**David G. Wilke, Ph.D.**

**University of Kentucky Honors Program**

Dr. David Wilke’s specific interests in Folklore and Mythology include: Folklore in Early American history & literature, Folklore in English literature (e.g., Burns, Hardy), and Folklore in Arthurian literature--from the earliest Welsh-Latin annals to Malory. This reflects his overall pursuit of the continuing folkloric tradition in later literature and culture. He also has some intriguing and specialized interests, such as the carol in English & Anglo-American literature, folk naming (name-calling, road names, place names, etc.), and has supervised a student project on the history and folklore of quilting in America.

Dr. Wilke has been an instructor in the Honors Program at U.K. since January 1998, having worn a number of hats during that time: Visiting Assistant Professor (1999-2002), Full-Time Instructor (spring 2005, fall 2007-spring 2012), and Part-Time Instructor (the rest). He hails from Peekskill, N.Y., a small industrial city in the picturesque Hudson Valley. (Some of the famous individuals who have lived in Peekskill include L. Frank Baum, author of The Wizard of Oz (during the late 1860s, Baum, then barely in his teens, was known to frequent lower South Street in Peekskill, where the paving bricks exhibited a yellow hue), and composer extraordinaire Aaron Copland, who resided at an address on Peekskill’s lower Washington Street during the last thirty years of his life.) In 1977, Dr. Wilke graduated from Oswego State in north central New York with a degree in English, while also taking almost a fourth of his undergraduate hours in math and natural science courses, including botany, chemistry, parasitology, and meteorology. The first twenty-two years of his life were spent in the vicinity of large bodies of water—a wide expanse of the Hudson River in both Peekskill and such nearby villages as Verplanck, and, in Oswego, Lake Ontario (itself the scene of many a breathtaking sunset).

Such experiences shaped Dr. Wilke’s enduring fascination with both the physical features and cultural character of coastal environments. Dr. Wilke missed such settings as, at age 25, he relocated to landlocked Denver, Colorado and, at age 34, to equally landlocked Lexington, Kentucky. In 1990 Dr. Wilke earned a Master’s degree in Philosophy at the University of Denver and, in 1996, a Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Kentucky. In the new Honors Program or Honors Academy he has taught courses in descriptive or non-statistical experimental psychology, descriptive or non-statistical child psychology, and descriptive or non-mathematical economic theory. Some happy additional academic indulgences are Arthurian literature in translation--from the earliest Welsh-Latin annals to the Middle-English works of the Gawain-poet and Malory--folklore in British literature, and the combined influence of the philosophies of Plato and the 14th-century Englishman William of Ockham upon both the early scientific revolution and efflorescence of poetry (Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Edmund Spenser), prose (Richard Hooker, William Gilbert), and drama (Shakespeare) in late 16th-century England.

Dr. Wilke’s work in philosophy includes his doctoral dissertation arguing that a rational method informs the entirety of the philosopher René Descartes’s 1649 opus *The Passions of the* Soul, a e curious amalgam of obsolete medicine, traditional rhetoric, and forward-looking determinism. Dr. Wilke packed his dissertation committee with medievalists from the departments of Philosophy, History, and French in order to insure that he would approach Descartes, not as the first of the moderns but as the last of the medievals. In 2002, he presented a very well-received paper to a group of seasoned medievalists at St. Anselm College (Manchester, NH) showing evidence of a hitherto unsuspected but thriving skeptical tradition at the beginning of the Latin twelfth-century.