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Inspirational Coach Herman Boone To Speak at IWU Soul Food Dinner

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--The Issues and Programming Commission of Illinois Wesleyan University's Student Senate will present IWU's Annual Soul Food Dinner, featuring keynote speaker Herman Boone on Feb. 17, in the Shirk Performance Gym, 302 E. Emerson St., Bloomington.

Dinner will be served at 5 p.m., and Boone will be available to the media at 5:30 p.m. A group of IWU students will begin main programming at 6:30 p.m., and Boone will take the stage at 7 p.m.

Tickets for IWU students only attending the speech will be free of charge, with a \$5 charge to those students that wish to have dinner. For faculty, staff, non-IWU students, and community members, tickets for dinner and the speaker are \$10, and \$5 for the speaker's presentation only.

Herman Boone's inspirational story of setting aside prejudice was captured in the 2000 Disney film *Remember the Titans*, starring Denzel Washington.

Boone was the head coach of the high school football team that won a state championship in 1971 when racial tensions ran high in Alexandria, Va. Three schools were newly integrated to form the T.C. Williams High School, the union from which the Titan football team was created. The former rivalries between the schools coupled with the strain between the black and white players resulted in a team far from united. Tensions only escalated when Boone was named head coach of the Titans, passing over Bill Yoast, the local favorite and successful head coach of the former white Hammond High.

The two coaches put aside prejudices, and were able to form a team whose common vision was to respect each other and win football games. At the same time, Boone and Yoast were able to help their small Virginia community to put aside intolerance and join together to support their children.

The Titans became one of the best teams in Virginia, achieving a 13-0 record and going on to win the state championship.

IWU students Kristin Gregory (class of 2003), an English-writing major from Carbondale, Ill., Princess Johnson (class of 2002), an international business major from Detroit, Mich., Mike Clark (class of 2003), a business administration major from Joliet, Ill., and Pat Spangler (class of 2003), an economics major from Joliet, Ill., will participate in the 6:30 p.m. opening program.

IWU Student Senate Issues and Programming Commissioner Joanna Littleton urges all to attend, "Boone is going to address issues of prejudice and discrimination, and techniques useful in bridging the gap between ethnic minorities."

