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## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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# AIDS quilt project marks 15th anniversary

AMHERST, Mass. – In 1992, the Five College AIDS/STD Committee began a quilt project memorializing those lost to HIV and AIDS while giving students a way to personally respond to the crisis. More than 1,000 students addressed the statement “This is how I feel about HIV and AIDS” by creating 8 ½ x 8 ½ inch squares, which were sewn into panels of 45 squares each.

To mark the 15th anniversary of the Beyond the Names Project, a collection of these panels will be on display Nov. 5 – 9 at UMass Amherst’s Student Union Gallery, 41 Campus Center Way. Hours are Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. An opening event Nov. 6 from 5 – 7 p.m. will feature speakers, performances and more; throughout the week, gallery visitors can add their voices to the project by creating their own quilt square.

The panels on display were designed by UMass Amherst and Amherst College students between 1992 and 1998. Many were created in memory of people lost to HIV and AIDS; others express the feelings of those living with HIV. Some contain messages of hope, others of prevention. Collectively, they provide a look into the hearts and minds of young adults while giving viewers a historical perspective often lost today.

The event is co-sponsored by the Women’s Health Project of University Health Services (UHS), the Everywoman’s Center at UMass Amherst.

At the Nov. 6 reception, UHS health educator Amanda Collings Vann, M.Ed., will discuss the project’s history and an overview of the university’s HIV/AIDS education initiatives. Assistant Professor of Microbiology Wilmore C. Webley, Ph.D., will be speaking on the current state of HIV/AIDS in the United States, focusing on HIV/AIDS in the African-American community. The Not Ready for Bedtime Players, UMass Amherst’s award-winning peer health education theatre troupe will perform several skits. The Players began in 1998 as The AIDS Follies, blending facts and entertainment to raise awareness. Information on HIV/AIDS and safer sex, and giveaways will also be available.

For more information, call UHS’ Health Education department, (413) 577-5181, or the Everywoman’s Center, (413) 545-0883.

## **About the Speakers:**

**Wilmore C. Webley, Ph.D.** is an assistant research professor of microbiology at UMass Amherst where he teaches immunology. Dr. Webley teaches the popular course Microbiology 160: The Biology of Cancer and AIDS. His current research is on chlamydia and its involvement in asthma initiation and exacerbation; thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP); and atherosclerosis. His research on chlamydia also includes the evaluation of transplacental transfer from mother to the unborn fetus and the development of a vaccine. In 1998, he received the Fulbright Scholarship and entered the microbiology program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he earned an M.S. in 2000 and a Ph.D. in 2003. In 2005, he received the International Who's Who of Professional Educators and the Junior Investigator Award from the American Society for Apheresis.

**Amanda Collings Vann, M.Ed.**, a UHS health educator, directs the Women's Health Project and the Not Ready for Bedtime Players and teaches the Peer Health Education class. She serves on the Five College Sexual Assault Prevention and Intervention Committee and the Five College AIDS Committee, and is an adjunct lecturer with the School of Public Health and Health Sciences.