

# Armchair College Fair

## Famed principal to speak Mar. 11

Joe Clark, the famed former principal of Eastside High in Paterson, N.J., and the subject of the movie "Lean On Me," will speak at St. John Fisher College, Pittsford, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, in Basil Auditorium. The event is free and open to the public.

Clark served as principal of Eastside High from 1982 to 1989. The school was marked by violence and disruption when he first took office, but within two years, the new principal had led the school out of its raucous past and into the national spotlight when it was declared a model school by New Jersey's governor in 1984.

After several years on the public speaking circuit, in 1995, Clark, author of the book *Laying Down The Law*, accepted the position of director of Essex County Youth House, a juvenile detention center in his hometown of Newark, N.J. His achievements have been chronicled by *Time* magazine, and such TV news shows as "60 Minutes."

For information about his talk at Fisher, call 716/385-8104.

## Fisher backs up promise with bucks

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

When he was a prospective college student, James M. Locker heard a lot of pitches from colleges to entice him to enroll. But the Hornell High School graduate never heard anything quite like what St. John Fisher College told him.

"I knew other colleges that promised to help you get a job," the freshman said. "But not one that said they would pay you money if you didn't."

When the history major graduates from St. John Fisher College, he might be eligible for up to \$5,000 if he is unable to land a job requiring a college degree or to find his way into a graduate school. That's as long as he fulfills the necessary criteria for eligibility, according to Gerard J. Rooney, Fisher's dean of enrollment management.

This financial promise is called "The Fisher Commitment," and since it was instituted in fall 1994, the guarantee has attracted considerable attention from the national press. For example, *Rolling Stone* magazine said the Fisher Commitment "may sound like a slacker's dream, but the program insists upon three R's: research, resource and resume."

Rooney echoed the magazine's take on the program, which he noted would be attractive to any

student who desires an intense undergraduate life dedicated to both study and extracurricular activities.

"The Fisher Commitment is designed to ensure an individual student success not only in transitioning from high school to college, but beyond to the world of work," Rooney said.

He added that about half of each incoming class of 300 students since the promise was available has decided to participate in the program.

According to information from Rooney's office, the Fisher Commitment is open to any freshman who will attend the school full-time for four years. The student agrees to work with the college in creating a "Career Success Plan." The plan consists of year-by-year requirements that the student must fulfill in order to be considered a program participant.

For example, in order to qualify for the Fisher Commitment, a student during freshman year has to:

- Participate in a Student Government Association organization or in Division III athletics.
- Complete a "self-assessment" document and review it with the college's Career Services office.
- Volunteer for community service work at least twice.
- Meet with a "Commitment" adviser twice each semester.
- Meet with an academic adviser at least once each semester.
- Research a career interest.

In addition to these mandatory actions, the student must also fulfill at least one of several different tasks that year, whether it's finding a summer job that relates to



Matthew Scott/Staff Photographer

St. John Fisher freshman, James M. Locker

his or her chosen career, or research graduate school requirements in his or her field of interest.

"These probably go on at other colleges," Rooney acknowledged of the steps students must take. "But not as intentionally ... It doesn't leave things to chance."

Locker said he had already fulfilled a number of his requirements, including volunteering at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish in Hornell, his home parish, over Christmas break and meeting with his academic advisor. He added that the Fisher faculty and staff have given him a lot of support already. "The whole college is like a family," he said.

Rooney said students like Locker must graduate with a minimum grade point average of 2.75 and then actively seek a job or accep-

tance at a graduate school. The graduates can receive help from Fisher in doing so, he said, adding that the school works with area businesses in setting up undergraduate internships that can lead to jobs. He said that Fisher also has an alumni network that students can tap for career advice.

If after six months, a student still hasn't landed a job or a graduate school, Fisher will give \$417 a month to the student for up to one year, Rooney said. The first class to become eligible for such assistance will graduate in 1998, but he said that the college isn't nervous about losing its shirt over graduates who fail to succeed. For that matter, neither is Locker.

"Fisher believes in you," he said. "Most colleges stand behind you, but they won't put money behind you."

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