

Gay bishop to focus on rights, religion

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The Right Rev. V. Gene Robinson, the first openly gay Episcopal priest to be elected a bishop, will present the annual Sibley Lecture at Alfred University (AU) on Tuesday, Oct. 1 at 7:30 p.m. in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. He will talk about “Gay Rights: How We Got Here, Where We’re Going, and Why Religion Matters So Much!” The lecture is open to the public free of charge.

As the first openly gay, partnered Episcopal priest to be elected a bishop, Robinson’s story has created controversy within the Anglican community throughout the world. His talk will focus on the history of gay rights and will explore the intersection between gay rights and religion.

On the day before his lecture, Monday, Sept. 30, Dr. Wakoh Shannon Hickey, assistant professor of religious studies at Notre Dame of Maryland University, will facilitate a screening of the film “For the Bible Tells Me So,” at 6 p.m. in Nevins Theater. This film features Robinson’s story and explores how people of faith handle, or sometimes fail to handle, having a gay child. This program is also open to the public; admission is free.

Robinson was elected Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire on June 7, 2003, having served as Canon to the Ordinary (assistant to the bishop) for nearly 18 years. He was consecrated a Bishop on All Saints Sunday, Nov. 2, 2003, was invested as the Ninth Bishop of New Hampshire on March 7, 2004 and retired as Bishop of New Hampshire on Jan. 5, 2013.

Robinson has been active particularly in the area of full civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. Working at the state, national, and international levels, he has spoken and lobbied for equal protection under the law and full civil marriage rights. He has been honored by many LGBT organizations for this work, including the Human Rights Campaign, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, GLAD, NH Civil Liberties Union, GLAAD, and the Equality Forum. Bishop Robinson was invited by Barack Obama to give the invocation at the opening inaugural ceremonies at the Lincoln Memorial on Jan. 18, 2009.

Fighting against AIDS, racism, and homophobia, Robinson is the co-author of three AIDS education curricula for youth and adults, and has authored several books, including “In the Eye of the Storm: Swept to the Center by God”

and “God Believes in Love: Straight Talk about Gay Marriage.” He currently serves as a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress located in Washington, D.C., and as “Bishop in Residence” at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C.

Robinson holds a bachelor of arts degree in American studies/history from the University of the South at Sewanee, TN and a M.Div. degree from the General Theological Seminary New York. He has been active within the Church since 1973, and his influence has reached throughout New England, New Jersey, and Canada.

The Sibley Lecture series was established in memory of Myron Sibley, the first professor of philosophy hired at Alfred University. Sibley was a faculty member at AU for more than 30 years and was a highly respected professor and community member.

This year's lecture is sponsored by the Division of Human Studies, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Spectrum, and the Institute for Cultural Unity.