

AU's 12th President to Deliver 'Valedictory' Speech to 425 Graduates

5/04/00

Alfred, NY -- When Edward G. Coll, Jr., became Alfred University's 12th president in 1982, most of the 425 degree candidates who will cross the McLane Center stage to shake his hand and receive their diplomas during the May 13th commencement ceremony had not even entered kindergarten yet. But they, and Coll, leave Alfred University together. Coll, who will deliver Alfred University's 164th commencement address at the 10 a.m. ceremony, retires at the end of June. "The Board of Trustees asked President Coll to deliver this year's commencement address to cap his own career, as well as that of the graduates, at Alfred University," said Dr. Gene M. Bernstein, chairman of the AU Board of Trustees. "His valedictory address should prove one of the most memorable speeches ever heard at an AU graduation." A graduate of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, Coll has spent nearly four decades in higher education admivated to house the Robert McComsey Career Development Center. But for Coll, what happens inside the classrooms and laboratories is more important than the facilities themselves, and he is most proud of what he has been able to do to enhance the quality of the Alfred University student body and to boost the image of Alfred University. Asked what his most significant contribution to the University has been, Coll answers, "The raising of the quality of the student body has probably been the strongest achievement of this administration." Since his arrival at Alfred University, the average SAT scores of incoming freshmen have increased 16 percent - during a time when they were declining nationally. He is well-known nationally for his leadership roles in educational organizations. He served as national chair (1991-92) for the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and as a member of the Division III Presidents' Commission and vice president for Division III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. In both organizations, he was involved in strategic planning efforts that influenced their direction and growth. "I can think of no individual in higher education, other than Ed Coll, who has served so successfully as both a chief advancement officer and a chief executive officer for such an extended period of time," said Peter McE. Buchanan, president emeritus of CASE. "However, what has distinguished Ed Coll from others who bear similar institutional responsibilities has been his volunteer leadership of the educational community at large." "Ed Coll is a doer, a leader, a man of his word, and a constant force for improvement of education. The very physical face of Alfred University reflects both his talent for attracting support and his sense of place," said Buchanan. At the state level, Coll has been involved in the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, the Independent College Fund of New York, the Rochester Area Colleges, and the College Consortium of the Finger Lakes. In the community, Coll has been a member of the advisory board for the Five Rivers Council, Boy Scouts of America, and a member of the board of directors for the Allegany County United Way and Steuben Trust Co. For his professional and personal achievements, Duquesne University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. He also received a Fulbright Fellowship to study at Warwick University, Coventry, England. Coll and his wife, Carole Lee Hulse Coll, who received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Alfred University during the May 1999 commencement, are the parents of five grown children and grandparents of seven. The Colls will remain in the Alfred area following their retirement from Alfred University. Alfred University will award 85 graduate degrees and 340 baccalaureate degrees at the May 13 ceremony.