



2010

News Release - Stroink '76 Urges Graduates to Celebrate Lifelong Learning

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Recommended Citation

Hatch, Rachel, "News Release - Stroink '76 Urges Graduates to Celebrate Lifelong Learning" (2010). *2010 Highlights*. Paper 1.

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Graduating Class of 2010 Celebrates Lifelong Learning

May 2, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – At the [160th Commencement ceremonies](#) for Illinois Wesleyan University, President Richard F. Wilson congratulated the more than 500 graduates of Illinois Wesleyan, saying he was proud to share the event with the students, their families and friends. "Commencement marks the beginning not the end," he said. "Today, we honor you and wish you well, wherever your journey may take you. We know what you have accomplished here and what you are capable of accomplishing as you move forward with your lives."

George Vinyard, the president of the University's Board of Trustees, also celebrated the graduates, and let them know that despite the challenges they see in today's world, they are well-prepared to take on any adversity. "In my humble opinion, 'Knowledge and Wisdom' express precisely what higher education should be about, and what we need more of today," said Vinyard, referring to the Illinois Wesleyan motto, *Scientia et Sapientia*.

The Senior Class President Alessandra Bollero took students through their years as students, before letting them know they will be ready to take on the challenges ahead. "Throughout our years we have changed individually and collectively," said Bollero. She praised Illinois Wesleyan for helping to create individuals. "This University has encouraged us to shape ourselves, rather than mold us into its own product. We would not be who we are without Illinois Wesleyan, and we are proud to have that name written on our diplomas."

Associate Provost for Planning & Academic Standards Frank Boyd acknowledged Kathleen Montgomery as the 2010 Student Senate Professor of the Year. Montgomery is an associate professor of political science at Illinois Wesleyan, who received the honor for the second time. "She is one of the most gifted professors I have ever known," said Boyd, who went on to convey the pride of the faculty in the graduating class, and hopes the class will continue to make the connections faculty have encouraged throughout their years at the University. "In only minutes you'll pass over this stage and move from graduates to alumni. I charge you with continuing to make connections."

President Wilson conferred an honorary doctor of laws degree upon Dr. Ann Stroink during the Commencement ceremony. Stroink, who then presented the Commencement address, is a 1976 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan and a board-certified neurosurgeon.

Stroink used her extensive medical training to bring the concept of "lifelong learning" to graduates. Originally, she said, the brain was considered a fixed organ, without the ability to change and grow, but medical science has learned the brain can continue to explore and adapt throughout a human's life. In her speech titled "Cerebral Plasticity: Lifelong Learning," Stroink used the very real example of a patient with a tumor relearning to speak in order to show the incredible plasticity of the brain and how a person can learn throughout a lifetime.

"Illinois Wesleyan is your partner for life, and with that partner you will learn what lifelong learning is all about," she said. "That's the thrill of learning."

Also receiving an honorary doctor of laws degree was Robert Quinn, the founding executive director of the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR), of which Illinois Wesleyan is a founding member. SAR is an international network of more than 200 universities in 26 countries dedicated to promoting academic freedoms and defending the human rights of scholars worldwide.

As the students received their diplomas, Wilson invited them to carry on the tradition of touching the stone pineapple that symbolizes the spirit of friendship and hospitality, in order to celebrate the friendships they have formed with fellow students, faculty and staff during their time on campus. "I lift my hat to the Class of 2010 and offer one final admonition," said Wilson. "Search for what is true. Embrace what you find inspiring. Commit to making a difference. Congratulations and good luck to all of you."

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