

## **Emeritus professor to read from upcoming collection during Bergren Forum program**

10/29/14



Alfred University's (AU) longstanding lunchtime series, the Bergren Forum, continues Thursday, Nov. 6, at 12:10 p.m. in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center with readings from an upcoming collection of his works by Ben Howard, AU professor emeritus of English. The program is free and open to the public.

Howard will recite from "Firewood and Ashes: New and Selected Poems," his forthcoming collection. His poetry is set in a wide range of locales, from Western New York to Dublin, Ireland. The poems explore central themes of Zen tradition - impermanence, "not-knowing," equanimity - and the states of mind associated with retirement.

The reading will feature the poetic sequence "Maturity: A Work in Progress," sections of which appeared in the Winter 2014 issue of the *Sewanee Review*, America's oldest literary quarterly.

Howard holds a bachelor of arts degree in English from Drake University, Des Moines, IA, and a master of arts degree in English and creative writing and a Ph.D. in English literature from Syracuse University.

Howard has been granted inclusion in seven different poetry anthologies and received a number of honors and awards, mostly for his writing prowess. These include the NEA Creative Writing Fellowship, Fred H. Gertz Chair in Writing at AU, Theodore Christian Hoepfner Award, Southern Humanities Review, Milton Dorfman Prize in Poetry, and the Alan Collins Fellowship in Poetry.

The AU Bergren Forum is sponsored by the Division of Human Studies, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Provost's Office. Guests are encouraged to bring a brown bag lunch; coffee and tea will be provided.

The series known as the Bergren Forum began in 1970. Rick Bergren, who taught at the University in the &70s, started the forums after being inspired by learning of the gatherings that (AU) students in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were known to conduct in Alumni Hall to discuss community issues. After Bergren's death in 1974, the University decided to continue the tradition in his name. Various faculty members have taken on the coordinator duties since that time. William S. Dibrell, professor of philosophy, is the current coordinator.