

Noted glass scientist to deliver winter commencement address at Alfred University

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An Alfred University alumnus who has gained international acclaim as a researcher and educator will deliver the address at AU's annual winter commencement, scheduled for 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15, at McLane Center. Dr. L. David Pye, who received a BS degree in ceramic engineering from Alfred in 1959 and a Ph.D. in the same field in 1968, will conclude a 34-year career at the University with his retirement at the end of December. His speech is entitled, "Visions." "When we select commencement speakers, we try to choose someone who can inspire our new graduates and whose achievements are something we would like them to emulate," said President Charles M. Edmondson. "As an alumnus of the University and scientist of global stature, David Pye is an exemplar of those aspirations." Pye will be presented with an Order of Merit by the University during a luncheon preceding commencement. It will be the most recent in a series of accolades Pye has received during his career. Earlier this year, he became one of only 13 State University of New York professionals to receive the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities. The award, given for the first time this year, "recognizes the work of those who engage in scholarly and creative pursuit beyond their teaching," according to a SUNY spokesperson. Pye has been called "one of this country's most influential glass scientists over the past 30-plus years." His research on the behavior of glass-forming melts including nucleation, crystallization, redox effects, and nuclear waste vitrification "have not only contributed to the base of scientific knowledge but have been the thesis research topics of many of today's young research scientists," said Dr. William C. LaCourse, who has been a colleague of Pye's for more than 30 years and who was co-director of the Center for Glass Research during its initial years. In April, the American Ceramic Society convened a symposium in Pye's honor, recognizing his lifetime contributions to the field of glass science and education, and to the glass industry. He is the first faculty member from AU's School of Ceramic Engineering and Materials Science to be so honored. Pye is immediate past president of the International Commission on Glass, which includes members from 30 different countries, and is a past chair and trustee of the Glass and Optical Materials Division of the American Ceramic Society. Pye, now a professor of glass science, served as dean of the state-supported College of Ceramics at Alfred University, which includes the School of Ceramic Engineering and Materials Science and the School of Art and Design; was founding director of the National Science Foundation's Industry-University Center for Glass Research at Alfred, and co-founder of the Paul Vickers Gardner Glass Center at the University. He has edited a number of conference proceedings and co-founded a continuing series of conferences on "Advances in the Melting and Processing of Glasses, Natural Glasses and Borate Glasses." Pye has published more than 80 articles on glass and ceramics. As a member of the AU faculty, Pye was instrumental in building the reputation of Alfred University as the third world-renowned center for glass research and education to offer a Ph.D. degree in glass science. During his tenure as dean of the state-supported units at AU, he oversaw construction of a \$4 million Hall of Glass Science and Engineering, and a \$12 million renovation of Binns-Merrill Hall, and played a major role in securing more than \$7 million in funding to construct a new building for the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art. He guided the redesignation of the NSF Center for Glass Research and the New York State Center for Advanced Ceramic Technology, and growth of the college's annual research program from \$3 million to \$5 million. Additionally, new master's level degree programs were added in integrated electronic arts and materials science and engineering under his leadership. The Van Derck Frechette Chair in ceramic science was inaugurated; the Kazu Inamori International Scholarship Program was developed, and the School of Art and Design grew by nearly 100 students. Pye has won international acclaim for his work, particularly as founding director of the Center for Glass Research from 1985 to 1996, and former president of the International Commission on Glass. He won the Phoenix Award for "Glassman of the Year" in 1996 and the Dominik Labino Lecture Award in 1995, two of the highest honors in the world-wide glass community. He is a member of the prestigious Academy of Ceramics and the New York Academy of Sciences, and is only the third AU faculty member to receive an Excellence in Teaching Award from the American Society for Engineering Education. He is a Fellow of the American Ceramic Society, and last year was inducted as a Fellow of the Society of Glass Technology during the 18th International Congress on Glass in Edinburgh, Scotland. His biography appears in a number of standard references including Who's Who in the World and Who's Who in America.