

## Phi Beta Kappa national secretary to deliver Sibley Lecture at Alfred University

11/07/14



Dr. John Churchill

Dr. John Churchill, national secretary of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, the nation's oldest academic honorary society, and a prominent philosopher, will deliver the annual Myron Sibley Lecture at Alfred University at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 18, in the Knight Club, Powell Campus Center. He will speak about his life and work, advocacy, and scholarship in the liberal arts.

The Sibley Lecture series at Alfred University was established in memory of Myron Sibley, the first professor of philosophy hired at AU. Sibley taught at Alfred for more than 30 years and was highly regarded as a professor and member of the community. The Sibley Lecture, co-sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and the Division of Human Studies, which Sibley helped to organize, annually brings to campus a renowned scholar.

Churchill received his undergraduate degree from Rhodes College, where he was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. He attended the University of Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, and completed his doctoral studies in philosophy at Yale University. His scholarship and publications have focused on the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and David Hume, as well as topics in the history of philosophy, the philosophy of religion, and the philosophy of liberal education. Prior to his leadership of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, Churchill was on the faculty of Hendrix College, where he also served as dean of the college, vice president for academic affairs, and interim president.

As a distinguished advocate for the humanities and liberal arts, Churchill has served as president of the National Humanities Alliance and on the Board of Directors of the American Conference of Academic Deans and the Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities. Under his leadership, Phi Beta Kappa recently launched a "National Arts & Sciences Initiative" to ensure that higher education is "learning for all of life." His weekly blog for Phi Beta Kappa titled From the Secretary provides important guidance for many within higher education. As secretary, Churchill is the Society's chief executive officer and the head of its national office. Churchill visited Alfred's campus in 2004 for the inauguration of Alfred University's chapter of PBK.

Founded in 1776, Phi Beta Kappa has 280 chapters on college and university campuses and well over a half-million living members. Its purpose is to advocate and recognize excellence in the study of the liberal arts and sciences.

The Sibley lecture was established in 1976 when Sibley, professor of Philosophy, retired from Alfred University after a distinguished career during which he built Alfred's philosophy program. Sibley first came to Alfred in 1950 as the University Chaplain, taking on a full-time appointment in philosophy in 1955. He was devoted to the university until his death in 1986. He had a deep interest in the diversity of human experience, exploring all forms of human creativity, whether expressed through literature, art, philosophy or religion. In choosing a speaker for the annual Sibley Lecture, the Division of Human Studies looks for someone whose own career and scholarship not only fosters the study of the humanities --and, in particular, philosophy or religion-- but is passionate about the contribution of the humanities to humankind's history, future, and well-being.

