

## **Outstanding Senior Awards at AU honor Marlin Miller, Jr.**

4/29/04

Elizabeth Greenwood, a comparative cultures and communication studies major from Pelham, NH, and Shaminda Amarakoon, a performing arts major from Alfred, NY, are the first recipients of the Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior Awards, announced during Honors Convocation. They were chosen for the honor by a campus-wide committee, chaired by Dr. David Szczerbacki, provost and vice president of academic and statutory affairs, on the basis of their scholarship, extra-curricular leadership and personal character. Along with a hand-crafted tile made by Wayne Higby, an internationally acclaimed artist and professor of ceramic art in the School of Art & Design at AU, each also received \$5,000 in cash, thanks to an endowment created by Robert L. MacNeil Jr. of Wyndmoor, PA, a friend and business colleague of Miller's. While Alfred University has for several years presented outstanding senior awards to the man and woman in each class selected by a campus-wide committee, this was the first time the awards have been presented in honor of Miller, a member of AU's class of 54, a member of its Board of Trustees since 1972, a former chairman of the board, and the University's largest donor. Both Greenwood and Amarakoon transferred to AU from much larger schools. Greenwood attended Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, NH, and enrolled at Boston University. She left after a year and worked for two years before deciding to attend Alfred University. Although she admitted she was "not very involved" in extracurricular activities in high school or at BU, at Alfred University she is involved in, and a leader of several campus organizations, including Poder Latino, which she served as president; the Alfies Awards Academy; the Student Activities Board; the Student Alumni Association; A-U-nited; and SAFE. She's been involved in numerous performing arts productions, and this year inaugurated a series of "Courageous Conversations," monthly discussion groups that address race and other tough issues. She is one of 20 students to be inducted into Alfred University's new Phi Beta Kappa chapter with a GPA of 3.85. Greenwood is also a member of Omicron Delta Kappa national leadership society; Phi Kappa Phi, national honor society, and Pi Gamma Mu, national social sciences honor society. She has been a resident assistant and worked at the information desk in the Powell Campus Center. Greenwood has also been a reporter for AU TV, and has represented the University at a national minority journalists' conference. She is a daughter of Charles and Nancy Greenwood of Pelham, NH. Amarakoon grew up in Alfred, attended Alfred-Almond Central School, and enrolled at Duke University as an electrical engineering major, only to realize after three years that he was not finding satisfaction in that field. He had, however, become involved in student theater groups while at Duke, and found theater much more fulfilling. He took two years off, and then decided to transfer to AU, where his father is a professor, and pursue a theater major. Not only has he been an actor, dancer, and director, but he persuaded the Division of Performing Arts to create the part-time position of assistant technical director, which he held for two years. He and a fellow student wrote, acted in, directed and produced a two-man show, *The Journey*, as a fund-raiser for the Alfred Montessori School, for which he was nominated for a Student Innovation Award and won an Alfie Award last year. He has been a member of the AU Chamber Singers and Alfredian Dramatists, serving as a performer and technical director for *Quilt: A Musical Celebration*. Amarakoon has been involved in community theater as well, as a producer, performer and technical director. He also served as a camp director for AU's summer theater camp, all while maintaining a grade point average that placed him on the Dean's List and earned him membership in Phi Kappa Phi national honor society. He is the son of Dr. Vasantha and Savithri Amarakoon of Alfred. In creating the Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior Awards, MacNeil noted that Miller is "one of the most distinguished and accomplished" alumni of Alfred University. "His record as an undergraduate and his service to the University as a trustee are well-known to the Alfred University community." On a personal level, I have had the great honor to have known Marlin for over 30 years, during which I have come to realize his extraordinary capabilities and success in business, particularly as the founder and chief executive officer of Arrow International." Higby, also a close friend of Miller's, was selected to make the terra cotta tiles that are the permanent memento of the award in Miller's honor. The tiles depict the Village of Alfred in its surrounding landscape, with words from AU's alma mater in the foreground. The tile was presented in a wooden box, handmade of cherry wood by Angelica craftsman Don Kaake. The box, which forms both a frame for the tile and a stand to display it, is in turn contained a quilted purple bag, tied with gold ribbon to represent the University's colors. The bag was made by Pat Kaake, also a noted artisan from Angelica.