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Founders' Day Convocation (2002 Program)

Illinois Wesleyan University

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Illinois Wesleyan University

FOUNDERS' DAY CONVOCATION

Celebrating The Ames Library Opening



Shirk Center
Performance Arena
February 11, 2002
7:30 P.M.

PROGRAM

President Minor Myers, jr., *Presiding*
Professor Julie D. Prandi, *Mace Bearer*

Prelude and Processional
(*please stand*)
Proud Heritage

Illinois Wesleyan University Wind Ensemble
Professor Vadim Mazo, *Guest Conductor*
William Latham (b. 1917)

Invocation (*remain standing*)

Dennis E. Groh
University Chaplain

President's Welcome

Minor Myers, jr.
President, Illinois Wesleyan University

Trustee's Welcome

Craig C. Hart
President, Board of Trustees

Awarding of Honorary Degree
John Hoyer Updike

President Myers
Janet M. McNew
Provost and Dean of the Faculty

Remarks

John Updike
"Readings Not Totally Unsuitable to Founders' Day"

Alma Wesleyana (*please stand and join in singing*)

NATIONAL HYMN
George William Warren (1828-1902)

From hearts aflame, our love we pledge to thee,
Where'er we wander, over land or sea;
Through time unending, loyal we will be—
True to our Alma Mater, Wesleyan.

When college days are fully past and gone,
While life endures, from twilight gleam til dawn,
Grandly thy soul shall with us linger on—
Star-crowned, our Alma Mater, Wesleyan.

—*Professor W. E. Schultz (1935)*

Benediction (*remain standing*)

Chaplain Groh

Recessional (*remain standing*)
Procession of the Nobles

Illinois Wesleyan University Wind Ensemble
Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)
arr. Erik W. G. Leidzén

John Updike

One of America's foremost men of letters, John Hoyer Updike is a disciplined writer who limits himself to polishing just 300 words per day. But how those words add up. Since his first collection of poetry, *The Carpentered Hen*, appeared in 1958, Updike has enjoyed a distinguished career, producing more than 50 volumes of poetry, short fiction, essays and criticism, memoir, children's books, novels, and a play.

Updike's early aspiration was to become an artist, and the summa cum laude Harvard graduate drew cartoons for the *Lampoon* and received a fellowship to study at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art in Oxford. But the English major's true love was books and writing, and he accepted a staff position at *The New Yorker*, where he enjoyed great popularity as the magazine's "Talk of the Town" reporter. When he resigned several years later to pursue a career as a serious writer, Updike promised himself one book per year—a promise he kept. "My favorite theater is the lap of a good reader," Updike told one interviewer.

After a short story collection (*The Same Door*) and first novel (*The Poorhouse Fair*) debuted in 1959, Updike received a Guggenheim to help him complete a novel for which he would become most famous: *Rabbit, Run* (1960), about an ex-high school athlete who struggles, following his fifteen minutes of fame, through a mid-life crisis in Middle America. That book launched a series unique to American literature, with Updike revisiting Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom approximately every decade, and, in the process, commenting on changes in American culture over the course of some 40 years. *Rabbit, Redux* (1971) documented the turbulent Vietnam War years, while *Rabbit is Rich* (1981), which won the Pulitzer Prize, detailed life in the age of heightened consumerism. The fourth and projected final installment, *Rabbit at Rest* (1990), followed "Rabbit" into retirement (and won a second Pulitzer for Updike), but the character proved so popular that Updike resurrected him for readers in "Rabbit Remembered" in *Licks of Love* (2001), where characters recall Harry fondly in a fictional postscript.

Updike is also well known for two additional series: three volumes about the comically longsuffering Jewish writer Henry Bech, and three novels in which he explored Nathaniel Hawthorne's story of adultery in *The Scarlet Letter* from the perspective of the philandering minister (*A Month of Sundays*, 1975), the cuckolded husband and man of science (*Roger's Version*, 1986), and the unfaithful wife (*S.*, 1988)—thereby underscoring the archetypal power of the adulterous triad in American culture.

Innovation has marked Updike's career, and a 1963 tribute to his father, *The Centaur*, won the National Book Award for the way it boldly combined myth on the surface alongside contemporary narrative. With *Couples* (1968), Updike was among the first American writers to incorporate gritty sexual language and descriptions into a literary narrative of wife-swapping in what *Time* magazine (in depicting him on its cover) termed a "post-pill paradise." A later novel, *The Witches of Eastwick* (1984), remains one of only a handful of successful attempts by Americans to write in a magical realist mode, and inspired a popular film adaptation. Since then, every Updike book has been an experiment, an adventure.



Founders' Gates Inscription



From a 1931 booklet of pen sketches of Illinois Wesleyan University

“WE STAND IN A POSITION OF INCALCULABLE RESPONSIBILITY TO THE GREAT WAVE OF POPULATION OVERSPREADING THE VALLEY OF THE MISSISSIPPI. DESTINY SEEMS TO POINT OUT THIS VALLEY AS THE DEPOSITORY OF THE GREAT HEART OF THE NATION. FROM THIS CENTER, MIGHT PULSATIONS, FOR GOOD OR EVIL, MUST IN THE FUTURE FLOW, WHICH SHALL NOT ONLY AFFECT THE FORTUNE OF THE REPUBLIC, BUT REACH IN THEIR INFLUENCE OTHER AND DISTANT NATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

Programs distributed by members of Sigma Tau Delta English Honorary and Egas, the Activities Honorary for Senior Women.