

Earhart-Cornell Lectures on the Liberal Arts and the Public Square

Sustained reflection on the relationship between public policy and liberal arts education helps both those who act in the public square and those who study in the academy to understand the essential reciprocity of their activities. Indeed, the history of liberal arts education in the United States bears witness to its crucial role in the preparation of leaders in all spheres of the public life of the nation. As Aristotle observed, the purpose of such education is not to produce experts in every field, but educated men and women who possess the critical abilities to evaluate the arguments of experts.

Too often those in leadership positions forget the enduring insights into nature and human nature which a liberal arts education affirms. Public discourse is impoverished when it is disconnected from the kind of balanced thinking central to the liberal arts. Similarly, students and faculty in the liberal arts need to remember, as Cicero would surely remind them, that a life of public service is both a noble vocation and one intimately connected to the purposes of liberal arts education. Cicero offers an ideal model for the union of the contemplative and the active life.

. . . man endowed with reason perceives the connection of things, marks their causes and effects, traces their analogies, links the future with the past, and, surveying without effort the whole course of life, prepares what is needful for the journey. Nature with the aid of reason likewise binds man to man, unites them by the bond of language and of social life, inspires them with a strong love of offspring, and impels them to multiply the occasions of meeting and consorting with their fellows How precious should we deem the gift of reason since man is the only living being that has a sense of order, decorum, and moderation in word and deed. No other creature is touched by the beauty, grace, and symmetry of visible objects; and the human mind transferring these conceptions from the material to the moral world recognizes that this beauty, harmony, and order are still more to be maintained in the sphere of purpose and of action; reason shuns all that is unbecoming or unmanly, all that is wanton in thought and deed. *On Moral Duties*
I.4

Erasmus once referred to Cicero's writing as a golden river of discourse, and there are few passages more eloquent in the affirmation of the connection between an understanding of the nature of things and the world of action. Cicero embodies that ideal, first expressed by Homer, that every human being ought to aspire to excellence in thought and action: to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.

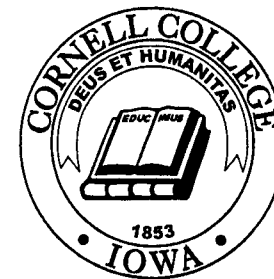
As a way to help to re-establish and strengthen the bridge between the public square and the liberal arts and to reaffirm the insight of Cicero, the Earhart Foundation is generously supporting a regular series of public lectures at Cornell College which addresses this connection and suggests ways to enhance it.

EARHART-CORNELL LECTURES ON THE LIBERAL ARTS AND THE PUBLIC SQUARE

Third Annual Lecture

“Religion and Public Policy in the United States”

DR. STEPHEN CARTER
William Nelson Cromwell
Professor of Law
Yale University



Cornell College

Friday, April 27, 2001
Hedges Conference Room

Stephen Carter

Stephen L. Carter is the William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., where he has taught since 1982.

He was raised mainly in Washington, D.C., attended high school in Ithaca, N.Y., earned a bachelor's degree in history from Stanford University in 1976 and a law degree from Yale in 1979. After law school he returned to Washington to clerk for two of the leading civil rights lawyers and jurists, Judge Spottswood W. Robinson of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and the late Justice Thurgood Marshall of the U.S. Supreme Court. After the two clerkships he practiced law with a Washington firm for about a year before joining the faculty at Yale. He teaches Constitutional law; contracts; intellectual property; law, secrets, and lying; and law and religion.

Carter, named by *Time* magazine as one of the 50 young leaders for this century, is a prolific author. His extensive writings include seven nonfiction titles, most recently *God's Name in Vain*, which uses contemporary and historical examples — from abolitionist sermons to presidential candidates' confessions — to show the role of religion in American life. His other books are *The Dissent of the Governed: A Meditation on Law, Religion, and Loyalty* (1998), *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy* (1998), *Integrity* (1996), *The Confirmation Mess* (1994), *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (1993), and *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby* (1991). His first novel, *The Emperor of Ocean Park*, will be published in May 2002 by Knopf.

He is a frequent contributor to law reviews and has also been published in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New Republic*, *New Yorker*, and *Atlantic Monthly*.

Earhart-Cornell Lectures

The Earhart-Cornell Lecture series, "The Liberal Arts and the Public Square," addresses the connection between public policy and the liberal arts education and is funded by the Earhart Foundation of Ann Arbor, Mich. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia presented the first lecture in 1999; economist, columnist, and commentator Walter Williams lectured in 2000.

During the 2001-02 academic year Cornell will host the fourth lecture, by Dr. Stephen Jay Gould, Alexander Agassiz Professor of Zoology, Professor of Geology, and Curator in Invertebrate Paleontology in the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University.

No video or audio taping is allowed without permission from Cornell's Office of College Communications.

Third Annual Lecture

11 a.m.

Hedges Conference Room

Dr. Leslie H. Garner Jr., President of the College
Presiding

"Religion and Public Policy in the United States"

Dr. Stephen Carter

Responses and Discussion

1:30 p.m.

Hedges Conference Room

Dr. Christopher Carlson, Professor of Sociology
Presiding

Comments

Dr. Craig Allin, Professor of Politics
Dr. William E. Carroll, Professor of History

Reply

Dr. Stephen Carter

Questions and Comments