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March 11, 2008

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Actor/Alumnus Kevin Dunn to Address Illinois Wesleyan Commencement

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Veteran character actor Kevin Dunn, who attended Illinois Wesleyan University in the 1970s, will deliver the University's Commencement address on Sunday, May 4.

Dunn, who has appeared in more than 80 films and Television episodes, has been recently seen in the movie *Transformers* as Ron Witwicky, and the television show *Samantha Who?* with Christina Applegate.

During the Commencement ceremony, Dunn will receive an honorary doctor of humane letters degree. Also receiving honorary degrees will be human rights activist Marjorie Agosin, former Illinois Wesleyan Board of Trustees President Craig C. Hart and architect Sidney Epstein.

Epstein and his grandson, Michael Lawton, will both be receiving degrees at the ceremony. Lawton, who nominated his grandfather for an honorary degree, is a senior who is scheduled to graduate from Illinois Wesleyan this spring.

Kevin Dunn

With a career spanning more than 30 years, Dunn has played serious soliders, caring fathers and scheming lawyers. His films include playing the speechwriter with a crisis of conscience in *Dave* (1993) with Kevin Klein, the straight-laced Colonel Hicks in the blockbuster *Godzilla* (1995) and a foil for Charlie Sheen as Lt. Commander James Block in the comedy spoof *Hot Shots!* (1991). His other movies include the Oliver Stone-directed *Nixon* (1995), *I Heart Huckabees* (1998), *Live Free or Die* (2006), *The Black Dahlia* (2006), *All the King's Men* (2006) and *Lions for Lambs* (2007) with Tom Cruise and Meryl Streep.

Dunn has also been seen on the small screen since the 1980s, with appearances on shows such as *Lost*, *Law & Order*, *Bette*, *LA Law* and *21 Jump Street*.

Born in Chicago, Dunn came to Illinois Wesleyan in 1973 as a theater major. He appeared onstage at Illinois Wesleyan in such productions as *Ladys Not for Burning* and as John Proctor in *The Crucible*. A member of the class of 1977, Dunn was a football player and member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity while at Illinois Wesleyan.

Craig C. Hart

As member of the Illinois Wesleyan University Board of Trustees for more than 25 years, Craig C. Hart watched over the unprecedented growth of the campus. Joining the Board in 1981, he became Board President in 1994. During his tenure, Hart saw campus facility improvements such the Shirk Center, the Harriett Fuller Rust House, Hansen Student Center, and The Ames Library. He worked closely with four presidents to shape the vision of the University, including the late President Minor Myers jr.

Hart stepped down as Board President in May of 2006, and that October the University renamed its career-advising center the Craig C. Hart Career Center in his honor. A connection between Hart and Myers will continue when the Hart Career Center will move into the new Minor Myers jr. Welcome Center when it opens this fall. Hart retired from the Board of Trustees in 2007, and now serves as an emeritus trustee.

The retired president and chief executive officer of Champion Federal Savings and Loan and founder and chairman of Heritage Enterprises, Hart has been dedicated to the renovation to downtown Bloomington and to the well being of the University and its home in Bloomington.

Marjorie Agosín

A professor of Spanish at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, Agosín has been a guest lecturer at IWU on three occasions and was nominated to receive an honorary degree by the Department of Hispanic Studies and students of the Spanish Club.

She is the author of more than 20 poetry collections, seven works of fiction, many critical essays and books on literary criticism and anthologies of Latin American women writers. One of her most significant and well-known books, which won the Alta Prize for Poetry, is *Circles of Madness: Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (1992), which is dedicated to the Argentine women whose children disappeared during the military dictatorship that began in 1976.

For her work as a human rights activist, Agosín received the United Nations Leadership Award in Human Rights in 1998 and the Gabriela Mistral Medal of Honor for Lifetime Achievement from the government of Chile in 2002. A documentary based on her book *Scraps of Life: The Chilean Arpillera* received a Peabody Award, and on her second visit to Illinois Wesleyan's campus, Agosín brought her collection of arpilleras (folk tapestries which tell of the bravery and hardships of the Chilean women) for display on campus.

Sidney Epstein

The work of architect and engineer Sidney Epstein is seen throughout the world. Chairman of the family firm A. Epstein and Sons International, Inc., Epstein has contributed to the design and expansion of buildings across the globe, from the Maine Montparnasse Tower in Paris to the Harold Washington Library, O'Hare International Airport and McCormick Place in Chicago.

More than a successful businessman who expanded his small family firm into an international corporation, Epstein is a philanthropist, giving back to his community in Chicago for more than 50 years. A co-founder of the Chicago Youth Centers for at-risk youth, Epstein is also active on the boards of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the University of Chicago Hospitals, the Michale Reese Health Trust and the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry. He is also a director of the Crown Family Foundation and the Polk Brothers Foundation.

"My grandfather embodies the values that Illinois Wesleyan University's mission statement articulates," wrote his grandson, Michael Lawton '08, when nominating him for an honorary degree. "He commits himself to embracing diversity and working for social justice. He is a model global citizen."

About Illinois Wesleyan

Founded in 1850, Illinois Wesleyan is a private liberal arts institution located in Bloomington, Illinois, with an enrollment of 2,045 students from 39 states and 22 countries. With 184 faculty scholars, the student-faculty ratio is 11 to 1 and the average class size is 17. The University offers 41 major areas of study, plus programs in pre-med, pre-law, pre-dentistry, pre-engineering, pre-veterinary science, pre-seminary studies, and professional programs in business, the fine arts and nursing.

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