

AU theater professor receives honors

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Michael Dempsey, associate professor of theater at Alfred University, was selected by representatives of the Kennedy Center/The American College Theater Festival (KC/ACTF) as the recipient of the first KC/ACTF Ming Cho Lee Faculty Design Fellowship. "The intention of this new and highly prestigious award is to provide an outstanding Theatre Educator and Professional Designer an opportunity to study in an intimate, one-on-one two week Master-class with Ming Cho Lee, a living legend in the area of set design in the United States," said Stephen Crosby, professor of theater and chairman of the Performing Arts Division in AU's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The master-class will take place July 2 - 14 in Fresno, California. Criteria for the selection, which was announced on May 8th, includes success in teaching young designers; significant contributions to the American College Theater Festival, and the Professional Design portfolio. Two of Dempsey's students -received top regional honors at the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh in January and advanced to national competition at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, in April. Kara D. "Kadie" Midlam, a senior in the School of Art and Design, received the top award for her costume designs for the AU production of "DeDonde?" A graduate of Oneida High School, she is a daughter of Richard and Barbara Midlam of Stoneleigh Road, Oneida. Earl T. Stephens, a senior theater major, earned the accolade for his scenery design for the AU production of "Sylvia." He is a son of Briant and Edna Stephens of East Swamp Road, Conesus, NY, and is a graduate of Livonia High School. Dempsey previously taught theater design at Smith College, Memphis State University, and Syracuse University where he headed the graduate design program in theater. An accomplished artist and designer with numerous design awards to his credit, Dempsey received a medallion from the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival for outstanding service. He has served as co-chairman of design for Region II of KC/ACTF. Ming Cho Lee, born in Shanghai, emigrated to the U.S. in 1949 just before the Communist take-over. His father, a 1919 graduate of Yale, selected Occidental College in Los Angeles because he wanted his son to have a "real American liberal arts education." Lee's father, however, did not plan on his son studying theater design. Even though his career choice may not have matched his father's plans for him, Lee has met with tremendous success. He has won numerous awards for his work, including: the first Joseph Maharam Award for Electra in 1965, a Tony nomination for Billy in 1970, the National Opera Institute Special Award for Service to American Opera in 1980, a Tony Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, a Drama Desk Award, and a Maharam Award in 1983 for his work on K2. Lee has also been named Man of the Year by the Chinatown Planning Commission in New York City and has received the Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture in New York City. Lee is currently co-chair of Yale University's School of Drama Design Department where he has taught since 1969.