

# ON OUR SHORT list

AARON SORKIN '83

## Broadway Brat

Articles about the Broadway courtroom drama, *A Few Good Men*, tend to focus on its playwright, newcomer Aaron Sorkin. But he's only half the story. In a year when producers are playing it safe by mounting revivals like *Gypsy*, the eagerness to produce Sorkin's 21-character piece and the speed with which Hollywood snapped up the story were, well, dramatic.

Broadway patrons flocked to Sorkin's 63-scene play. No less than six powerful producers brought Sorkin's show to Broadway for a price tag of more than three-quarters of a million dollars. Among them are film producer David Brown (*Jaws*) and members of the Shubert Organization.

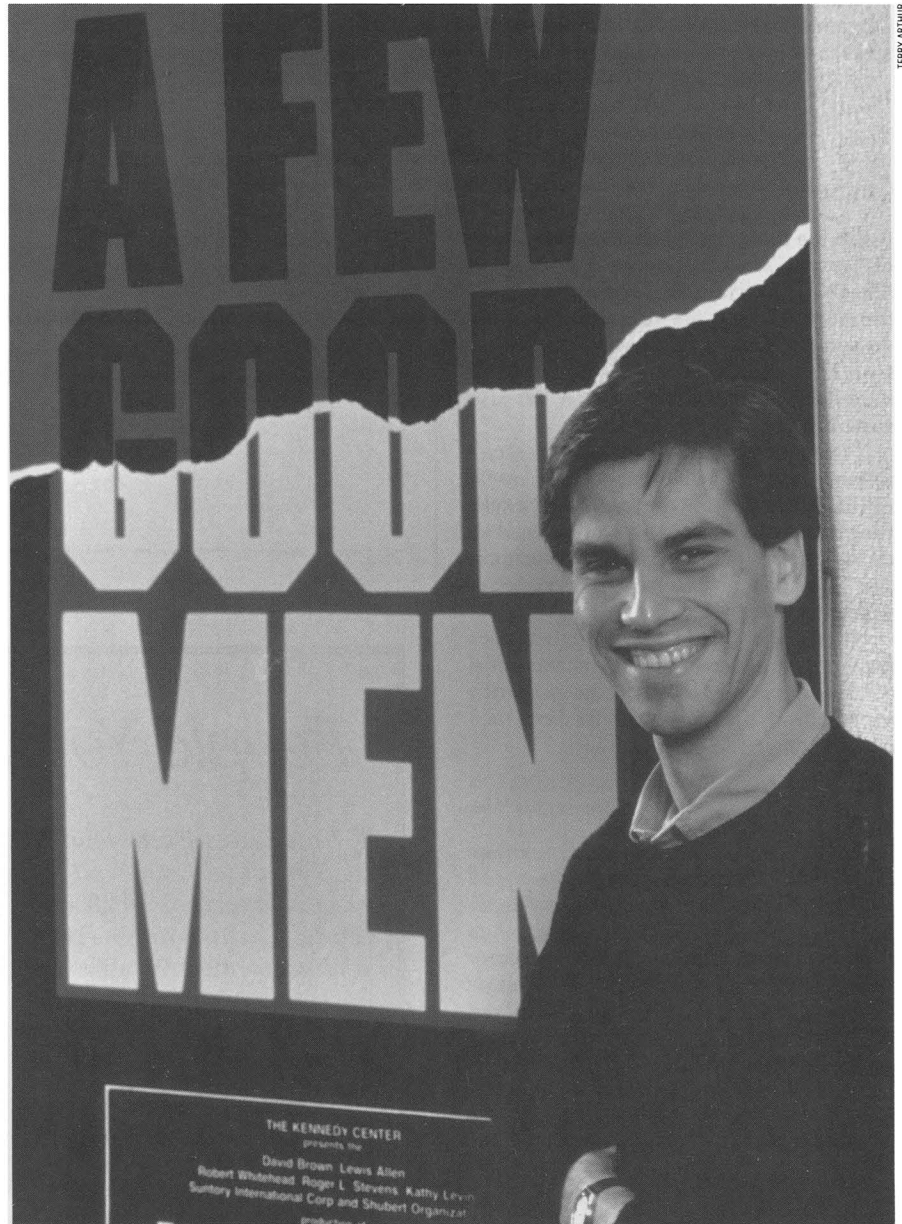
Critics have showered the show with praise. "The greatest courtroom drama since *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*," said one. Another pronounced it the best American play of the year. Masterful performances by Tom Hulce, Stephen Lang, and an ensemble cast guarantee recognition when the Tony Awards are announced this spring.

Sorkin makes his job sound simple. He told James Servin of the New York weekly *Seven Days*, explaining his blueprint for the ideal script: "Somebody wants something. Something stands in their way of getting it, and somehow the obstacle must be overcome. It's the Aristotelian principle."

Sorkin's own Aristotelian ascent was by no means instantaneous. He came to New York in 1983, fresh from Syracuse with an undergraduate degree in drama. At first he was a runner for the TKTS booth on Times Square, then a theater bartender. In the latter job, Sorkin would keep an eye out for producers enjoying a gin and tonic during intermission, then unabashedly pass them his latest script. Little came of that.

Then Sorkin happened upon a fellow booze-slinger who worked by day at a casting agency. Shrewd Sorkin pressed her into duty and got an early play, *Removing All Doubt*, to a major theatrical producer. The project elicited some interest but it was eventually dropped.

A few false starts later, Sorkin penned *A Few Good Men*, based on the case of two Marines accused of killing a fellow soldier in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. He found Don Scardino, an actor-turned-director (*Days and Nights of Molly Dodd*), who helped breathe life



Six years out of college, playwright Aaron Sorkin is one of Broadway's few good men.

into the tale. They worked at honing the story line. Its tryout at the University of Virginia's Culbreath Theatre elicited mixed reviews, but Sorkin continued to polish (30 rewrites in all). The play's original ambiguous ending was revised to include a jury verdict and clear-cut finale. Sorkin received raves for a mounting at the Kennedy Center in Washington, and *A Few Good Men* was ready for Broadway.

*A Few Good Men* is meticulously crafted, a larger-than-life story about men living under a code of honor that precludes any other moral standards. Drawing on the almost robotic manner of soldiers, the play examines the fragility beneath the bravado—and the contradictions therein. Sorkin creates multidimensional characters that resist stereotyping and evoke sympathy even when so

harshly drawn. While the show possesses a certain brashness informed by youth, its energy and professionalism are undisputed.

As Tri-Star Pictures readies the film version of the Broadway show—screenplay by Sorkin—the young playwright has another show, *Making Movies*, opening just off the Great White Way this season. —JAY BLOTCHER

PATRICIA TWAY G '74

## Full Plate

When Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter sit for dinner at their fishing cabin in northern Georgia, the sauteed chicken and rice pilaf arrive on some of the most exquisite and unusual china in the world. Forget delicate flowers or soft geometric designs. The Carter's ivory dinnerware sports Carter-green trim and a colorful assortment of feathered fishing flies—yes, trout lures.

Patricia Tway, whose Woodmere China firm produced the unique dinnerware, says the former president was interested in a pattern that captured the spirit of his favorite sport. It seemed appropriate that Tway, an ardent fly-fisher herself, create this special order.

Designing and manufacturing special-order china is not out of the ordinary for the company that Tway founded 14 years ago with her husband, and recently sold. Woodmere has created specialty dinnerware for such places as Lutece in New York, the Harvard Business Club, Chicago's Conrad Hilton, and Disney's Epcot Center; and for such individuals as the former King of Saudi Arabia and, before her legal difficulties, Leona Helmsley.

Some china companies are too large to process small or special orders, says Tway, who received her Ph.D. in anthropological linguistics from SU's Maxwell School in 1974. "We fill a particular need," she says. "We're very small. We have fast turn-around from the time we take an order to the time we deliver it. We have extremely high quality because we're tiny and can devote the time necessary to produce a good piece of ware."

Tway got involved in the business in a roundabout manner. As part of her doctoral studies at SU, she began researching workplace dialects, by chance, in a china factory. After two years of studies, Tway realized she knew enough about the industry to set up her own operation.

Since its humble beginning in a spare bedroom of the Tways' home, Woodmere has grown to occupy a 15,000-square-foot manufacturing space and a 20,000-square-foot warehouse in New Castle, Pennsylvania.

The firm employs 60 and gross sales for 1989 topped \$6 million.

Recently, though, the Tways sold Woodmere to pursue other interests. Patricia, the 1989 chairwoman of the Design Group of the American Ceramic Society, still writes a monthly column for *Ceramic Industry*. Her newest project is a business communications firm, through which she plans to syndicate a weekly newspaper column addressing problems in the workplace.

Tway consults for Woodmere China, though, and last March she attended the presentation of the Carters' fly-fishing china collection. She shared dinner with the former president and his family. The entrée was trout, naturally, served on Woodmere.

—MARY ELLEN MENGUCCI



Richard Carbotti knows how to throw a bash.

RICHARD CARBOTTI '71

## Puttin' On the Ritz

The first inkling was the invitation: a passport.

The next clue was Customs. Six hundred guests were led through *faux* customs as they arrived at the Inn at the Crossings in Warwick, Rhode Island.

This was to be no ordinary party, but a fantastical, imaginary journey through five nations—a journey created by party planner extraordinaire, Richard Carbotti.

"We transformed the ballroom into New

York and the Fifth Dimension played," says Carbotti. "We created delicatessens and the Brooklyn Bridge and had the Statue of Liberty built. I turned hallways into France with French cafés, and built the Arc de Triomphe to scale. I created a Via Veneto in Rome, the Coliseum, Trevi. Then we turned the huge atrium of the hotel into China, with Chinese gates and pagodas and oriental kites."

Carbotti is the owner of Perfect Surroundings, a special-event design and production firm based in Newport, Rhode Island. The company produces approximately 50 events per year, ranging from small weddings to very elaborate corporate and nonprofit events. Most are held in Newport or nearby, although the firm has done work in New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Florida, as well. "In New England we really are one of few people who do what we do," says Carbotti.

Perfect Surroundings creates an ambience, transforming space around a theme. Carbotti is a designer and coordinator, often working with florists, caterers, and musicians to create the event. Depending on the scale of the event, Carbotti's services generally range in price from \$5,000 to \$40,000.

Perfect Surroundings rents an airplane hangar where it stores props collected over the years: yards of fabrics, fountains, balustrades, motorcycles, an entire diner—"anything you can imagine," says Carbotti.

A Long Island native, Carbotti attended the Parsons School of Design for three years before transferring to SU's College of Visual and Performing Arts, where he studied advertising and graphic design. After graduating in 1971, he was drafted into the Navy and stationed in Newport, where he remained after his discharge, pursuing a career as a free-lance graphic and interior designer.

Over time, he was hired by corporate cli-



China manufacturer Patricia Tway and happy client Jimmy Carter

# ON OUR SHORT list

ents to help plan their special events. Then he was asked to work with the royal designer on a party the British America's Cup syndicate hosted for Prince Andrew. "We transformed the Beachwood, Carolyn Astor's estate in Newport," says Carbotti. "We did façades of tenting and lots of architectural details. We did fountains and gardens that didn't exist." The party was described by *Town & Country* as one of the best special events of the eighties. *People* called it an "extravaganza." A new career was born.

Seven years later, Carbotti's client list includes IBM, AT&T, Volvo, and Audi. He planned the 350th birthday party for the City of Providence, and the CARE Ball for Nancy Reagan. Recently, he produced a fund-raiser for the Governor of Rhode Island, at which George Bush was the guest of honor. "This was a very different kind of job because the Secret Service pretty much dictates what it has to look like," he says. "Everything is designed with the President's six-foot-two height in mind. . . . We even had to match a [printer's] color for the fabric because the President has to be photographed against a certain color blue."

Some of Carbotti's favorite events are those he's thrown for family and friends. And then there are his kids' birthday parties. "They have *incredible* events," he laughs. "They more or less pick and choose what they want."

—RENEE GEARHART LEVY

LUCILLE PATTISON G '57

## Eyes of the Nation

More than two years have passed since the alleged abduction and rape of Tawana Brawley made news. The sensational case, which raised as many questions as answers, heightened racial tensions across the country and for months focused the country's attention on Dutchess County, New York.

While news of the Brawley case continued to surface throughout 1989, America has inevitably focused on other racially charged cases—the Central Park jogger attack and the uprising at Bensonhurst, to name two. Dutchess County, though, has only begun to assess the damage done to its own communities. And Lucille Pattison, the Dutchess County executive, is trying to ease the pain.

"The people of my county were concerned that those difficult days were going to haunt us forever in the eyes of the rest of the world," says Pattison. "It is my perception that we really have gotten over that. . . . Now we need to focus our attention on continuing the healing process here at home, because we have a lot to do."

Pattison, a 1957 graduate of SU's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs,



Lucille Pattison was the county executive thrust into the middle of the Tawana Brawley affair. She is shown with Brawley lawyer Alton Maddox on Geraldo.

became involved in the case when officials closest to it—the district attorney, sheriff, special prosecutor, and other law-enforcement officers—were prohibited from commenting. "We had a tinderbox atmosphere in the county," says Pattison. "It fell to somebody to try to keep things under control. By virtue of my office, some of that fell on me."

Pattison's comments on the case were necessarily restrained. "You couldn't say, 'Shame on the people who committed the crime,' because you didn't know whether a crime had been committed. Nor could you say, 'Shame on Tawana Brawley—she's fabricated this whole thing,' because it had not, throughout the course of the investigation, been resolved whether she made the accusations."

Pattison says it became her role to tell the people of Dutchess County and the world to suspend judgment until evidence became available. "And that was very, very difficult," she says. "The longer the [Brawley investigation] dragged on, the more aggravated people became."

Nevertheless, Pattison remains proud of the people of Dutchess County. "They were provoked from all sides. Provoked by people who were very sympathetic with the charges launched by the young woman. They were provoked by people who showed a display of intolerance. They were provoked by hoards of people from all over the nation coming here," she says.

"You really got to understand the role of the media, television in particular," says Pattison. "I think the whole community was dazed by the fact that something could com-

mand so many people's attention for such a long period of time."

As the dust settles on the Brawley case, the quiet communities of Dutchess County are coming to grips. Pattison, who has served as county executive since 1978, focuses on county executive concerns—the airport commission, the governor's foundation, a new highway, the county water agency, affordable housing, and more.

But Pattison knows that the Brawley case serves as a local reminder of a national problem. "In every community, there are race-relation problems. No more, no less in my county," she says. "But something of a racial nature could get out of hand in just about any community because we are still a nation that has not resolved race issues or conflicts."

—MARY ELLEN MENGUCCI

EDIE MCCLURG G '70

## The Real Mrs. Poole

Edie McClurg has made a career playing skewed, off-center women who skirt the edge of credulity. Her satirical characters are brought to life by McClurg's gift for creating dead-on voices, from breathy matron to hectoring redneck to addled Midwesterner.

Character acting has taken McClurg down some twisting paths. As an evil high schooler she pelted Sissy Spacek with tampons in *Carrie*. She spoke in a little girl's voice at an orgy in *Eating Raoul*. And as a car rental agent, she told Steve Martin where to go in *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles*.

She currently co-stars in the NBC sitcom *The Hogan Family* as Mrs. Poole, next-door neighbor of Sandy Duncan. Mrs. Poole bursts weekly into the lives of the Hogans—the bubbly, chubby, fruity-voiced loon who provides many of the show's best laughs.

"I just don't like the neighbor-as-trouble-maker or unwelcome-guest label," McClurg once said. "I see her as having a great deal of positive energy, with her only fault being that she gives too much. She sacrifices but it's her own choice."

The real Edie shares little with Mrs. Poole—McClurg looks younger, her voice is lower and saner—other than her upbeat view of the world. "I don't set out to create goofy characters. I consider how women survive and succeed in this society, how it's built and structured in degrees against them. These are the brave souls of life."

McClurg developed her vocal talent in her first career as a public radio broadcaster and teacher in Kansas City. "Working in radio, you get used to dissecting the sound of people." She graduated in 1970 with a master's degree in television/radio from SU's Newhouse School. While attending SU, she was in demand as a narrator and, on occasion, a mimic. "I was constantly performing and producing on my own and it gave me a great deal of confidence."

After several years in public radio in Kansas City, McClurg moved to the West Coast. Her brother encouraged her to audition for an improvisation company to which he belonged. She did, and beat out 150-plus competitors for a spot with the troupe. Five months later, the group had failed, but McClurg stayed in Los Angeles, her sights set on acting.

"I find that people need to see you making people laugh. They need to see you succeeding in an audience situation before they will take the chance of hiring you," McClurg



Actress Edie McClurg



Chester Soling's gallery serves discriminating tastes in nautical miniatures.

says. The improvisation experience served that role for McClurg.

She performed with Pee-wee Herman and Robin Williams early in their careers, and appeared in a slew of television series, films (*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*), stage productions, and specials before Mrs. Poole and *The Hogan Family*.

McClurg's schedule is tight—she has refused several films due to her series commitment—but she would like to interest a pay-cable service in producing a comedy special for her. "I don't use bad language, but I get a little political. I know that won't be acceptable [on network television]. I don't take cheap shots at people who have no choice about the way they are. I take shots at people who have a choice, usually people in the White House."

—GEORGE LOWERY

CHESTER SOLING '54

## *Ships Ahoy!*

Chester Soling began building ship models when he was 18. "It used to take me two years and a lot of money to build a boat," he says. Today he buys his models and that takes only five minutes.

Soling owns the San Francisco Ship Model Gallery—located not in California, but on Madison Avenue in New York City. The gallery, considered New York's premier minimarina, harbors a flotilla of schooners, cruisers, yachts, whaling ships, and clippers.

It caters primarily to international business tycoons, many of whom own full-size ships to match their models.

"I think there is something romantic about the models," says Soling, a 1954 graduate of SU's School of Architecture. "Most boys dream of going to sea. I love the sea and I did a lot of sailing. And I found out it was a lot easier to buy models than to build them."

Soling has bought plenty. In addition to the models for sale at the gallery, he owns a private squadron of 22 ships—ranging from an elaborate modern yacht model to a toy steamship. His personal favorite is a whaling ship that he bought several years ago in Nantucket. "It's an absolutely perfect reproduction of a whaleboat, down to the little hatchet that chops the line attached to the boat harpoons."

Soling, who works full-time as a real estate investor, purchased the gallery four years ago and moved it from San Francisco to New York. As much as he delights in having the tiny vessels so near, Soling says the gallery has taken some of the joy out of collecting for him. When, for instance, a new clipper that particularly catches Soling's fancy comes into the gallery, his staff sells the ship quickly before he can lay claim to it. And if a customer is looking for a model that Soling owns in his private collection, the gallery staff will twist his arm to sell it. "Now models are considered trade goods," he says.

Indeed they are. The precisely scaled ships range in price from less than \$10,000

# ON OUR SHORT list

each to more than \$50,000 for antiques. They are considered such treasures that they often come into play during corporate takeover battles. In an average month, Soling estimates that 1,000 customers visit, call, or inquire about what's new at the gallery. Business is so good, Soling opened a second gallery in Savannah, Georgia, recently.

Ship models, says Soling, are a great present for someone who has everything. "If you ever see a picture of an important person—a governor, a senator, a business executive—there is always a model on the breakfront behind them. It's a great decoration for an office. It's a perfect little thing."

—MARY ELLEN MENGUCI

HERBERT ROBINSON '50

## Expert Witness

A man is strung out on cocaine. He gets into an argument with his wife, and in his frenzy stabs her, nearly killing her. The man is charged with attempted murder. His lawyers claim that because of his drug use he was mentally incompetent and cannot be held responsible for the crime. A psychiatrist is called to make an evaluation.

The case is hypothetical. The role of the psychiatrist in the legal process is not. As a forensic psychiatrist, Herbert Robinson has served as a consultant on psychiatric evaluation and an expert witness in cases ranging from personal injury to bank robbery and murder, with an expertise in medical malpractice evaluation.

Forensic psychiatry is a sub-specialty of the medical profession, requiring training beyond that of the usual psychiatric residency, generally through a forensic fellowship program. Robinson is an exception, having entered the field of forensic psychiatry by obtaining a law degree.

"In a criminal case, I'm generally trying to determine the person's competence to stand trial or their state of mind at the time of the offense," says Robinson. He does not make legal decisions, but provides evaluations, opinions, and testimony to assist the court in determining if the defendant understands the charges against him and was legally sane at the time of the crime.

In civil cases, such as workman's compensation claims and personal injury litigation, Robinson is often called upon to assess a person's physical and emotional well being and the compatibility of each. "This demands a continuing awareness of physical medicine," says Robinson, "and for the psychiatrist to remain cognizant: 'physician first, specialist thereafter.'"

A 1950 College of Arts and Sciences graduate in psychology, Robinson became a staff member of a New York placement school for delinquent boys, many of whom were the



STEVE SARTORI

Forensic psychiatrist Herbert Robinson

subjects of legal proceedings—his first experience with forensics. After completing his medical training, he worked for 25 years as a mental health administrator in California, most of that time with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, and maintained a part-time private practice. He retired from the county in 1978 as deputy medical director, chief of the second largest mental health program in the nation, operating an annual budget of \$120 million. For more than 10 years, he served on the nationwide American Psychiatric Association's Malpractice Committee and is now on the Southern California Psychiatric Society's Ethics Committee.

In 1979, Robinson enrolled in law school, "juggling classes, days and nights in order to

maintain my practice, which had then become full-time," he says. He also continued supervision of psychiatric residents at the University of Southern California College of Medicine, as a clinical associate professor.

Since earning his law degree in 1982, he has concentrated on forensic matters. He is either in court or giving depositions almost weekly. "Cross-examination is the Moment of Truth in the life of the forensic psychiatrist," says Robinson. "Each attorney has done his medical homework and demands of the physician creditable medical basis for his conclusions."

Robinson believes legal psychiatry will satisfy him for the remainder of his career, "except for the urge to travel and see how the rest of the world meshes psychiatry and the law," he says.

—RENÉE GEARHART LEVY

ALBERT ORNSTEIN '33

## Experiment in Peace

On the International Day of Peace last fall, Albert and Miriam Ornstein attended a United Nations ceremony at which they were among a handful of dignitaries presented with the U.N.'s prestigious Peace Messenger award. The Ornsteins accepted it on behalf of the Experiment in International Living, a citizen-exchange program that they have served as volunteers for more than 25 years.

The Experiment, designed to promote peace through international citizen exchange,



Albert and Miriam Ornstein (right) accepted a United Nations award on behalf of the Experiment in International Living. With them is Dr. Abdelhavi Gamal El-Din, chairman of the U.N.'s Supreme Council for Youth and Sports.

was started in 1932 by Dr. Donald B. Watt, a former SU administrator. Watt arranged for 23 American youths to live in Switzerland and travel throughout Europe. They stayed with Swiss families.

Many organizations have sponsored student exchanges since then, while the Experiment has evolved into a federation of programs in 27 countries. In any given year thousands of people cross nearly 100 international borders on Experiment exchanges of one kind or another. What's more, the Experiment has created the accredited School for International Training, which grants bachelor's and master's degrees in intercultural fields. The Experiment provides language-training programs for students and professionals. And to help meet the needs of Third World countries, the Experiment has established relief projects: refugee orientation, teacher training, and on-site technical training in health, agriculture, and small-business fields.

During the last 10 years, the number of "Experimenters" in a single year grew from 6,000 to 30,000. People who get involved with the Experiment are as diverse as the programs offered, says Albert Ornstein, who graduated from SU's College of Arts and Sciences in 1933 with a degree in political science and sociology. "Everyone from high school and college students to older adults and American and foreign professionals participate in our programs."

What attracted and maintained the Ornsteins' interest is the Experiment's mission to promote peace in the world. They discovered the Vermont-based Experiment when their daughter Julia, a 1961 SU graduate, received a scholarship for an Experiment homestay in Ireland. The Ornsteins were impressed with the program's efforts and volunteered to help.

They have assisted in the establishment of Experiment exchanges in Alaska and Canada. For the past 10 years, they have served as the Experiment's representatives to the United Nations. As such, they sit on committees for many non-governmental organizations at the U.N. Primarily, says Ornstein, "we're supporting the U.N. wherever possible in topics relevant to the Experiment."

Ornstein, a semi-retired attorney and realtor, has a long history of volunteerism. He and his wife, Miriam, served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ghana, West Africa, in 1967-68. They are nongovernmental representatives of Oxfam America, which works to relieve poverty and suffering worldwide. And they serve as volunteers for the local Catholic diocese, teaching English to foreign adults.

"We do it because we love it," says Ornstein. "And opportunities such as accepting an award on behalf of the Experiment on the International Day of Peace sustains our pride in the Experiment." —MARY ELLEN MENGUCCI

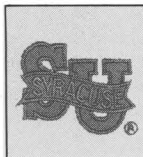
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