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Trustee Greetings

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Trustee Greetings - George A. Vinyard '71

Chair, Board of Trustees

May 4, 2014

Scientia et Sapientia + Pete Seeger

Graduates, Parents, Family Members. . . Faculty, Staff, and Friends of Illinois Wesleyan --

Greetings from the Trustees and Alumni. On their behalf I say -- Congratulations, Welcome and Thank You.

We **Congratulate** each Graduate for your individual achievements. We **Welcome** you to the fellowship of Illinois Wesleyan Alumni. And we **Thank You** for your contributions to the University community.

To Parents, Family, Friends, Faculty and Staff -- we share your pride in the accomplishments of these young men and women, and we join **them** in **Thanking You** for all you have done to help them on their way to this important occasion.

As an institution of higher learning we strive to help our students develop the curiosity and intellectual and moral capacity to think deeply about the important things in life and to live in a manner that is consistent with the best values as reflected in our motto -- *Scientia et Sapientia* -- generally translated as "Knowledge and Wisdom".

Knowledge implies the acquisition of true information and understanding grounded in objective observation and logical reasoning. **Wisdom** has been defined as the capacity to **exercise sound judgment** and **act rightly** in matters of life and conduct, choosing **proper means** to achieve **good ends**. This requires personal engagement that goes far beyond the search for objective truth and reaches deeper into the realm of what it means to be part of humanity in all its historical, social, esthetic, moral and spiritual dimensions.

But all of this is rather abstract. When it comes to functioning and contributing in the practical world, in addition to knowledge and wisdom, it is vital to possess the

right tools for the situation at hand and the skills to use them well. Note that I say the **right tools**. Perhaps you are familiar with the old saying that is all too often proved true – *“If your only tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.”*

The recent passing of the great Pete Seeger reminds us of how important it is to find or develop the right tools and skills for understanding the world and making a positive difference in it. Pete was not just a famous and talented songwriter, singer, musician and entertainer. For the better part of 8 decades, he was a preserver of our folk culture, a teacher and an activist for peace, civil rights, poor working people, democracy and the environment. He was a joyous idealist with a realistic view of the world -- capable of writing and singing, in a single song, both about deeply personal love and also about the *“job of separating the false from the true”* and the hard truth that no song he could sing would *“take the gun from a hate-filled man.”*

Now at first blush you might think Pete Seeger is an illustration of the old saying about hammers. After all he seemed never to be in a situation that he did not think could be helped by a song. And you might recall that one of his most famous songs is known as *“The Hammer Song”*. But Pete Seeger was a man with many tools and skills in his bag.

He had innumerable tunes and lyrics at his disposal and the skills to apply just the right ones for each occasion. He played both the banjo and the twelve string guitar with skill. And by all accounts he had great people skills – uncanny audience rapport. His banjo was inscribed *“This machine surrounds hate and causes it to surrender.”*

And of course *“The Hammer Song”* was not just about an ordinary hammer. It celebrates the *“hammer of Justice”* and so much more -- The *“bell of Freedom”* and the *“song about the love between [our] brothers and [our] sisters, all over this land.”*

So as you go forth to swing your particular hammers, ring your unique bells and sing your own songs of love, we ask that you Remember and Honor your University and your fellow Alumni. We hope that you will always think of us as your family and this campus as your home. We invite you to return often. You will always be welcome here -- and wherever Titans gather.