

Press Release

November 20, 2008

Williamsburg, VA - The national Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) has recognized The Phi Beta Kappa Society with its inaugural “Arts and Sciences Advocacy Award.” The announcement was made at the CCAS Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon.

The Award honors an individual or organization demonstrating exemplary advocacy for the arts and sciences, flowing from a deep commitment to the intrinsic worth of liberal arts education.

In presenting the award to Phi Beta Kappa Secretary John Churchill, CCAS President Matthew C. Moen (Dean of Arts & Sciences, University of South Dakota) said that “There was no debate among the CCAS Board members that Phi Beta Kappa should be the first recipient” of the award, for “exemplary advocacy of the liberal arts and sciences is their mission, dating back to their founding by five students at the College of William and Mary in 1776.”

Moen further stated that “Phi Beta Kappa lives by the motto ‘that love of learning is the guide of life,’ and they have brought that magnificent intellectual spirit to more than 600,000 members, and to chapters at 276 colleges and universities. Phi Beta Kappa embraces principles essential to the academy, and to the work of deans, including free inquiry, and liberty of thought and expression.”

In accepting the award, Secretary Churchill applauded CCAS “for the very idea of this award.” He went on to say that, “We live in an age in which the value of education in the arts and sciences seems increasingly ignored, misunderstood, or even opposed. The concept that [CCAS] would institute such an award brings new attention to these worthy pursuits, and offers us a platform from which to proclaim, explain, and defend education in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences and mathematics.”

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CCAS is the largest association of arts and sciences deans, with approximately 1600 members at nearly 500 higher education institutions. Taken together, our member institutions educate more than four million students. CCAS is headquartered at The College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.