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## Transforming Lives Campaign Gala Remarks

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From the President

[Transforming Lives Campaign Gala](#)

*The president welcomed guests at campaign kickoff galas on May 13 and 14, 2009*

It is my pleasure to welcome you. You were invited here tonight because you are the leaders of the Illinois Wesleyan Community – its movers and shakers so to speak – and on this exciting night in our university's history, we wanted to share with you our vision.

As you know, great institutions are never allowed the luxury of standing still. We've been hard at work on a campaign to ensure that Illinois Wesleyan continues its promise of transforming lives.

Those transformed lives have gone forth from our campus to help the world in ways both great and small. Over our 159-year history, Wesleyan graduates have stood tall in scientific laboratories and art galleries, on athletic playing fields and opera stages, in boardrooms and battlefields, in classrooms and in homes. Now is our time to position our school for a new century, new challenges, and new opportunities. We need your help.

Many of you have already answered the call and I predict the biggest – and happiest – surprise of this night will be the realization that we are not here to kick-start a campaign into motion. You are catching us already mid-stride.

Some of you might wonder at our timing or even go so far as to ask...can't this wait? I say to you, boldly and without apology, that no, this cannot wait. Economic turmoil creates opportunity – and fortune favors the bold.

Our university has a long history of facing up to troubling times. The 1929 stock market crash caused problems so profound that the university accepted, on occasion, [bushels of corn](#) in lieu of tuition money. And yet, in that very next year, on February 3, 1930, the newly constructed Presser Hall was dedicated – and what a glorious home it has been to generations of Wesleyan music students and faculty.

That is typical of Wesleyan's brave and proud history. Young minds don't wait and neither will we. Our time is now.