

ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Focus

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December 1989



DECEMBER 1989

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(Cover Photo: Artist John Wilson has been commissioned to place a sculpture on Roxbury Community College's campus. Installation will be completed during 1990.)

## Roxbury Community College

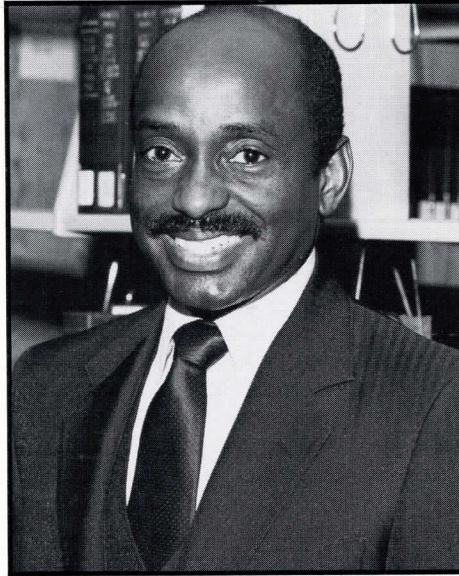
# Focus

The Focus is a monthly publication of Roxbury Community College.

Notices, news and items for publication should be submitted to the President's Office, Room 304, Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Avenue, Roxbury Crossing, MA 02120. (617) 541-5301.

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Staff Writer: Aya de Leon.

## President's Message:



(Photo: Angel Amy-Moreno)

**G**reetings to all students, faculty, staff and friends of Roxbury Community College who have been longterm supporters of the school. This year, we need your help and commitment as we've never needed it before.

These are not the easiest of times for RCC, but I know without a doubt that we have all the elements of an outstanding community college, and with commitment, we will be able to make academic excellence an unquestionable reality here at Roxbury Community College. Throughout the coming months, I would just like to stress the importance of keeping our eyes on that goal. Certainly our circumstances have not made it easy, but in the face of adversity from outside our halls, it is important that we turn inward, and take care of what needs to be taken care of here on our campus.

We know Roxbury Community College students deserve our best—and we have so much to give. The qualifications of our staff are impressive; the credentials of our faculty are outstanding. I believe in this College. I know the potential is here. Why else would I have taken this job, despite all of the warnings of the naysayers? When Thomas F. Welch, Chairman of the RCC Board of Trustees, called me and offered me this job, I said "I accept," prior to discussing terms or salary. I took this job

because I wanted the opportunity to work with all of you: students, faculty, staff, and community members to bring Roxbury Community College to its rightful place in higher education. I know many of you already give 100% to this job; but we've all got to be committed.

I have worked all semester seeking support from the community at-large, and I am feeling now that we are at a point where we will make a breakthrough. The initial response from our legislative representatives is encouraging; the response from private industry is also favorable, and I am confident that more supporters of Roxbury Community College are out there waiting to be identified. We at the College need to do more in order to turn the promises of support into concrete resources--the future of our institution demands it. We have to fend off financial woes while continually improving the operation of the College. I am asking everyone who knows the historic mission of the College to redouble their efforts to drum up support. Let's change the news that's being written; let's trumpet the success stories that are yet to be told, and let's make our voices heard up at the State House and in the streets. There's much to be proud about at RCC, but if we let others tell our story then our real potential will continue to go unrealized. And that's part of the reason why the Focus has been produced, and only part of what we as a College community have to offer to the watching and waiting residents of our neighborhoods. Let's spread the news: "It's a new day at RCC."

Where there's a will, there's a way. If we are all willing to work together, we will succeed.

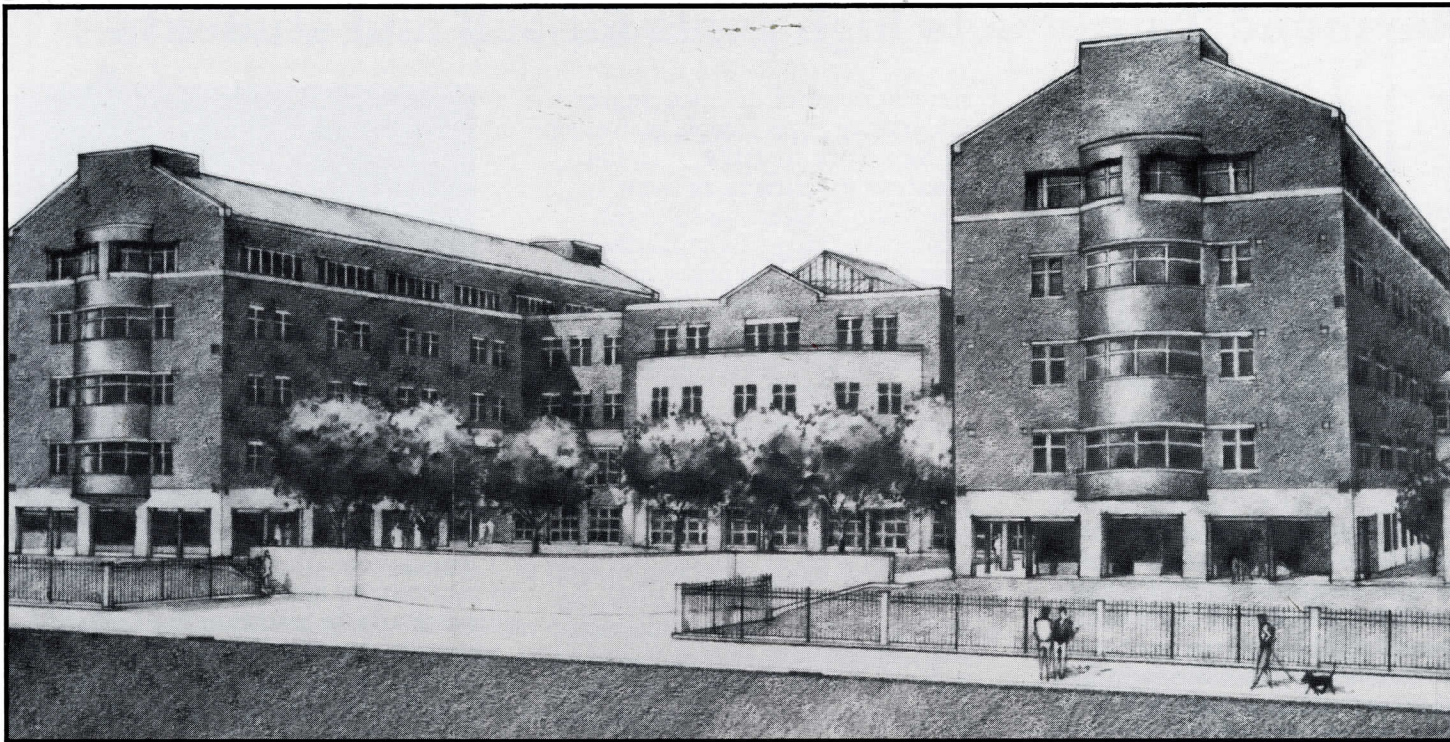
I recall, recently, a visitor to Roxbury Community College remarked to me, "What an impressive campus."

I replied, "Just wait until you see what's going on inside."

Join with me. I know we can make it work.

Sincerely,

*Walter C. Howard*  
Walter C. Howard  
President



## Forum Measures Academic Excellence

**O**n Wednesday and Thursday evenings, November 1 and 2, the College held a public forum entitled Academic Excellence: Where We Are, and Where We Must Go.

The purpose of the forum was to determine the current state of preparedness of RCC graduates. The forum was designed to provide feedback on the development of systems to ensure the preparedness of all Roxbury Community College graduates to enter the workplace and the academic arena.

During the forum, employers, business community leaders, administrators of transfer colleges and universities, former Roxbury Community College students, and others presented their views on the skills and training of Roxbury Community College graduates to a panel of educators and community leaders. Panelists included Melvin King, Professor of Urban Studies and Planning, and Director of the Community Fellows Program at MIT; Sharon McDade, Director of the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard; Luis Prado, Executive Director of La Alianza

Hispana; Thomas F. Welch, President of Thomas F. Welch Associates; Dr. John Grady, Professor at Wheaton College; Dr. Kyrsis Rodriguez, Associate Professor at RCC, and Dr. Raymond Turner, Assistant Professor at RCC; as well as Dr. William B. D. Thompson, former Acting President. President Walter C. Howard acted as moderator.

Speakers addressed the panel on matters related to the following questions: How well do RCC graduates perform in the colleges and universities to which they transferred? How well do they perform the jobs they receive after graduating from Roxbury Community College?

Both evenings were well-attended by students, faculty, administrators, and members of the greater community. While a number of businesses were in attendance, there was a more comprehensive response from RCC alumni who had transferred, and the college administrators. The following schools were represented at the forum: UMass Boston, Wheelock College, Suffolk University, Wellesley College, Smith

College, Simmons College, Salem State College, Boston University, and Wentworth Technical Institute. While the majority of the feedback was positive, there were specific areas of weakness that were identified by the speakers. One alumna noted that her preparation in Spanish was inadequate, and another graduate stated that many of his technical credits were not transferrable. On several occasions, speakers remarked that math, science and writing skills needed to be strengthened.

"I think it was a good beginning," remarked Florence Miller, an RCC alumna who spoke during the forum, "We needed to have something like that a long time ago. I think our new President is working hard to get things together."

"I think the forum went very well," Dr. Howard said afterward. "We heard what we are doing well, and what needs work. This was the easy part; now we have to roll up our sleeves and go to work. But I was pleased that so much of the feedback was positive. I am confident that this faculty has the tools to make the adjustments that will make RCC the excellent college it can be."

## Raymond Turner sets high goals for self and students

By Aya de Leon  
Staff Writer

*"He's always pushing and helping students to understand what he's trying to teach."*

*"He motivates us into learning more about science."*

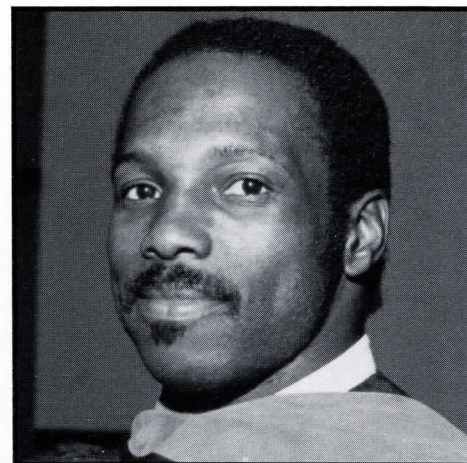
The preceding comments were written by students on an anonymous evaluation form for General Science, an introductory course taught by Dr. Raymond Turner, Assistant Professor of Chemistry and Mathematics at RCC, and current Co-Chair of the Faculty Assembly.

"I believe in accomplishing whatever mission I set out to...I have always set and tried to maintain high standards." Throughout his life, Prof. Turner has set high standards for himself. He received

his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Brooklyn College in New York in 1974, and his Masters in Chemistry from Fordham University in 1982. While studying at Fordham, he was a Research Worker at the Columbia University Department of Biochemistry, and a Senior Research Technician at Cornell University Medical College.

After graduating from Fordham, he received a full-time teaching and research fellowship to Polytechnic University in New York, where he received a second Masters and a Ph.D. also in the field of chemistry in 1986. In 1987, he began a post-doctoral fellowship at the Department of Nutrition in the School of Public Health at Harvard, and during that same period, he began teaching at RCC.

"I like teaching because it gives one a chance to influence people in a positive way. Students,



Turner

particularly traditionally excluded people, need positive role models, people they can look up to."

"People who have succeeded can come back to them and say 'let me show you how'...I try to provide them with the tools to be

*(Please see Turner, page 7)*

## Kyrsis Rodriguez challenges students to think critically

By Aya de Leon  
Staff Writer



Rodriguez

*"At the end of this semester you will have been exposed to organisms you never knew existed and will rediscover others that you never paid much attention to. I hope that this part of the journey makes you keenly aware of the world around you and develops in you a responsible perspective on the importance of every organism that shares this planet with us."*

The introduction to Dr. Kyrsis Rodriguez's syllabus for General Biology I promises an exciting, challenging course; the syllabus also reflects Dr. Rodriguez's fascination with biology, her passion for teaching, her commitment to her students, and her love for the planet.

Dr. Rodriguez, born and raised in Puerto Rico, received her Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Biology from the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras, in 1970 and 1974. "In Puerto Rico," she explained, "it's very common for women to pursue careers in science and medicine." It was not until she came to Massachusetts in 1972 for a six week course at Woods Hole, that she found that "the majority of the scientists were male, and the majority of people doing research were male." Undaunted, she completed her Ph.D. in Plant Anatomy and Physiology at the University of Missouri at Columbia in 1982.

She came to Roxbury Community College in 1983, and was promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor in 1987. "I love teach-

ing," she explains. "Teaching is not a comprehensive enough word—I see myself as a learner also. I learn something new every semester. The reason I am in the classroom is to share what I know with [students], with the understanding that they will share what they know with me. So we are both supposed to be teaching and learning...It's a very exciting process." The rich cultural and racial atmosphere at RCC makes teaching exciting for Dr. Rodriguez: "It is a challenge in the sense that every culture has its own ideas and its own way of looking at things. It teaches you to look at things in so many different ways that it gives you a perspective on things that you probably cannot get someplace else."

She has also worked to make science and math more accessible to the Latino community at RCC by teaching courses in Spanish, developing curriculum, and teaching: Science Workshop for Bilingual Students, an intensive four-week course in the ESL depart-

*(Please see Rodriguez, page 7)*

## What is Workplace Literacy Education?

**A** recent survey in Massachusetts has found some surprising answers to the question: "What is workplace literacy education?"

Conducted by David Rosen, Roxbury Community College's Adult Literacy Resource Institute director and Cerci Kale, director of the Boston Workplace Education Collaborative at RCC, the survey reflected the concerns of 27 workplace literacy programs in Massachusetts (a 64% response rate). The survey revealed that employer-centered needs and goals—such as increased job accuracy and productivity, employee retention and promotion, or decreased accident rates—are only part of what most Massachusetts programs try to achieve.

Kale and Rosen found that nearly all Massachusetts workplace education programs teach *basic skills* required in the context of job tasks. However, these programs also include basic skills needed for other life tasks: applying for citizenship, knowing one's rights and responsibilities as an immigrant, home safety, communicating verbally and in writing

with children's teachers, and other "life skills."

Most respondents said their programs should be evaluated using additional measures such as changes in levels of basic skills, qualitative and quantitative measures of increase in self-esteem, increased problem-solving skills, entrance into GED programs or citizenship classes, ability to function in one's neighborhood or community, and learner satisfaction with classes.

Respondents stated that definitions of workplace literacy must recognize that many programs serve limited English-speaking adults who need both generic and job-specific ESL. They also urged the continued involvement of organized labor. The concern of unions with rights and responsibilities of workers must be combined with attention to quality of life issues.

A narrow definition of workplace literacy education was largely rejected by respondents in favor of elevating student/worker interests and goals through this field of education. Union and



employer interests that view literacy as education rather than as merely prerequisite training for one's job are critical. Such a definition would include basic skills which lead to promotions and better jobs, as well as to increased communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills on the job and in the rest of the worker's life.

Copies of the survey are available from Dr. David J. Rosen, at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, 241 St. Botolph St., Boston, 424-7947.

## Dean Bright addresses "Challenges for the 90s"

"A challenge is an opportunity in disguise. We have before us the rich opportunity, well-hidden though it may be, to reverse the prospect of a future of poverty and hopelessness for thousands of inner city children, their families and communities, and in the end, our society. We can be the ones to provide the personnel who will make the difference in retaining corporations in the Northeast who will rebuild the faltering economy. We can be the ones to augment the dreadful shortage of AHANA [African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American] teachers, scientists, engineers, and people of medicine. We can be the ones to spur the renewed vitality of our educational institutions, make them more responsive to non-traditional students and in the process more responsive to all students. We can be the ones to save our colleges."

These were the closing remarks of an address by Hazel Bright, RCC Dean of Student Development and Campus Life, entitled "Challenges for the 90s." Dean Bright was the keynote speaker at the opening session of the 42nd Annual Meeting of the new England Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers held November 9, in Sturbridge, Mass.



Dean Hazel Bright addresses Commencement, 1988

# FOCUS on the News

## Fiscal Affairs VP and Academic Affairs VP begin in January 1990

Barbara Logan-Stamps was recently selected as the VP for Fiscal Affairs and will begin work January 2, 1990. Ms. Logan-Stamps brings 10 years of corporate experience to the College. Most recently with the Boston Company, she holds a Masters in Administration (1980) and a Masters in Education (1978) from Brooklyn College. Dr. Alan Sheppard, a Professor at Fort Valley State College in Georgia, was VP for Academic Affairs at Fort Valley State from 1987 to 1989. He received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1971, and will assume his new post January 16th.

## Roberts elected Student Trustee

In October, Darren C. Roberts was elected as the student representative to the RCC Board of Trustees by the Student Government Association, of which he is treasurer. Born in Trinidad, now living in Dorchester, Roberts entered RCC in the Spring of 1988, interested in the field of Accounting. He is an accounting tutor in the Teaching Learning Center, and is committed to representing student concerns: "It is important for me to know how our students feel about issues on campus so I can act accordingly."



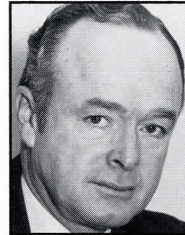
## Employees Honored by the Commonwealth

In September, Dean José de Jesús and Dean John McGrann were honored by the Commonwealth of Mass. Employee's Campaign (COMEC).



deJesus

Dr. Walter Howard was in attendance as the CEO representative of RCC.



McGrann

L. Edward Lashman, Jr., Secretary of Administration and Finance and 1989 Chair of COMEC, presented plaques to deJesús and McGrann, in recognition of their efforts to raise funds for the 1988 COMEC campaign. Last year, de Jesús and McGrann led the fundraising effort at RCC, which raised \$7,538, almost twice the amount of the previous year. All of the funds raised were sent to charities in the Boston area.

## "Pride in Performance"

Last September, three RCC employees were honored for dedicated service to the Commonwealth. Gail Cody, José de Jesús, and Betty Hillmon were awarded certificates and engraved marble desk plates during the annual "Pride in Performance" banquet, which was held at the Park Plaza Hotel. "It is important that we

celebrate who we are and what we do," said Governor Dukakis, who was the keynote speaker. "You are the people that are making a difference in the lives of our citizens," he added.

## Gelzer Scholarship Established

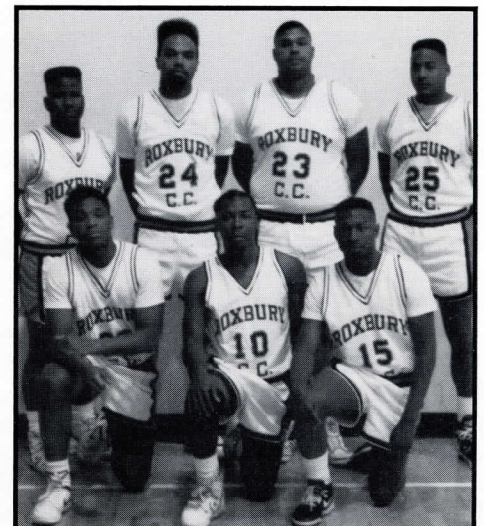
Early in the fall, Francina E. (Copeland) Gelzer was honored at the Harriet Tubman House, which celebrated her twenty-five years of dedicated service as a librarian. The reception was held on her birthday and an announcement was made that a scholarship will be established in her name in conjunction with Roxbury Community College.

Francina Gelzer has been the branch librarian of the Dudley Branch Library and has served as the district supervisor of seven other branch libraries since 1978. She began her career as a children's librarian at the North End Branch, after receiving her master's degree in library science from Suffolk University. "I can't remember a time since I was in my teens that I did not visualize being a librarian," explained Gelzer, "I just always wanted to be one."

The celebration and "Community Salute" came as a complete surprise to Mrs. Gelzer, who retired on June 30 of this year. "I was overwhelmed," recalls Gelzer, "I don't think I can ever capture in words what the whole affair meant to me."

(Please see Gelzer, page 7)

The R.C.C. Express & Expressettes began the 89-90 basketball season in winning form. Home games are held at the Shelburne Recreation Center, 2730 Washington Street, Roxbury. Pictured at left, the EXPRESSETTES (back row): Kathy Grannum, Zobeida Lopez, Shawna Hicks, Whitney Granger; (front) Mandell Perryman, Jemma Owens, Pamela Hale, Samedi Morris. At right, the EXPRESS (back row): Dana Fisher, Benny Bowers, Chris Beach and Dave Foy; (front): Steve Nicholson, Greg Jackson and Edell Howard. (Photos: Abdul Sadik)



## Rodriguez...

(Continued from page 4)

ment, and translating Biology and Basic Math materials into Spanish.

In addition, she is active in the Science Department and in the RCC community as Department Chairperson-elect for 1990, and is currently Co-Chair of the Faculty Assembly.

She uses a multi-faceted approach in the classroom: "I don't just go in there and teach biology. I also have to teach them ethics, critical thinking, how to relate to each other, how to relate to their society, how to question authority without being abrasive. I ask them to challenge me. By doing that, I am teaching them how to challenge authority in a respectful and positive way.

"And that has nothing to do with biology—but they're going to need it when they go out there."

She explains that the method she uses for conducting her

classes is a lecture/discussion format. "There is a lecture," she says, "but the lecture emanates from the answers of the students." She explains that when a student asks a question, she insists on using a dynamic process to arrive at the answer. "When the student asks me a question, I ask questions of the student until I get the answer from the student." Through this interaction, she explains, the answer is not just a fact to be written down, but the result of a process of which the student is a part, and the student knows that he or she had the answer all along.

While her pedagogy is at times nurturing and inclusive, she also has a tougher side. She challenges her students to think critically, to have opinions, and to express them. "You don't have to agree with me all the time," she tells her students, "If we all agreed all the time, then life would be very boring. But if you're going to disagree...you have got to learn

how to present your argument in a coherent manner. If not, I'm going to kill your argument."

She stresses critical thinking skills through various methods. She explains that she will often ask students to write papers on controversial, science-related topics, and asks that for the final part of the paper, they state their opinion. "I make it very clear that they are not graded on what their opinion is, but how well they support it. I want them to take a stand on abortion, AIDS, lead poisoning, nuclear waste, environmental issues, birth control—give me your opinion and defend it—in other words, have an intelligent opinion." She also asks them to give a presentation to the class on a topic, after which they are questioned by the professor and the other students.

"They have this panic, absolute panic, about talking in public, but...at the end of the semester, they are more confident."

## Turner...

(Continued from page 4)

successful.... Unfortunately, many highly educated people of color do not come back and give back to the community."

Dr. Raymond Turner was born in Mt. Hermon, a Black community in Portsmouth, Virginia. He explains that it was "one of the few historically Black neighborhoods that has traditionally been Black controlled," and that his Carib-

bean-born grandfather was one of the original founders.

After graduating from high school, he volunteered for the military and served as an infantry soldier in Viet Nam. He was honorably discharged, and is currently a captain in the Medical Service Corps of the U.S. Army reserve. He has a permanent appointment to the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington D.C., as the Assistant

Chief of Biochemistry in the Dept. of Molecular Pharmacology.

Perhaps what is most impressive about Ray Turner is the fact that he is able to be effective in a classroom where students are not expected to have any previous background in science.

"I believe that students at RCC have hidden potential. When students come with poor grades from high school...I convince them that people were wrong about them."

## Gelzer...

(Continued from page 6)

Barbara Elam, Co-Chair of the Gelzer Community Salute Committee explains that "Frankie's [Mrs. Gelzer's] rock bottom commitment was to the young people of this community." During her 25 years of service, Gelzer worked to ensure that the library was a vital community resource. She feels that the library can be an important resource for youth: "I'd rather have them comfortable in the library than out on the streets."

The Francina E. Gelzer Scholarship at RCC was established by the Gelzer Community Salute Committee, made up of friends and colleagues of Mrs. Gelzer,

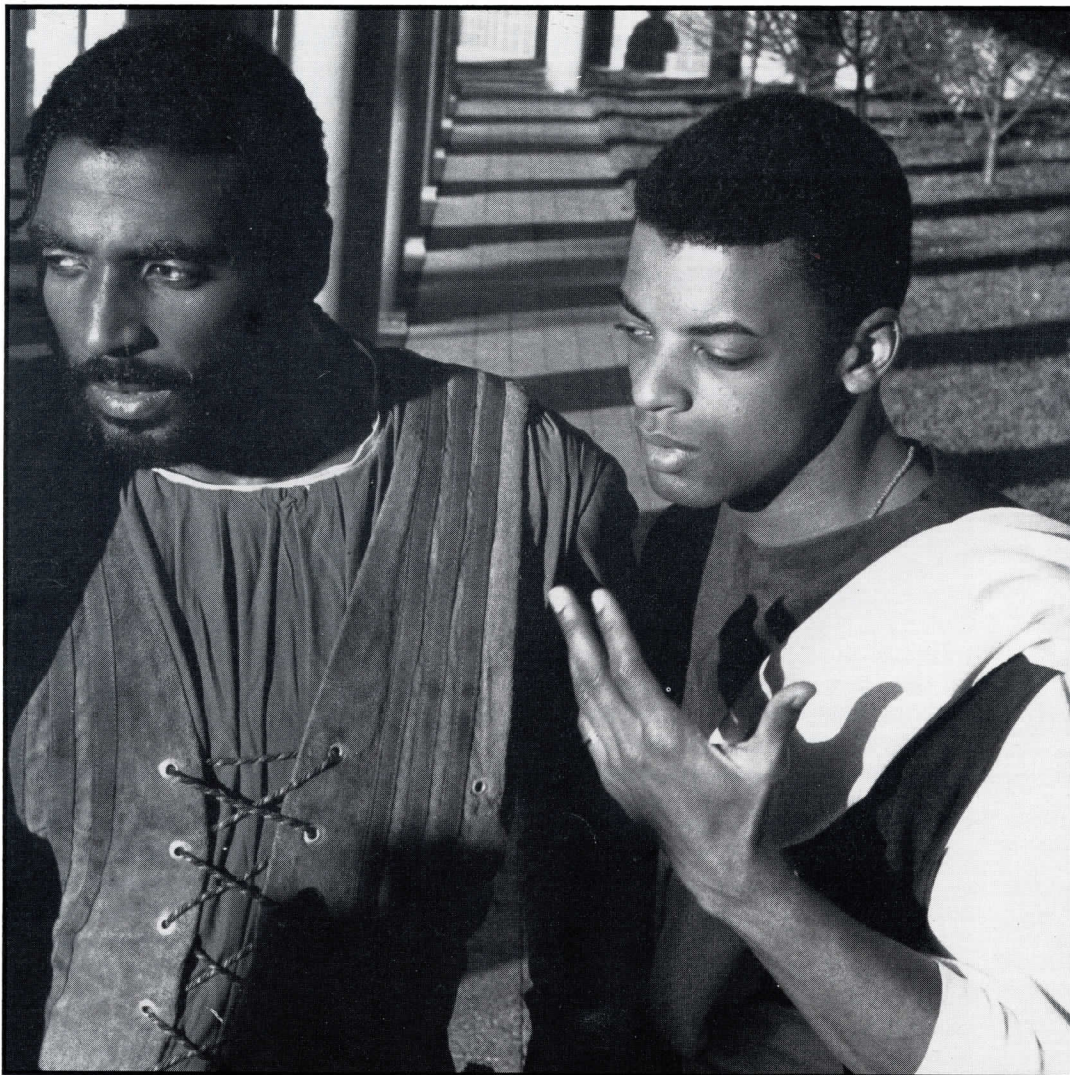
including Mrs. Pearl Mosley, who works in the RCC Learning Resource Center. Given the mission of the College, "RCC was the place for the scholarship to be," said Mrs. Mosley. She and the other committee members were willing to donate their time and money to the scholarship in Mrs. Gelzer's name. "These people came readily," Barbara Elam explained, "out of the love and respect they had for Frankie [Mrs. Gelzer]. Everybody wanted to help."

Approximately five thousand dollars will be awarded each year. Details of the scholarship will be finalized through the RCC Foundation.

### Roxbury Community College Board of Trustees

Mr. Thomas F. Welch, Chairman  
Ms. Eleanor Acheson  
Mr. Leon Brathwaite, Sr.  
Mr. Guy Denizard  
Ms. Kay Gomez-Young  
Dr. John Grady  
Ms. Deborah Jackson  
Dr. Irene Nichols  
Mr. Luis Prado  
Mr. Darren Roberts

Dr. Walter C. Howard  
President



*Faculty member David Coleman and Stacy Lee Simmons recreate a scene from the Roxbury Outreach Shakespeare Experience's recent production, "Macbeth," which was performed at Lowell University November 30 - December 2, and at the Strand Theatre in Dorchester, on December 7. The Roxbury Outreach Shakespeare Experience (R.O.S.E.) is co-sponsored by Roxbury Community College and features students and community residents in its performances.*

*(Photo: Kippy Goldfarb)*

## Focus

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**Roxbury Community College**

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Address Correction Requested