrumental role in defining the mission of NYSTAR, one which we believe will benefit New York State as a whole by using the power of our research and technology to generate jobs." In that regard, NYSTAR's mission and Alfred University's mission are closely aligned. We know that the research coming out in our laboratories can help strengthen New York's competitive position as a technological leader, and we know the graduates who will receive their degrees from Alfred University this May will be among those who carry out that mission," said Edmondson. "For that reason, having Dr. Bessette speak at commencement, to give them their 'marching orders,' in a sense, seemed appropriate."

AN ALUMNUS of Manhattan College, Bessette holds Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Dental Surgery degrees from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He was trained in general surgery and plastic and reconstructive surgery, is a board-certified plastic surgeon and is a Fellow of both the American College of Surgeons and the American College of Dentists. He has authored or co-authored more than 55 peer-reviewed academic publications, reports and research papers and has authored eight textbook chapters on reconstructive surgery, and was awarded the First Place Research Paper Award by the American Society of Maxillofacial Surgeons in 1983. In addition, he maintained a private practice in plastic and reconstructive surgery for fifteen years and been on the medical staff in the Head and Neck Center at Sisters Hospital in Buffalo. Bessette was a clinical professor in the Department of Surgery (Reconstructive Plastic Surgery) at the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Medicine, and received an Educator of the Year Award from the School. Bessette was director of the Instrument and Devices Clinical Laboratory at the Center for Advanced Technology at Buffalo from 1985 to 1989, and was the executive director of the Buffalo Technology Transfer Center at Sisters Hospital from 1997 to 1999. He has served on the New York State Public Health Council since 1995 and has been chairman of the Council since 1996. He is a past president of the Erie County Medical Society, the American Society of Temporomandibular Joint Surgeons and the University of Buffalo Medical Alumni Association. He is a past member of the Associate of Academic Chairmen of Plastic Surgery. Bessette served on President George Bush's transition team for the National Institutes of Health, and has served on several statewide medical committees.

GENE BERNSTEIN, who has been a member of the Alfred University Board of Trustees since 1986, is now completing his sixth year as chairman of the Board of Trustees. During his tenure, the University completed its New Millennium Campaign, raising \$82,610,316 and exceeding its \$70 million goal by nearly 20 percent. Bernstein also chaired the successful presidential search process that resulted in Dr. Charles M. Edmondson being appointed the 13th president of Alfred University. After earning his B.A. degree in English Literature from Alfred University in 1969, Bernstein earned a Master of Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1970 and a Ph.D. degree in English Literature from the University of Massachusetts in 1974. He started his professional career in

academia as a visiting assistant professor of English Literature at the University of Arizona (1974-75) and then as an assistant professor of English Literature at the University of Notre Dame (1975-1982). He gave up his academic career to return to Long Island and the family's business, Northville Industries, where he advanced from vice president to president and then vice chairman of the Board. In September, 2000, Bernstein returned to academia as dean of the Scott Skodnek Business Development Center at Hofstra University. Active in community affairs, Dr. Bernstein is founding and current general chairman for the Lightpath (formerly Northville) Long Island Classic Senior PGA Tournament which has raised more than \$2,000,000 for charity since it began in 1987. He has served on the National Center for Disabilities Services Board of Directors since 1989; the Institute for Student Achievement Board of Directors since 1993; the WLIW (Channel 21) Advisory Board since 1996; and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservations' Statewide Golf Advisory Board since 1996. Earlier this year, he joined the Long Island Business Development Council. Among the honors bestowed upon Dr. Bernstein are the Metropolitan Energy Council Man of the Year Award, 1989; the Met Golf Writers' Association Bing Crosby Sponsor's Award, 1996; the Alliance of Sales and Marketing Executives' William Olsten Hall of Fame Award, 1996; the Long Island State Parks Foundation's Distinguished Service Award, 1997; and the Public Relations Professionals of Long Island's Achievement Award, 1998. He is married to Pamela Alice Lavin Bernstein '71. They are the parents of two daughters living in Manhattan, Jennifer Anne and Melinda Joy, who is married to Marc Feinberg. PAMELA BERNSTEIN will receive a Presidential Order of Merit during commencement for her efforts on behalf of the University during the past 15 years. A native of Peekskill, New York, Mrs. Bernstein attended Alfred University where from 1967 to 1970. She married Dr. Gene M. Bernstein in January 1970 and transferred to the University of Massachusetts in Amherst where she earned a B.A. in Latin American history while he completed his doctoral work, and they had their first child. When Dr. Bernstein gave up his academic career in 1982 to join a family business, they moved to Long Island where Mrs. Bernstein has been active in philanthropic endeavors on behalf of The National Center for Disability Services. Through the Lightpath Long Island Classic Senior PGA golf tournament, where she has hosted numerous cultural and historical trips to New York City and Long Island for the pro's wives, she has helped raise over \$2,000,000 for The Schneider Children's Hospital. W. RICHARD OTT came to Alfred University in 1980 as dean of the College of Ceramics. He was instrumental in increasing the College's sponsored research program by creating the National Science Foundation's Industry-University Center for Glass Research and the New York State Center for Advanced Ceramic Technology. He also helped to create the Ceramic Corridor Innovation Centers in Alfred and Wellsville, and for many years served as president of the Alfred Technology Resources, Inc., board that operates the incubator facilities in Alfred and Corning. He also reorganized the College into the School of Art and Design and the School of Ceramic Engineering and Materials Science, both with international reputations for excellence in their fields. In 1988, Ott became provost and academic vice president of Alfred University, a position he held until his retirement. He initiated a doctoral program in School Psychology that has gained national prominence, and was instrumental in the creation of the multi-disciplinary Center for Energy and Environmental Research. Through his efforts, sponsored research at Alfred University has grown from about \$80,000 a year in the early 1980s to nearly \$9 million this year. Ott is also credited with expanding the University's academic programs, including two doctoral programs (School Psychology and Glass Science); several master's degree programs, including those in business administration, accounting, electronic integrated arts and biomedical materials engineering science. A graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Ott earned his master's from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in ceramic engineering from Rutgers University. Prior to coming to Alfred, he was dean of ceramic engineering at Rutgers where he had taught since 1970. He had worked as a ceramic engineer at Champion Spark Plug before entering academia. He is a Fellow of the American Ceramic Society, a member of the National Institute of Ceramic Engineers and the American Society of Engineering Educators, and served as national president of Keramos, the national honorary society for ceramic engineers. Ott now makes his home in New Jersey with his wife, Dr. Carla Narrett.