

## **Spitzer encourages AU graduates to help make a better New York**

5/13/06

ALFRED, NY As New York State's attorney general, Eliot Spitzer has been lauded for his record of investigating and prosecuting crime. As Democratic candidate for governor, he hopes to some day create new opportunities and improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers. On Saturday, he asked the graduating class of 2006 at Alfred University to join in those efforts. Spitzer was the keynote speaker at the 170th commencement at Alfred University, held Saturday morning in the McLane Center. The attorney general expressed his concern over a trend that has seen thousands of people leave New York. The most recent census figures, he said, indicate approximately 180,000 more people left the state between 2000 and 2004 than moved here. "People are leaving because they can't make ends meet here and they are forced to look for better opportunities elsewhere. This is not the New York we dream of. It is not the New York that my grandfather came to. It is not the New York where my father built his life," Spitzer said. "I can't change this sad fact. Government can help. But even the strongest of governments couldn't alter this course. When it comes down to it, only you can change this. "Spitzer urged students to stay in New York and help create a promising future, not only for themselves, but also for generations to come."We can make this a state where you can make a life for yourselves and your families. But we need your help," he said. "I ask you to stay in New York not for your tax dollars, or for your good company - but for the sake of our future."Spitzer reminded students of New York's history of taking risks to achieve great things, whether it be protecting the environment (by creating the Adirondack Park), pursuing landmark economic development (by constructing the Erie Canal) or addressing women's rights (through efforts led by women's rights pioneer Susan B. Anthony). "The point is, never underestimate the power you hold," Spitzer told graduates. "Set an example. Work yourself bleary eyed. Be relentless. Demand more from yourselves, from your government, from your neighbors."Spitzer warned graduates that they would encounter critics "the army of the state quo" who will undermine their efforts to do great things."There will be nay-sayers. The Wright Brothers were told that 'heavier-than-air flight was both impossible and contrary to the will of God.' The Beatles were even told that 'the guitar sound is on the way out.' IBM engineers initially were told that there was no market for home computers. The future doesn't belong to the army of the status quo. You couldn't fly, you couldn't rock, and you couldn't surf the web if it did."Spitzer said young people, like those graduating from AU Saturday, can build upon the state's illustrious past and change New York for the better."Each of you has the ability to achieve great things. But in order to do so, you must get involved, you must embrace change," he said. During Saturday's commencement, the University awarded three doctoral degrees; 155 master's degrees (MFA, MS, MA and MBA) and 445 baccalaureate degrees (BA, BS and BFA). The number of candidates includes those who completed their degree work in August and December 2005, as well as this semester. The University also conferred two honorary degrees. Spitzer received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree, and Nathan Lyons, a 1957 alumnus of Alfred University and founder of the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, NY, received an honorary Doctor of Arts degree. Top graduates honored at commencement for having the highest grade-point average in their college or school of study were: The College of Business: Craig D. Collins, who received a B.S. degree in accounting. Collins, who earned a perfect 4.0 grade point average (GPA), is the son of Terry and Barbara Collins of Chester, CA., and is a graduate of Westwood High School. The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences: Jonathan G. Burke, who received a B.S. degree in computer science. A graduate of Middleborough High School, he is the son of John and Kathleen Burke of Berkley, MA. School of Art & Design: Elizabeth Treichler, who received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, with an overall GPA of 3.85. She is the daughter of George and Lisa Treichler of Hammondsport, NY, and is a graduate of Hammondsport Central School. The Kazuo Inamori School of Engineering: Stephen Sanford, who received a B.S. degree in materials science and engineering. He is the son of Stephen and Penny Sanford of Wayland, NY, and is a graduate of Wayland-Cohocton Central School.