

Alfred University professor to receive Distinguished Educator Award

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The James Renwick Alliance will present its Board of Governors' Distinguished Educator Award to Wayne Higby, professor of ceramic art in the School of Art and Design at Alfred University, at a black tie gala in Washington, DC, April 26. The James Renwick Alliance is an art advocacy group of collectors, curators and critics associated with the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC, houses what is considered the nation's premiere collection of art in craft media - fiber, fine metal, glass, wood and ceramics. The Board of Governors' citation to be presented to Higby reads, in part, "For his dedication to the education of a generation of students at Alfred, and for his educational contributions world wide, the James Renwick Alliance is pleased to present the Distinguished Educator Award to Wayne Higby." Higby has shaped a generation of students earning their Bachelor of Fine Arts or Master of Fine Arts degrees since joining the Alfred University faculty in 1973. Through his efforts and those of his colleagues in the Division of Ceramic Art, the MFA program at Alfred University has retained its ranking as the top ceramic art program in the country, according to US News and World Report's Guide to Best Graduate Schools. His reputation as a teacher of ceramic art is well-recognized. In addition to the award from the James Renwick Alliance, Higby was awarded a State University of New York Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1993, and was designated as a "master teacher" by the University of Hartford. For his efforts to form alliances between the School of Art and Design at Alfred University and institutions in China, Higby was named an honorary professor at Shanghai University and an honorary president of the San Bao International Ceramic Institute in Jingdezhen. Higby has earned international acclaim as a ceramic artist. The American Crafts Movement proclaimed him to be a "visionary of the American Crafts Movement," and recognized him as one of only seven artists who are "genuine living legends representing the best of American artists in their chosen medium." His work is found in the permanent collections of several major museums, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art at the Smithsonian. The Renwick collection includes a porcelain sculpture, "Lake Powell Memory - Winter Rain," (1998), which it acquired in 2001, as well as two of earlier earthenware pieces. In March 2001, Higby was invited to speak at the opening of the Renwick Gallery's exhibition, "USA Clay," which featured his ceramic art.##