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Inauguration of Richard F. Wilson

Richard F. Wilson

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4-9-2005

## Gilbert L. Dorsey '62, First Vice President, Board of Trustees and Chair of Presidential Search Committee

Gilbert L. Dorsey '62  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

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### Recommended Citation

Dorsey '62, Gilbert L., "Gilbert L. Dorsey '62, First Vice President, Board of Trustees and Chair of Presidential Search Committee" (2005). *Inauguration of Richard F. Wilson*. 14. [https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/wilson\\_inauguration/14](https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/wilson_inauguration/14)

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## Greetings and Call to Leadership

### **Greetings from the Board of Trustees**

Gilbert L. Dorsey, '62, First Vice President Board of Trustees and Chair of Presidential Search Committee

It was just about one year ago that the search for Illinois Wesleyan's 18th president came to a decisive conclusion. The 16 Trustees, Faculty, Staff and Students serving on the Search Committee saw then what you see now - a man with great vision, a man with strong leadership ability and a warm personal style — and we unanimously recommended him to the Board of Trustees. One of the most important duties of the Board of Trustees is to secure the right presidential leadership for our university and we are confident that we have found such a president in Dick Wilson.

Illinois Wesleyan has already begun to know and benefit from the impact of Dick Wilson's guidance...for instance, his effort to solidify IWU's Strategic Plan is well underway. He's made an amazing effort meet and exchange ideas with as many people as possible on campus, in the community, and alums across the country. Everywhere I go, I hear positive comments about Illinois Wesleyan's President Wilson and about his gracious wife, Pat, who is equally an asset to the Wesleyan community.

Not long ago, a professor put a small chalk dot about the size of a dime on the blackboard. Then he asked his sophomore students what it was. A few seconds passed. Finally someone said, "A chalk dot on the blackboard." No one else had anything more to say.

"I'm surprised at you," the professor told the class. "I did the same exercise yesterday with a group of kindergartners and they thought of fifty different things the chalk mark could be: an owl's eye, a cigar butt, the top of a telephone pole, a star, a pebble, a squashed bug, a rotten egg, and so on. They really had their imaginations in high gear."

In that time between kindergarten and college, these children had learned to repeat back the obvious, the expected, and their innate curiosity had been stifled. Creativity was not seen as a valued commodity. As noted educator Neil Postman has remarked, "Children enter school as question marks and leave as periods."

My hope for this university and its future is that Illinois Wesleyan will continue and grow as a place where the question marks remain and the search for second, third and more right answers is always encouraged.

Dick and Pat, on behalf of the University's Board of Trustees, I want you both to know that we're very glad you're here and we look forward to a bright future for Illinois Wesleyan University.