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From the President's Desk

This letter appears in the Summer 2009 issue of the Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine

On May 13-14, we announced the [Transforming Lives campaign](#) formally at events in Bloomington and Chicago. Both evenings provided many illustrations of how Illinois Wesleyan's history of transforming lives was true in the past and continues to be true in the present.

On the morning of the first announcement, I met with faculty and staff to give them a preview of the campaign goal and progress to date. As I looked around the room, I realized that this group of people and their predecessors were the ones responsible for the transformations that occur. I have said on a number of occasions that the Wesleyan experience always comes back to people -the faculty and staff who devote their lives to the personal and intellectual growth of students. I wanted the faculty and staff to know that the alumni and friends of the University are grateful for the many ways their lives have been enriched by their University experience.



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The question I have been asked frequently in recent months was: "Why now"? I don't need to be reminded that we are in the midst of a serious economic crisis. At the same time, we have planned the campaign carefully, have secured a significant number of lead gifts, have held meetings with small groups of alumni all over the country who have urged us to proceed, and have concluded that a successful campaign will provide us with an important competitive advantage in relation to peers. For all of these reasons, I say to you boldly and without apology that we cannot wait. As I indicated to those attending the campaign kick-off events, economic turmoil creates opportunity - and fortune favors the bold.

Now is the time to position our University for a new century, new challenges and new opportunities. We have structured the priorities of the campaign around four themes:

- * Increase support through the Annual Fund and through new endowed funds in support of student scholarships, with the goal of restoring the historic promise of meeting every student's financial need.
- * Increase the number of endowed chairs and professorships in order to facilitate our efforts to recruit and retain the best faculty.

* Establish endowments to provide a margin of excellence for important University programs and initiatives.

* Secure funding for three capital projects: a new classroom building, a new theatre and new apartment-style housing for students.

At the campaign kick-off events, we announced that our goal would be \$125 million, the largest gift total in the history of the university. It was with great pleasure that I also announced that we had received \$73 million in gifts and commitments toward that goal. We are positioned well not only to be successful but to enhance the stature of Illinois Wesleyan among all liberal arts colleges in the country. In the history of every great college and university, one can discern a few defining moments that alter the path in dramatic ways for generations to come. For Illinois Wesleyan, one of those moments is now.

Richard B. Wilson