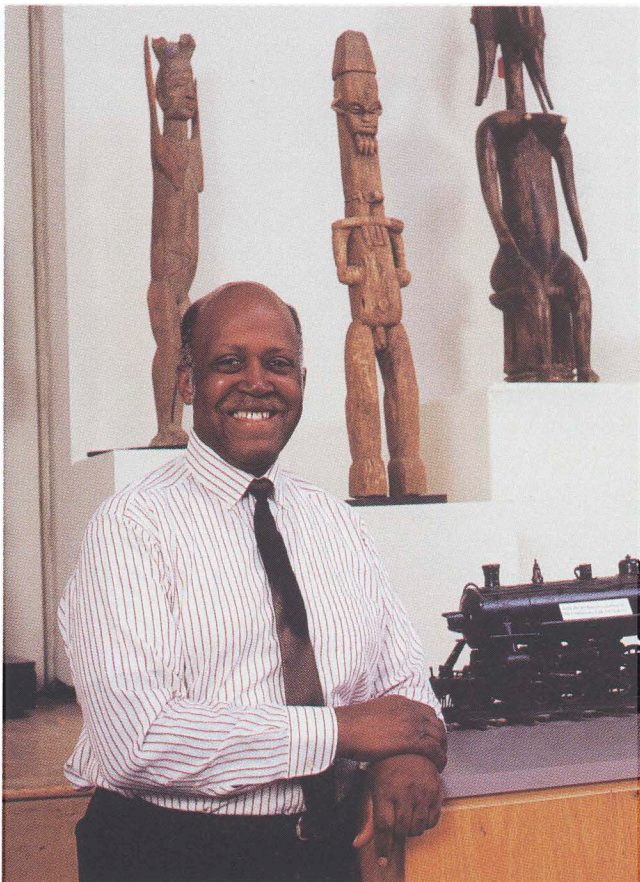




# Artistic Impressions

*SU's Community Folk Art Gallery celebrates its 25th anniversary*

JOHN DOWLING



Director Herb Williams stands in front of a display of African statues at the Community Folk Art Gallery. The gallery stays connected to the community through exhibits, children's art classes, adult workshops, and other activities.

When Megan White '90 was a senior, she took AAS 361—Art of the Black World. As part of the course, the art history major took a field trip to the Community Folk Art Gallery and was immediately impressed by the cultural center. Her interest led to an internship and eventually a seven-year stint working at the gallery. "That trip made me realize that the gallery was, and is, the only lasting, visible location in Syracuse for people of color to see representations of themselves," says White, who now works as director of the Empire State Crafts Alliance. "The gallery is a wonderful urban idea."

Twenty-five years ago, Syracuse University invited Herb Williams to teach and create a community project for the budding African American studies program. Williams felt an art center was the perfect outlet for cultural enrichment. "I wanted to make it possible for artists of color to show their work, and for all peoples to come together for classes, films, lectures, and tours," says Williams, the gallery's first and only director.

The Community Folk Art Gallery was Williams's brainchild, born out of a discussion he had with students in the first Art of the Black World course he taught. After a laborious semester of planning, the United Way's Urban Crisis Fund and Syracuse University joined forces to fund the project and make the concept a reality. "No attention was being paid to artists of color anywhere in the country," says Mary Schmidt Campbell G'73, G'82, one of the gallery's early collaborators. "We needed alternatives to

mainstream exhibitions, and this was an example of that."

Along with artist recognition, Williams saw the gallery as a place where students considering careers in art or gallery administration could gain experience. Campbell was one of those students; today she serves as dean of the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. "This field excludes people of color," she says. "Were it not for the Community Folk Art Gallery, I wouldn't have learned curatorial displaying, mounting, or the other skills that come along with this business. The gallery introduced me to a profession that became my life."

Throughout its existence, the gallery has been instrumental in bringing the black art experience to the community. Exhibitors there have included painter Romare Bearden, photographer James Vanderzee, and sculptor Augustus Savage. "North of the Tappan Zee Bridge, African Americans had been shut off," says Jack White, a featured abstract artist in the gallery's 25th anniversary exhibition in February. "With little money or staff, the Folk Art Gallery brought prominent black works to Central New York."

And, says Williams, the gallery will continue to do so. Currently he is planning another celebratory show focusing on Syracuse's early African American community. "Our country requires ways for cultures not admitted into the mainstream to be exposed to larger publics," says Campbell. "As long as that exists, there will always be a need for the Community Folk Art Gallery."

—NATALIE A. VALENTINE

## Sports Legend

Count Larry Kimball among Syracuse University's sports legends. True, he never nailed a game-winner against Georgetown, but he certainly tallied his share of assists during 31 years of pumping out press releases and coordinating media relations as SU's sports information director (SID). Until his retirement in August, Kimball had worked at 383 straight football games, the longest such active streak



Larry Kimball witnessed a lot of SU sports history during his 31 years as sports information director.

in the country. This Gehrig-esque accomplishment, which dates back to his start in the sports information business at the University of Vermont in the early sixties, places him second on the all-time consecutive-football-games-worked list recognized by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA).

"I take pride in the streak. I'm lucky that somewhere along the way I wasn't sick or didn't suffer any broken bones," says Kimball, who advised his two daughters against planning weddings during football season (one waited for the season schedule to come out, then picked an open date). "I've taken pride in the business I'm in, and I've enjoyed being a representative of SU."

This record has plenty of company among Kimball's career highlights. He won numerous awards for his media guides, was inducted into the CoSIDA Hall of Fame in 1994, and orchestrated media coverage for an array of events ranging from NCAA basketball and lacrosse tournaments in the Carrier Dome to the Intercollegiate Rowing Association Championships, which he co-directed for 31 years. "His accomplishments are really impossible to list," says SU athletic director John "Jake" Crouthamel, who honored Kimball by establishing an endowment fund for the SID's post in his name. "He's a wealth of history."

When Kimball—a one-man operation until 1980—reflects on his career, he offers an uncanny historical perspective

on SU sports and the evolution of inter-collegiate athletics. He'll quiz you on the identity of the third player in the backfield with Floyd Little '67 and Larry Csonka '68 (it was Jacksonville Jaguars head coach Tom Coughlin '68, G'69), recall the establishment of women's sports at SU, and discuss the impact of the changes in media coverage. He'll share

memories of Orange greats, assorted sports personalities, and trips to locales like Hawaii and Japan. He'll explain how SU sports gained a national audience through TV exposure; the Big East; the success of the football, basketball, and lacrosse programs; the ever-recognizable Carrier Dome; and the surge in the merchandising market.

## IN MEMORIAM

➤ *Mildred C. Eggers* of Syracuse, wife of the late Chancellor Melvin A. Eggers, died July 4 at age 87. Chancellor Eggers, who oversaw SU for more than 20 years, died in November 1994.

Born in Markle, Indiana, Mildred Chenoweth graduated from Ball State Teachers College in Muncie, Indiana. She later attended SU as a graduate student. She married Melvin Eggers in 1941.

Mildred Eggers was an elementary school teacher for 25 years before retiring in 1970. During her husband's administration from 1971 to 1991, she hosted numerous functions at the Chancellor's residence and was an active volunteer in the community, including service on the boards of Syracuse Stage and the Syracuse University Women's Association. In 1979 she was honorary chair of Onondaga County's celebration of the International Year of the Child.

In 1990, in recognition of her years of community service, she received the Syracuse Area InterReligious Council's Leadership Award and the Girl Scouts' Outstanding Community Leadership Award. She was inducted into SU's Orange Plus Hall of Fame in 1982.



Mildred C. Eggers

➤ *Bettina B. Chapman*, an honorary SU trustee, died July 16 at University Hospital in Syracuse. She was 85.

Chapman graduated from SU in 1933 with a bachelor's degree in fine arts. She studied at the Von Emberg School of Art in New Jersey, and at the Woodbury School of Art in Maine.

She was a member of the boards of visitors for SU's School of Social Work and School of Information Studies, and former president of the Friends of the School of Art and Design. She also headed the Class of 1933 fund for the artists-in-residence studio in the Shaffer Art Building.

Her extensive community service included two terms as president of the Everson Museum's board of directors.

Among the honors Chapman received were the Friends of the School of Art and Design Community Art Award and the SU Eggers Senior Alumni Award.



Bettina B. Chapman '33

"The role of SU sports changed considerably because of television, especially ESPN, and the creation of the Big East," says Kimball, who's known as the "Dean of Big East SIDs." "This is all part of a total explosion of sports that I've seen and been around. It's an exciting thing."

Kimball can recall the days when Western Union operators were scattered around the press box at football games and transmitted reporters' stories back to the newsrooms. Computer modems, fax, e-mail? Forget it. Instant video feeds? Heck, he spent Sunday mornings splicing together game-film highlights and then delivering them to the local TV stations. "What we do, in some respects, is still fairly constant," he says. "How we do it is totally different. Modern technology can be wonderful, but it's no substitute for planning."

As a kid, Kimball joked about playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers, but later found a calling in the college sports world and the games he still loves. "I really liked what I was doing," he says. "I was where I wanted to be." —JAY COX

## Tuned In

It all began with a 2 1/2-watt transmitter and a dream. The former was a prototype FM unit designed by General Electric. The latter belonged to Ken Bartlett, hired as Syracuse University's first radio instructor in 1929.

For many years in the 1930s and into the 1940s, Bartlett's students in the University's Radio Workshop produced educational programming like "Ask the Scientist" and the Peabody Award-winning "Syracuse on Trial," which were carried by special arrangement on Syracuse commercial radio stations WSYR and WFBL. Bartlett, however, yearned for students to operate their very own station.

When GE approached SU about testing its new transmitter in early 1947, his dream began to take form. Under a low-power license held by GE, students piped shows from studios in Carnegie Library and a Quonset hut erected behind the library called Radio House, to listeners huddled around 30 FM radio sets placed in living centers across campus.



STEVE SARTORI

WAER general manager Joe Lee sees the station as a training ground for tomorrow's broadcasters. "Our mission," he says, "is to ensure that students...are well-prepared going into the workplace."

After three months, the Federal Communications Commission renewed the experimental license to Syracuse University, and the station, originally dubbed WJIV, was renamed WAER (representing "Always Excellent Radio" as well as Alpha Epsilon Rho, the national broadcast honor society co-founded at SU).

From such humble beginnings emerged a laboratory, public forum, and creative outlet for thousands of student broadcasters, among them Dick Clark '51, Ted Koppel '60, Marv Albert '63, Dick Stockton '64, Steve Kroft '67, Len Berman '68, Bob Costas '74, Sean McDonough '84, and Mike Tirico '88.

Through countless staffs (both student and professional) and numerous formats (including the current mix of public radio programming, SU sports, and jazz and specialized music), WAER has enjoyed a rich 50-year history.

Several alumni returned to campus during Reunion Weekend last June to share their college memories. At a Saturday night anniversary dinner, professor emeritus Larry Myers, longtime WAER mentor and former chair of the television-radio-film department, was honored for his many contributions, and WAER general manager Joe Lee spoke of the now-50,000-watt station's status and future plans.

Lee's vision for WAER remains true to Bartlett's. "WAER is a training ground for tomorrow's broadcasters," Lee says. "Our mission is to ensure that students are trained on the most technically up-to-date equipment the industry has to offer, so that they are well-prepared going into the workplace."

In any academic year, the station's eight full-time staffers work with 125 to 135 students. Most are in news and sports. To open up new student opportunities, WAER expanded operations to 24 hours, restructured its news department, and created a few paid student marketing and development positions.

The station's primary concern involves equipment, Lee says. "WAER stacks up well for many stations in markets of this size, but a lot of stations are going digital." In the near future, Lee says, WAER hopes to assemble funding from a variety of sources—including alumni—to replace aged compact disc players and reel-to-reel tape machines, and install digital editing and broadcast equipment.

Several other anniversary events, including a local jazz concert, are in the works. Alumni cybersurfers can follow WAER activities and sample a selection of photos and audio clips at the station's Website — <http://web.syr.edu/~waerfm88>

—KEVIN MORROW