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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**November 6, 2005**

### **Corning Community College's Major Gifts Campaign Funding Establishes Walter R. Smith Visiting Scholar Series**

Corning Community College's Development Foundation has announced that its first-ever Major Gifts Campaign, *From Past to Future Generations...Investing in a Strong Community*, has secured over \$54,159.74 for the establishment of the Walter R. Smith Visiting Scholar Series. The community phase of the Campaign will continue through September 30, 2006 and include participation from alumni, individuals, foundations and corporate contributors over a five-year pledge period.

In February 2004, Walter R. Smith, professor of history and government, announced his intention to provide up to \$50,000 over the next five years as a matching gift challenge in support of a visiting scholar series. He will match any contributions made from individuals, foundations or corporate funding sources. In light of his generous contribution, the Series was named for Walter R. Smith.

Funding for the newly created Walter R. Smith Visiting Scholar Series had its beginnings with monetary donations by CCC faculty and staff to purchase a Thomas Buechner portrait of Professor Smith, a longtime employee of the College serving over forty-six years. Contributors were informed that money raised beyond the cost of the portrait would benefit the Series. At the end of July 2004 that fund held \$6,105.00. Professor Smith generously agreed that those funds could be counted toward the matching challenge.

A committee was formed to identify potential speakers and arrange the first two scholars. The committee includes faculty members Joseph Hanak, David Higgins, Larry Josbeno and Clare Reidy; retired faculty members James Hudson and Mike Gilmartin; the College's first Director of the Library, Jack Martin; and John Spence, the College's Director of Development.

Due to his longstanding friendship with Professor Smith, Congressman Amo Houghton agreed to be our first speaker on October 27, 2004. The title of the Congressman Houghton's presentation was "Civility in Politics" and was delivered toward the end of a less-than-civil presidential campaign between George Bush and John Kerry.

Dr. Tina Packer, founder and Artistic Director of Shakespeare & Company and author of *Power Play: Shakespeare's Lessons in Leadership and Management*, was our second speaker on March 14, 2005.

This semester, Dr. Virginia Trimble, professor of astronomy, history of science, and world-renowned astrophysicist spoke to a standing room only crowd on September 26. Dr. Trimble's presentation was titled "Cosmology: Man's Place in the Universe".

The Very Reverend Paul Zahl, dean and president of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, will join us on March 22, 2006. Reverend Zahl has spoken nationally representing those in the Episcopal Church opposed to the ordination of an opening gay bishop. He will address this issue from a historical point of view and explain why the topic should matter to those who are not Episcopalians.

Walter R. Smith stated, “My goal is to reestablish a tradition of scholarly speakers at Corning Community College. The Series will stimulate the thinking and conversations of our students, faculty and members of the local community by inviting experts from outside the area. We welcome politicians, artists, scientists, historians, and observers of contemporary culture.”

As of November 4, the Campaign total was \$3,303,500 from private sources including one hundred percent participation by the CCC Regional Board of Trustees, Development Foundation board members, and Alumni Association board members. Combined with the availability of state matching funds for portions of private sources, over \$5,500,000 raised to date indicates that the Foundation’s goal of \$7,000,000 is attainable.

In January, the CCC Development Foundation, a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation, launched the Major Gifts Campaign to help the region resolve challenges and capitalize on opportunities. The Campaign offers an opportunity to invest in the future of our region by increasing access and opportunity, providing seed money to initiate new programs, and to enhance quality of life.

Initiatives include *Access and Opportunity*: Outreach and Scholarships; *Program Growth and Development*: New Program Development and Technology Upgrades; *Community Enrichment/Quality of Life*: Infrastructure and Visiting Scholar Series. These initiatives will allow CCC to complete many of the infrastructure projects identified in the 2003-2008 Facilities Master Plan including a new perimeter road, classroom conversions to upgrade instructional technology and the learning environment, new elevators and roofs.

For additional information, please call (607) 974-6011.