

## Alfred University to bestow two honorary degrees at its 2018 Commencement

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Michele Cohen and Don McPherson will receive honorary degrees from Alfred University.

Alfred University will award two honorary degrees at its annual Commencement, scheduled for 10 a.m. May 12 in the Galanis Family Arena at the McLane Center.

The Alfred University Board of Trustees voted to honor Don McPherson MS '84, Ph.D. '88, co-founder and chief science officer at EnChroma Labs and Michele Cohen, a member of the Board of Trustees and chair of its Student Affairs Committee

"Don McPherson and Michele Cohen are each visionaries in their own way," said Alfred University President Mark Zupan. "Don, who will deliver the keynote Commencement address, is an inventor and an entrepreneur who has his sights set on helping millions of people with color-blindness, particularly children. Few of us stop to think how much children rely on color for cues in everyday life, and how difficult it must be for a child who cannot properly distinguish colors.

"Michele has helped to both envision the future of our University as a trustee, and to make the vision a reality through her engagement and philanthropy. Michele is an advocate for the arts at Alfred; she and her husband, Marty, created the first-ever endowed deanship at Alfred University, the Michele and Martin Cohen Endowed Deanship for our School of Art and Design. As chair of the Student Affairs Committee, Michele was quick to see the potential in APEX—our nascent Applied and Experiential Learning Program—for Alfred University. Her generous financial support is allowing us to launch the program this fall," Zupan said.

The University will bestow a Doctor of Science degree, honoris causa, on McPherson to recognize his ground-breaking work in developing lenses that correct most forms of "color-blindness," which affects more than 300 million people around the world. He initially developed glasses for surgeons to use to protect their eyes when they were doing laser

surgery, and by happenstance- loaning a pair to a friend with whom he was playing Frisbee - discovered they enabled people with color-deficient vision to see colors.

He holds numerous patents, and has received National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, and other grant funds to further his research.

McPherson credits his Alfred University mentors the late VanDerck Frechette '39, professor of fractography; L. David Pye '59, professor emeritus of glass science and dean emeritus of the College of Ceramics; and James Varner '66, professor emeritus of ceramic engineering, with teaching him to "solve problems and to think. So I did."

He might best be described as a "serial entrepreneur." Prior to founding EnChroma, he was president of Bay Glass Research, Inc.; vice president of research and development for Vetrazzo, Inc., and co-founder and president of Counter Productions, Inc.

President Zupan named McPherson as one of the initial recipients of the Fiat Lux! Awards in October 2016. McPherson will also deliver the Commencement address.

McPherson and his wife Elle live in the San Francisco area.

The University will bestow a Doctor of Arts degree, honoris causa, on Cohen, recognizing her passion for the arts at Alfred University, and her commitment to improving the lives of Alfred University students.

Elected to the Alfred University Board of Trustees in 2001, Michele Cohen immediately took on one of the most challenging tasks the board has been faced with in recent years - serving as a member of the Trustee Task Force on Greek Life that was charged with making a recommendation to the full board on the fate of Greek organizations at Alfred University. She is chair of the Student Affairs Committee, and serves on the Academic Affairs and Executive Committees as well as the Human Resources Subcommittee.

The Cohens have been creative and generous supporters of the arts at Alfred, creating the Cohen Art Center for the first-year Foundations program and the Cohen Gallery to spotlight alumni artists; sponsoring several senior shows in New York City for our students, and most recently, establishing the endowed deanship for the School of Art and Design.

She has been a strong advocate for programs that enhance and enrich the student experience at Alfred University. The Cohens are providing the seed money for the APEX program that will ensure every Alfred University student has the means to have an applied or experiential learning experience before graduating.

In 2006 Michele Cohen received the Alfred University Honorary Alumna Recognition Award, presented by the Alumni Association.

Michele Cohen is currently chair of the Board of the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City and has been acting director of the Museum. She served for eight years as a trustee of the Riverdale Country School, where three of her four children attended. Now completing a six-year term as a member of the University of Vermont Foundation Board, she will become a member of the Foundation's Leadership Council. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Vermont in 1972 and a Master of Science degree in education from Hunter College, both in early childhood development.

Michele Cohen retired in 2004 from Cohen & Steers Capital Management in New York City.

The Cohens reside in New York, NY and have four children: Todd, Adam '03, Mollie and Barrie.

The Cohens are members of the Society of Benefactors at Alfred University.

