

## **Former trustee, founder of Powell Institute, dies**

11/08/05

Lea R. Powell, a former Alfred University trustee whose gifts created the Lea R. Powell Institute for Children and Families through which the University has been able to assist numerous area residents, died Monday, Nov. 7, 2005, at her home in Valley Forge, PA. She was 84. A native of the Bronx, N.Y., Lea Powell attended Hunter College in New York. At the urging of their parents, who played cards together, she and Arthur L. Powell, a 1943 graduate of Alfred University, began corresponding while Art served in the Army Air Corps. They met for the first time, their daughter Carol Heller told the Philadelphia Inquirer, after he was discharged in 1946. They married March 16, 1947. In 1957, the couple moved to the Philadelphia area when Arthur Powell joined M.A. Kravitz Co., a development company. He and a partner, Harold G. Schaeffer, later bought the company. Renamed Kravco, it became a major developer of shopping malls, including the King of Prussia mall. Lea Powell was active in the community while raising their four children. In addition to her husband, Mrs. Powell is survived by son Richard and his wife Shelley; son Jon and his wife Jill; daughter Nancy and her husband Paul Kirschner; and Mrs. Heller and her husband, Dr. Harry Heller; 13 grandchildren; and her brother. While Lea Powell had no previous connection with Alfred University until Art Powell joined the AU Board of Trustees in 1980, she quickly became involved in the University and was an ardent supporter of it for 25 years. In recognition of her "dedication, service and commitment to the University, she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in 1995, and was also appointed to the Board of Trustees. She and Art served on the Board until 2001. The Alfred University Alumni Council, recognizing her outstanding commitment to the University, named her an honorary alumna in 1993. As a couple, the Powells were generous donors; they were among the charter members of the Society of Benefactors, which recognizes those whose lifetime gifts to the University exceed more than \$1 million. In recognition of their support, the University named its new campus center, opened in 1994, the Arthur L. and Lea R. Powell Campus Center. To encourage student artists, they created a fund to purchase student work for the campus. They supported other initiatives as well, including the planned renovation of South Hall into a residence hall. But it was service to children and families that drew Lea Powell's personal support and philanthropy. In 1994, she created the Lea R. Powell Institute for Children and Family Services at Alfred University. The Institute supports and enhances the service, training and research activities conducted by the Division of School Psychology. She provided funds for the renovation of the former Pi Alpha Pi sorority house at 6 Sayles Street into a new home for the Institute, as well as the Center for Rural School Psychology and the Rural Justice Institute. The renovated facility, which included a 5,000 square foot addition, was dedicated in October 2002. Her role went beyond that of benefactor, however. She was actively involved as a member of the board of the Powell Institute. Lea Powell explained her interest in helping children and families, particularly those in rural areas such as that in which Alfred University is located and where there is often a lack of access to mental health care providers, saying "I believe very strongly that if children at a younger age can get the help they need, it will put them on the right path for the rest of their lives. It's particularly important for people who live in the rural area in which Alfred University is located. If people take advantage of the services and get the help they need, it is good for the entire community." Earlier this year, Lea Powell made another \$1 million gift to the University to continue the work of the Institute. A portion of the funds is being used to expand the facilities at 6 Sayles Street, but the majority of the gift will be added to the endowment for the Powell Institute. It will support the Lea R. Powell Fellowship in School Psychology for an incoming student in the School Psychology program, and will also create the Lea R. Powell Honors Award, to be given at Honors Convocation each spring to an outstanding student in the Doctor of Psychology Program. "Mrs. Powell has been wonderful incredibly generous to the Lea R. Powell Institute for Children and Families and to the School Psychology Program at Alfred University," said Dr. Ellen Faherty, Institute director, who became a close friend of Mrs. Powell's through their work at the Institute. A funeral will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2005, at Temple Brith Achim, 481 S. Gulph Rd., King of Prussia, PA. Burial will be in the Haym Salomon Memorial Park in Frazer, PA. Memorial gifts in Lea Powell's name may be made to the ALS Association of Greater Philadelphia, 321 Norristown Rd., Ambler, PA 19002.