

# Alburey Castell's liberal arts philosophy profiled

## Book by Ron Hustwit supports the mission of an education

WOOSTER — When Howard Lowry persuaded Alburey Castell to leave the University of Oregon and join the faculty at The College of Wooster in 1963,



Castell

it was a major coup, not only for the department of philosophy, but also for the college and its nascent reputation as a national liberal arts institution. Lowry, who brought Independent Study to Wooster in 1948, sought faculty members whose passion for the liberal arts paralleled his and Castell, who believed that a liberal arts education provided an ideal foundation for a life of learning, was a perfect match. Both men subscribed to the philosophy that

the liberal arts should be the cornerstone for a society to build future leaders and decision makers.

Castell's beliefs are neatly summarized in a collection of papers, lectures and presentations during his time at Wooster gathered by his colleague Ron Hustwit, professor of philosophy at Wooster in "Who Needs a Liberal Arts College? A Philosophy of Education" by Alburey Castell.

"Castell believed that the development of cultured thinkers was critical to the college's mission," said Hustwit. "He believed that educating students in philosophy, in particular, was the best preparation for the professor. He was especially attracted to the education of primary and secondary school teachers as well as professions in law, ministry and the psychological and medical arts. His goal was to prepare students to become effective thinkers, or what he

called 'rational agents.'"

The collection gathered by Hustwit includes Castell's "The Self in Philosophy," "The Humanities Give You the Modern World," "The Place of Philosophy in Education and The Humanities," and "Who Needs a Liberal Arts College?"

"Dr. Hustwit has not only provided us with a carefully edited volume of Castell's works, but he has also provided the college and the liberal arts community with a significant gift — a piece of history," said Denise Monbarren, special collections librarian at Wooster who wrote the preface to the book. "This work offers the words and thoughts of a man who helped to educate today's leaders in service-oriented fields, business, and academia."

Castell, who was appointed to the Elias Compton Professorship at Wooster, remained at the College for 10 years, during which he befriended and mentored Hus-

twit. As one of 20th century America's prominent philosophers, Castell argued that the person, or "self," reasons, while the processes of nature are reasoned about. A lifelong adversary of B.F. Skinner, Castell believed that students were not "stimulus-response mechanisms, but resourceful reasoners assembling connecting links to conclusions." He described the function of a liberal arts college as one that "provides a foundation for the technical skills acquired at the graduate and professional school level."

Born in Canada in 1904, Castell earned a B.A. and M.A. at The University of Toronto and a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. He began his teaching career in 1931 as an instructor in philosophy at the University of Minnesota and served as department chair from 1949-1963. He also had a joint appointment in the department of education at the University of Oregon, and held visiting appointments at Yale,

Columbia, Florida, and Bowden. His publications include "A College Logic" and "An Introduction to Modern Philosophy" — standard texts in colleges and universities for decades — and are centered on teaching the undergraduate. In addition, he wrote introductions to books by Mill, Huxley, James, Jones and others.

Hustwit, who joined Wooster's faculty in 1967, earned a B.A. at Westminster College (1964), an M.A. at the University of Nebraska (1965), and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas (1970). His teaching responsibilities include ancient philosophy, logic, philosophy of mind and philosophy of education. He is author of "Something About O.K. Bouwsma" and has written articles and papers on Søren Kierkegaard and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Hustwit's book is available at The College of Wooster's Wilson Bookstore, located in Lowry Center.