

Sesame Street's 'Gordon' to perform at Alfred University

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A generation of Alfred University students that grew up humming "Can you tell me how to get to Sesame Street?" will have an opportunity to see one of the actors from the popular Public Broadcasting System show on campus Friday, Jan. 20. Acclaimed singer-actor Roscoe Orman, perhaps best known for his role as "Gordon" on the children's television show, will appear at 8 p.m. in Holmes Auditorium, Harder Hall on the AU campus. As Gordon, Orman taught generations of American youngsters their numbers and letters. Now, through his stage show, he takes his audience on a journey through some of the pivotal periods and themes of African American history, using the poetry, prose and song of two of America's best-known artists: Oscar Brown Jr. and Langston Hughes. Orman, a native of New York City who began his acting studies at the Circle-In-The-Square Theatre with Michael Kahn, made his professional acting debut with the Next Stage Theatre Company's 1962 production of "If We Grow Up." He became an early member of the Free Southern Theatre in New Orleans, touring throughout the Deep South for two years. In 1967, Orman joined Harlem's New Lafayette Theatre and appeared prominently in most of that company's productions, including "Who's Got His Own," "The Duplex," "The Devil Catchers," and "The Fabulous Miss Marie." His many other New York stage appearances have included "The Sirens," "The Last Street Play" and "The Talented Tenth" at the Manhattan Theatre Club; "Julius Caesar" and "Coriolanus" at the New York Shakespeare Festival's Public Theatre; "The Great McDaddy" and "The Sixteenth Round" at the Negro Ensemble Theatre; "Mahalia" and "Twenty Year Friends" at the New Federal Theatre, and "Clara's Ole Man," "Every Night When the Sun Goes Down," and "The Confessions of Stepin Fetchit" at the American Place Theatre. He also played Gabriel in the award-winning Broadway production of "Fences." Orman's film credits include "Willie Dynamite," "Follow That Bird," "F/X," "Striking Distance," "New Jersey Drive" and "Elmo in Grouchland." In addition to his role as Gordon on Sesame Street, television audiences have seen him on such programs as "Sanford and Sons," "Kojak," "All My Children," "A Man Called Hawk," and "Hard Times on the Planet Earth." He has also narrated PBS-TV's "Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper" and "Hidden Heritage" for Discovery Channel's National Geographic. Orman's appearance, which is sponsored by the student group Umoja and the Office of ALANA Affairs, is the first in a series of events on the AU campus to mark Black History month. Admission is free and open to the public, although seating is limited. Although Orman is best known as a children's entertainer, Dan Napolitano, director of Student Activities for AU, said he has been advised that the content of Orman's program is not intended for young audiences. The program is best suited to teen-agers and adults. Further information may be obtained by calling 607.871.2175.