

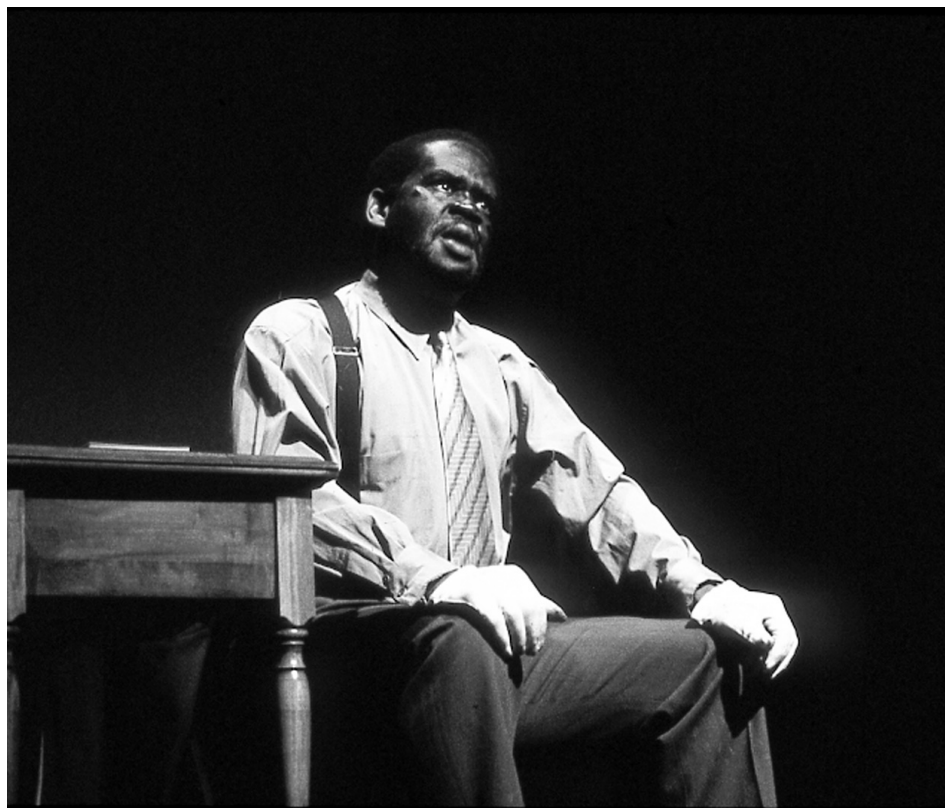
Published by the Office of Foundation, Corporate and Government Relations, *Faculty Grants Quarterly* is an internal newsletter created for Hamilton College faculty members to report on funding and research trends of public and private funding sources, as well as the grant and scholarly activities of their colleagues.

Considering writing a grant proposal?  
Have an idea, but don't know what to do next?  
Need help sorting out your budget?  
Contact our office.

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Mark Cryer on stage in his one-man show, *99*.

## On the road with Mark Cryer and *99*

While in the Air Force stationed in Biloxi, Miss., Mark Cryer came home to find the words “Nigger go home” scrawled across his door. Nearly 25 years later, Cryer, an assistant professor of theatre, was brought back to that very moment when, in 2000, a racial slur was scribbled across a student’s door. “The entire campus was in an uproar. Students were mad as hell and held a series of rallies, town meetings and e-mail campaigns,” Cryer recalled, “I kept seeing the same people saying the same thing: Racism is bad. They were, in effect, preaching to the choir.

“While I applauded their activism, I questioned their long-term commitment to addressing the root of the problem: We don’t know each other, except as the ‘other,’” he added.

Cryer’s original one-person play, *99 Questions You’ve Always Wanted to Ask an African American but Were*

*Too Afraid to Ask*, was inspired by these events. The play challenges socially constructed norms by creating an environment that fosters a dialogue about race. “I wanted the audiences to view race from a new perspective,” Cryer explained, “but I wanted them to be entertained as well.”

The development and production of *99* came to fruition after countless hours of hard work and with the assistance of a variety of internal and external grants. In the summer shortly after the incident at Hamilton, Cryer applied for and received an Emerson Scholars grant. The funds allowed him to work with a student, Jared Johnson ’02, for the summer and gather the materials needed to write the script. “I purchased a video camera and sent him to New York City for the summer with a single edict: Ask anyone and everyone if they have a question

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they've always wanted to ask an African American but were too afraid to ask," said Cryer.

Meanwhile, on campus, Cryer posed the same question via an all-campus e-mail. "The response was overwhelming," he said. "I received questions that had been expected, but many that were a complete surprise. Two extremely poignant questions stood out for me. The first was: 'Why do African Americans exclude whites from their culture?' And the second came from a small child who was with his mother. He simply asked, 'Why does it have to be a different question for African Americans?'"

Cryer wove the questions into a

reports. "The success of 99 on campus was gratifying, but it also motivated me to bring the production to a larger audience. I envisioned a national and international tour, but to do so, I needed funding."

During the next 18 months, Cryer spent his time rewriting the play, turning it into a one-person touring show (the original play incorporated his students) and chasing down grant money to fund his tour. Because of the limited funding available for the arts, Cryer decided to apply for a number of small grants, as opposed to one large, comprehensive grant. The first of the external grants came from the Arts & Cultural Grant Fund sponsored by State Senator John DeFransico, through the Cultural Resources Coun-

\$2,500 from the Puffin Foundation. The foundation's mission of "continuing the dialogue between art and the lives of ordinary people" fit nicely with Cryer's goals for 99. The grant provided Cryer with the resources to purchase additional projection equipment and, in part, funded his national tour. The mailing campaign funded by the first two grants helped him secure performance dates at Alfred University, Colgate University, SUNY Canton, SUNY Oneonta, Syracuse University and Louisiana State University. He also has plans to perform at the renowned Piccolo-Spoleto Festival in Charleston, S.C., this summer.

However, Cryer still had the hope of taking 99 international. Cryer had his eye on the Kilkenny Arts Festival in Kilkenny, Ireland, and the Edinburgh Theatre Festival, in Edinburgh, Scotland, where he has already secured dates to perform.

"I attended graduate school in Scotland and am keenly aware that most Europeans, as with most Americans, get whatever they know about African Americans from television," explained Cryer. "It is just not the best medium to be learning from!"

He approached Arts International, a private US-based organization devoted to the support of global exchange in the arts, and applied for funding to bring 99 to Europe. The application is currently pending. Cryer considers this to be a critical step in reaching the goals he set forth for 99.

"As an artist, I believe and practice *the political as personal*, and attempt to use this philosophy as a way of building understanding and inclusion. One of the goals of this project is to reach as wide of an audience as possible."

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**— Mark Cryer, assistant professor of theatre**

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script that eventually became 99. The audience sees videotaped clips of people asking their questions and hearing the answers — often for the first time — interspersed with monologues delivered by Cryer's character. The answers, mixed with humor and candor, are crafted into a fast-moving play that takes the audience on a journey of discovery and reflection.

It was first performed at Hamilton in Minor Theater to a standing-room-only crowd. The production had an immediate and powerful effect, spawning countless spontaneous discussions, a series of weeklong editorials and a number of local television

cil (CRC). The program is intended to fund artists or small arts and cultural organizations in the Central New York area that "truly define the concept of community-based arts." Almost at the same time, Cryer received word that he was awarded a second grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. The \$1,500 offered by the CRC and the additional \$1,500 from the NYSCA enabled Cryer to purchase equipment, costumes and props, and, more importantly, allowed him to embark upon a large direct mail campaign to find prospective venues.

Shortly thereafter, Cryer learned he was awarded a third grant of

# The ACCESS Project

## Empowerment through education

With a tenacious and committed staff and the financial assistance of state and federal government agencies, private foundations and Hamilton College, the ACCESS (Academic Coalition for full Citizenship through Education and Social Support) Project has spent the past four years assisting more than 65 low-income parents to become secure workers and valued citizens through the pathway of higher education.

ACCESS is the brainchild of Vivyan Adair, the Elihu Root Peace Fund Associate Professor of Women's Studies. Some 15 years ago, she too was a single parent and welfare recipient. "Without access to higher education, I lacked the skills, knowledge, credentials, self-esteem or vision necessary to support and nurture my family," she recalls. Despite all the obstacles, Adair enrolled at North Seattle Community College and began a journey that would eventually lead to a Ph.D. in English from the University of Washington, a tenured faculty position at Hamilton and the creation of a program to help other low-income parents fulfill their educational goals.

ACCESS is a demonstration project that was created, in part, as a response to 1996 welfare reform legislation that discouraged recipients from pursuing a degree by creating a "work first" mentality that dominated all decisions regarding programming. ACCESS sought to demonstrate that a post-secondary education would permanently and positively change the economic circumstances of the participants, keeping them off the welfare rolls while improving their self-esteem, instilling a sense of citizenship and enhancing their ability to care for their families.

To do so, however, the ACCESS group, which included Adair, co-director and James L. Ferguson Professor of Economics Erol Balkan, and Project Coordinator Sharon Gormley, needed a substantial amount of funding. The program they proposed was comprehensive and would require nearly \$500,000 annually to implement. In short order, the trio became some of the savviest fundraisers on campus. They tapped a variety of funding sources and, over the course of the past four years, Adair and Gormley have managed to raise almost \$2.4 million.

A large portion of these grants and contracts came from the State of New York. Most notably, ACCESS was able to connect with New

York State Senator Raymond Meier, chairman of the Senate Committee on Social Services, whose longstanding interest in welfare reform was a natural fit with ACCESS's overall objectives. With Meier's sponsorship, ACCESS has received four state allocations of \$500,000 or more, providing the bulk of funding for the program, while a fifth allocation is currently pending.

In 2002, the program secured a Department of Labor Work Force Development contract worth \$65,000 that provided many of its students with employment opportunities. Adair made countless contacts with similar programs across the nation and joined a consortium that was awarded a grant from the Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) — \$80,000 of which was awarded directly to ACCESS. Other contributions, such as \$45,000 from the Community Foundation, \$95,000 from the Charles A. Frueauff Foundation and \$12,000 in private donations, allowed the program to address the social service needs of its students.

As another academic year comes to a close, ACCESS is exploring avenues for a new version of the program that will be responsive to changing welfare legislation. Ongoing assessment and programmatic support for existing students will continue, ensuring that ACCESS's legacy is far-reaching. This year, ACCESS celebrated the graduation of six students from Hamilton. The remaining ACCESS students are at varying points in their educational or professional careers, but all have been substantively transformed by their time in the program.

As Dr. Sandra Dalhberg, one of the program's assessment experts, noted, "in just a couple of years, ACCESS-supported college graduates will teach countless central New York school children; will offer counseling in schools, treatment facilities and prisons; will serve the region as social workers, parole officers, lawyers and public policy analysts. As mentors, leaders and public servants, ACCESS graduates will positively contribute to New York State and the lives of others for decades to come."

# A Sampling of Awards and Submissions

**Please join the Office of Foundation, Corporate and Government Relations as we extend congratulations to the following faculty members who have recently received awards or submitted proposals.**

**John C. Adams**, visiting professor of rhetoric and communication, submitted a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities' Summer Seminar program requesting \$82,214 for support of his proposed seminar *Epideictic Rhetoric, Civic Virtue, and Practical Wisdom*.

**Karen S. Brewer**, associate professor of chemistry, submitted a proposal to the American Chemical Society's Petroleum Research Fund requesting \$50,000 for support of her project, *Rare Earth Calixarene Complexes in a Sol-Gel Matrix: Synthesis and Luminescence*.

**Eugene W. Domack**, professor of geology, was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation to support his research project, *Testing the Snowball Earth Hypothesis by Comparison to Antarctic Marine Deposystems*. Domack was also awarded two other grants from the National Science Foundation: a \$69,788 grant, submitted in collaboration with colleagues from Harvard, which will support *Collaborative Research: Glacial History of Snowball Earth*, and a \$333,152 grant, submitted in collaboration with colleagues from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Colgate University, Montclair State University, and Earth and Space Research, which will support *Collaborative Research: Paleohistory of the Larsen Ice Shelf System: Phase II*.

**Timothy E. Elgren**, associate professor of chemistry, along with colleagues from biology and chemistry, submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation's Major Research Instrumentation program requesting \$211,450 to support *Acquisition of a Raman Microscope*.

**Gordon L. Jones**, assistant professor of physics, along with colleagues from Tulane University, Depauw University, and Indiana University, submitted a proposal requesting \$269,915

for support of their project, *Development of an Apparatus to Measure the Electron-Antineutrino Correlation in Free Neutron Beta Decay*.

**Heidi M. Ravven**, professor of religious studies, was invited by the Ford Foundation to submit a planning grant proposal requesting \$150,000 for support of her project, *Spinoza and American Pluralism*.

**Sharon Werning Rivera**, assistant professor of government, submitted a proposal to the American Political Science Association for support of her project, *Comparative Communist Transitions: Elite Renewal in China and the USSR*.

**George C. Shields**, Winslow Professor of Chemistry, was awarded a \$35,000 grant from the Research Corporation for his project, "*Quantum chemical investigation of the mechanism of action of the enediyne natural products.*"

**Ann J. Silversmith**, professor of physics, submitted, along with a colleague from Davidson College, a proposal to the American Chemical Society's Petroleum Research Fund requesting \$50,000 for support of her project, *Florescence From Sol-Gel Materials Doped with Rare Earth Impurity Ions*.

**Edward Wheatley**, associate professor of English, was awarded a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities supporting his project, *Stumbling Blocks Before the Blind: The Medieval Construction of a Disability*.