

Alum/trustee/note'd musician to give Commencement address

5/10/12



David Miller, a 1966 alumnus of Alfred University (AU) and a member of its board of trustees since 1988, will deliver the address at this year's commencement ceremonies, scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, May 12, in McLane Center on the Alfred University campus. The University will also bestow an honorary Doctor of Music degree on Miller. University President Dr. Charles M. Edmondson will preside. "The Board of Trustees was unanimous in its decision to honor David Miller," said Edmondson. "Not only is David Miller a recognized authority in transportation law, but he's an acclaimed jazz pianist, and a devoted Alfred University alumnus. He's guided us with his counsel, entertained us with his music, and inspired us with his leadership." Leading the processional of 13 doctoral, 104 master's, and 423 bachelor's degree candidates and faculty members into the McLane gymnasium will be Theodore L. Morgan, professor of art, serving as grand marshal. The group will process and recess to music provided by the Alfred University Symphonic Band under the direction of Christopher Foster, assistant professor of music and director of bands. The Rev. Laurie J. DeMott, campus interfaith adviser and minister of the Union University Church, Alfred, will present the invocation and benediction for the ceremony. In a reference to his lifelong love of music, Miller has selected "Playing It by Ear on the Grand Stage" as the title of his address. Prior to Miller's remarks, the University will bestow on him a Doctor of Music degree, honoris causa. He will be presented for the degree and receive his doctoral hood from fellow Trustee Jeffrey S. Maurer '69. [See other story](#) Following Miller's address and the conferment of the master's degrees by Nancy Evangelista, associate provost for graduate and professional studies and dean of the College of Business, the 2012 Marlin Miller Outstanding Seniors - Margaret "Molly" Anna Finnerty of Watertown, a Dean's List student in the School of Art & Design, with a minor in marketing, and Kevin Daniel Carr of Canandaigua, a Dean's List student in the School of Art & Design, who has concentrated on painting and printmaking - will offer their thoughts upon leaving Alfred to fellow graduates, faculty, family, friends. Kathy Woughter, vice president for Student Affairs, will introduce them. The senior awards are named for Marlin Miller, AU class of 1954, a member and former chair of the University Board of Trustees. Baccalaureate degrees will be conferred by Mary McGee, dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences; Leslie Bellavance, dean, School of Art & Design; Doreen Edwards, dean, Kazuo Inamori School of Engineering; and Evangelista. Prior to concluding remarks by Edmondson, Michael Christakis, AU class of 1999, president of the Alumni Association, will induct the newest members into the organization. The ceremonies will conclude with a rendition of the Alma Mater by members of the University Chamber Singers, under the direction of Luanne Crosby, professor of voice and chorus, and the benediction by DeMott. A number of faculty members will serve as Commencement marshals, including Wesley Bentz, professor emeritus of chemistry; Elizabeth Ann Dobie, professor of art theory; Frank Duserick, Kruson Distinguished Professor of Business; Gerard Edizel, professor of art history; Addison E. Frey, associate professor of mathematics; Juliana Gray, associate professor of English; Theresa Gunn, assistant professor of accountancy; Michelle Illuminato, assistant professor (art) Foundations; Nicholas Kuder, assistant professor of graphic design; Coral Lambert, associate professor of sculpture; Scott T. Misture, Inamore Professor of Materials Science and Engineering; Susan P. Morehouse, professor of English; Steven Pilgrim, professor of materials science and engineering; Joseph W. Rosiczkowski, professor of mechanical engineering; Jeffrey Sluyter-Beltrao, associate professor of political science; and G. David Toot, professor of physics. A native of Great Neck, Miller earned a bachelor of arts degree, cum laude, from Alfred. While at AU, he was a member of the golf team and a brother and

president of Klan Alpine Fraternity. He was also the piano accompanist for the University choir and performed as a jazz pianist on and off campus. After graduation, Miller entered Syracuse University College of Law, receiving his J.D. degree, magna cum laude, in 1969. He was admitted to the NYS Bar in 1970 and the California Bar in 1971. He earned a judicial clerkship position with the Appellate Division Third Department of the New York Supreme Court in Albany until 1970, when he joined Hanson, Bridgett, a law firm based in San Francisco, CA, with offices in Sacramento and Larkspur, CA. He became a partner in 1974 and managing partner in 1984. Miller's law practice centers on the transportation industry. For more than three decades he has served as general counsel for three of the principal mass transportation agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area: the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District; the San Mateo County Transit District; and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board. He has lectured nationally on a wide range of transportation, real estate and labor relations issues, and was recognized for his contributions to public transportation when he was awarded Caltrain's Silver Spike Award in 1988. The award is given to "individuals, groups and organizations that have made a significant contribution to Caltrain," the commuter railroad system that connects the cities of San Francisco and San Jose. Also in 1988, Miller was the recipient of the Peninsula Coalition's Community Leadership Award. He also has received recognition annually since 2005 as a California Super Lawyer by Super Lawyer Magazine. He also joined the Alfred University Board of Trustees in 1988, serving his first three-year term as an alumni-elected trustee before gaining a long-term appointment to the board. He has chaired the Academic Affairs Committee of the board, and has been a member of the Executive, Finance, Human Resources, Strategic Planning and Student Affairs committees. While he has been an active member of the AU Board of Trustees for nearly a quarter of a century, it is his talent as a jazz pianist that makes him well-known on campus. Miller says he's been told he began playing the piano by ear at the age of three, and studied classical piano and music theory through high school. During his college years, however, he switched to jazz piano. Shortly after he arrived in San Francisco, he met percussionist Bill Belasco, and formed an enduring musical partnership with him that has continued for nearly four decades. Ten years ago nationally renowned bassist, Mario Suraci, joined the Dave Miller Trio. The new ensemble has recorded several CDs. Rapture, issued on the Summit Records label in 2010, reached No. 14 on the national jazz charts for radio air play. Most recently, the trio has been joined by David's daughter, vocalist Rebecca DuMaine. Their CD, Deed I Do, was released by Summit Records in 2011. In addition to the performances with his band, Miller frequently has performed solo at professional, social and political events, including having had the honor of entertaining at three United States Senate Democratic Caucus Retreats in recent years. Whenever Miller has been on campus for Board of Trustees' meetings, he has performed at jazz sessions with faculty, staff and students and drawn enthusiastic audiences from the community.