

George Mason professor to deliver annual Russell Lecture

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The annual Willis C. Russell Lecture in History, sponsored by the Division of Human Studies at Alfred University, will be delivered on Thursday, Oct. 18, at 8 p.m. in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. The talk is open to the public free of charge. Featured speaker will be Professor Martin J. Sherwin of George Mason University, a renowned author and lecturer, who will speak about the development of the first atomic bomb during World War II. Sherwin, known for his breakthrough educational strides, has authored a number of prize-winning books. His most recent is "American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer" (with Kai Bird), which won the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for biography, the National Book Critics Circle Award for biography and the English Speaking Union Book Award. He also authored "A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance," which won the Bernath Prize awarded by the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations as well as the American History Book Prize awarded by the National Historical Society. The book was also the 1976 finalist for both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Before teaching at George Mason, Sherwin taught at Tufts University for 27 years. He has also held appointments as the Cardozo Fund Visiting Professor of American History at Yale University and as the Barnette-Miller Visiting Professor of International Relations at Wellesley College. He has been on the faculties of the University of California-Berkeley, and Princeton, Dartmouth, and Cornell universities. Sherwin was also the founding director and executive producer of the "space bridge" program called Global Classroom Project, that employed TV satellite technology to link his students at Tufts with university students in Moscow for interactive discussions about the nuclear arms race and the environment. The programs were broadcast throughout the Soviet Union and on selected PBS stations in the United States. Sherwin has been an adviser for many documentary films on the history of the nuclear age, and he was the co-executive producer and National Endowment for the Humanities project director of the PBS documentary film, "Citizen Kurchatov: Stalin's Bomb Maker," (1998) a biography of Igor Kurchatov, the first scientific director of the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons programs. The Willis C. Russell Lecture features prominent historians speaking in honor of the late Dr. Russell, who was a professor of history at Alfred University for 32 years.