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Alumni Showcase

Kevin Dunn, Class of 1977
Illinois Wesleyan University

Carlina Tapia-Ruano, Class of 1977
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Dave Kindred, Class of 1963
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Demetria Kalodimos, Class of 1981
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Alumni Showcase – April 2016

Inauguration Theme: Collaborative Engagement - Developing Partners in Success

1. **Kevin Dunn '77**

Kevin: Thank you very much. It's an honor to be here. I'd like to thank Dr. Jensen for inviting me down for his inauguration. As I peruse the guest lists I saw a veritable murder's row of distinguished people: neurosurgeons, renown sports writers, biographers... news anchors, heads of immigration law and...I felt kind of like a high school kid in a triathlon that gets hired as the trivia specialist... [laughter from the audience] ...with all the math wizzes and history wizzes, but here I am and I'd like to thank Steve Seibring too for inviting me out. I was looking at his message and I noticed his title and I think of in spirit of collaboration we should address those first words, Steve... "Vice President for advancement and gift planning" ... [laughter from the audience] ...but I know Steve and I know he works really hard at his job so it kind of sounds like... "Vice President for Advancement and Cruse Parties or Something" ... [laughter from audience]. So I think maybe one of the first things in the light of collaborations, maybe you could kind of beef up the title a little bit ... [laughter from audience] ...maybe something like "Advancement and Legacy Enforcement?" ... [laughter from audience] ...so then again the ideas, feel free to present them at the end of the program. I guess the subject of the day is collaboration and how that occurred here at the university and how we carry it on through our lives. My first thought of coming down here and the reason why I wanted to attend here is was because they had a great theater program and I could try to play football, which I did for a couple of years, but the first thing in my mind was "size matters". I wanted to be able to do as many different things as I possible could and learn enough about the field of theater and to be able to participate in as many different things as I could, different aspects of theater. One of the cool things, we weren't able to perform our first year so we built sets, we built costumes, we ran lights, we hung lights. We did everything except step on the stage. We slammed doors offstage, we did... but that's when the whole idea of collaboration started for me. I remember wonderful actress Stephanie Faracy was in the show *Little Foxes* and she would always make these little entrances in different stages of fury so I had a number system and I say, "Steph, what do you want? Five? Six?" ... "Nah, give me a seven!" ...BOOM! ...you know, she'd go onstage and she'd just reign somebody out and come back up. But it became addicting because the whole process of learning your lines by yourself, then working with other actors on a bare stage, and then pieces would come in and then it would become time for a tech rehearsal and lights would come up and it was just a very addicting process for me, but that transfer too when I went into television and film was that it just became much more of an acute experience because there was so many other things involved with...it wasn't just that you were up there on a stage, kind of on a high wire, but there was just so many factors that went into getting just

one shot...just twenty seconds, you know? A minute and a half. And there are a million things that could go wrong. From an airplane, to a boom [6:12?] shot, to fuddling up a line to you know just...there is a million things that could go wrong in a shot, but I really enjoyed the whole collaborative effort that was involved in getting the shot right. And my crew, or the crew, becomes your audience and you become theirs because when it all goes right and they say “check the gate”, it’s done. It’s cooked, put it in your pocket and you move on. And it’s a nice feeling...it’s a nice feeling and it all started here. So thank you all. Let’s get some guests with some true renown up here...[laughter from audience]...to speak to you, but I’m very happy to be here. It’s nice to be back at IWU. Thanks.

2. *Carlina Tapia-Ruano ‘77*

Carlina: Thank you Steve, Kathy, Dr. Jensen and everyone else who has made this wonderful event possible and for inviting me. I feel very honored and very privileged. Just as a few minutes and as I was telling some of the other invited guests, I feel like at a disadvantage because I am one of the older speakers here and yet we all have the same amount of time to talk about how we got from Wesleyan to where we are now and you know...wow, that’s going to be tough for me in 10 minutes, but I thought that in the spirit of recognizing that the theme this weekend is collaborative engagement, what I would do is take parts of my life to help explain and show how I got to where I am today by discussing the challenges of that period that I faced and whom my collaborators were. I thought that that might be the theme here. Well, when I left and it starts off leaving Wesleyan...sorry... [laughs]...when I left Wesleyan, I was a newlywed. I had no money. I had no house. We had to live married with my parents. We didn’t even have a security deposit and I also didn’t cook...by the way, I don’t cook today either... [laughter from audience] ...and I found that at that time in my life help me face those challenges, I found at Wesleyan, my life long collaborator. I am married to Jeffery Gunn, I met him my first month, my first year at Wesleyan and we have been married now almost 40 years and he has been not only the source of support and comfort, but inspiration and if you have a partner in life that supports you, encourages you, and inspires you, you can’t fail. I don’t care what you do, you can’t fail. I entered law school, DePaul Law School, again, no money, insecure. Not only was I a minority in terms of being Hispanic, I was born in Cuba – I was also a minority because I was a female. There were very few females in law school at the time. In fact, I want you to know I got a C in civic procedure in law school because – and I was a good student. I’m not very intelligent. I’m one of those overachievers, but I got a C because in my civic procedures class was taught by a professor who decided that the best way to teach it was by comparing it to the rules of football. I’m sorry, I’ve never played football. I guess I was lucky that the class was with my language of English, but beyond that I really didn’t understand a word he said. Who were my collaborators during the very difficult law school? Which by the way, I hated...not

DePaul, but I hated law school as a general rule. I spent three years competing with aggressive young males, you know, not my idea of a good time... [laughter from audience] ... and who were my collaborators? My fellow law students. The few women who were there. The Latino Law Student Association, I think we were a total of twelve, but it doesn't matter, they were my collaborators too. People I could go to, to share my insecurities, to inspire me, to give me hope and became lifelong friends thereafter. Then I left law school and became a new lawyer. As a new lawyer I learned, once again, that I didn't do anything all! Why would anyone pay me? I am so absolutely useless! I didn't write well, I didn't speak well, and my bosses kept telling me that I wasn't thinking well, because I have not mastered the art of literal thinking. So I felt a total failure. Over the course of the next ten years, I had several bosses who I had various feelings about, but what I really learned at the very end until I finally opened up my own firm, those bosses were my mentors, those bosses were my collaborators. They taught me how to write. They taught me how to speak. They taught me how to think and they taught my skill and I owe a world of debt to those people. Then in the 80's I became a new mother. I had two children. I've never done that before. I should've gone to school, because again I was totally clueless on how to do this. I had new collaborators there. I had my lifelong collaborator, my husband. We had old collaborators, my parents. Who gave me endless advice, but also endless money, endless time, endless care, and support and childcare which when you're a working mother is as valuable as gold. I also had one new collaborator which I encourage all you young working mothers. I want you to know I've never made much money in my life and is success is defined by money, I'm a failure, but I consider myself tremendously successful and one of the reasons I'm successful is because I've had a world of people around me to support me, to encourage me, to help me accomplish goals and I had a live-in nanny. My own collaborator at a time when I couldn't own a home, never purchased a new car, did not have electronic equipment that we owned. I had a live-in nanny and people were shocked. And I realized that when you make your priorities and for me my priorities was family, but equally my career -- somethings got to give, by the way cooking always gave...always gave, but one of the things I had to give was, I wanted to give my children support, nurturing and I need them to have somebody constant and if it can't be my husband --I forgot to mention that he also worked-- then it has to be a live-in nanny and that was relatively unknown, at least at the time I did it. I then threw myself into my career, professionalism. I've always loved people. I've always loved working with people. I volunteer everywhere. Every bar association. Chicago Bar Association, American Bar Association, Hispanic Lawyers Association and then because- I don't know- I had so much support, I decided it wasn't good enough to be a member-- I had to be a leader of all of them! Not all at the same time. Eventually, I've ended up spending a great deal of time volunteering for the American Immigration Lawyer Association, chairing committees, hitting up projects, working with other individuals, being a liaison to the US government, which was a learning experience of its own. I developed new collaborators, my fellow colleagues, my fellow attorneys. They all helped me

accomplish enormous goals. I'm very proud to say that in 2006, I became the first elected Latino, male or female, to have the 12,000 --and now its 14,000-- American Immigration Lawyer Association, a national bar association of immigration students, teachers and lawyers. There I learned who are your collaborators. Well at that point it was 12,000 people. 12,000 people leading them is like learning to herd cats, not easy, but if you want to accomplish goals --which all leaders should-- you've got to learn you can't just work with your friends. You've got to work with the people you dislike and you've got to find common ground if you hope to accomplish things and that's exactly what I did. I also learned to find allies in the most unexpected places and I learned that to be a leader takes more than compromise. It takes the skill of building consensus so you can actually achieve the goals you all aspire to achieve. Now... in that position I was able to be the face for several years of immigration, not only was I the head of an immigration national bar association, but I was also a refugee. So I represented several faces. I had the opportunity, and it truly was an opportunity, to travel across the country, to speak for different groups, including the US congress and to advocate for positive immigration policies in a completely neurotic political climate which by the way we have today, very, very similar. I guess I want to leave you with the parting words that say: When you seek out to accomplish bigger goals, goals you can't do on your own, in the process if you seek collaborators who you not normally associate to be your first partner, you will find that those collaborators will have you achieve goals bigger than you could have ever accomplished on your own and in the process not only will you have accomplished these goals, but probably become a better person because of it. So I strongly encourage collaboration in all things, at all times. Thank you.

3. *Dave Kindred '63*

Dave: Thank you Steve. I noticed Carlina talking about being old. I graduated 14 years before she did. I first walked in this building 57 years ago. The floor is the same. This is actually the basketball floor that Illinois Wesleyan played on in 1959. I am came here as a guest of Fred Young, who was I think in the class of 1915, who was a sports writer at the Pantagraph. I attended Illinois Wesleyan on a Pantagraph scholarship. The tuition at that time was unreachable for the common family, it was 2,500 a year, so I had a scholarship, I worked at the newspaper for half of it and the school... Pantagraph paid for the other half. I am here today to tell you about getting in bed with Mohammed Ali and what Illinois Wesleyan had to do with that. It was mid 70s, Las Vegas, Ali's hotel room, Ali was the most accessible of celebrities. He wanted people around him. I go to his suite, it was a central suite, he was in the bedroom, I see him on the bed, he's got a blanket up to his neck. I can't hear him, he can't hear me so he says, "Louisville, come here!" -- I was working at Louisville Courage the at the time and he called me Louisville --I'm not sure he ever knew my name, but he called me Louisville. "Louisville, come in here". So I go in there, I still can't hear him, he can't hear me because there's a hundred people

in the room. He lifts up the corner of his sheet and he says, "Get in". So I don't know what you do if the heavyweight champion of the world tells you get in bed, but I did and only one of us had on clothes... [laughter from audience] ...so we pull the sheets up over our heads just to hide from people. He took my notebook. I wanted to do a column about his entourage: Who they were, how many there were, what he paid them. So he took my notebook, and just above his head wrote their names, wrote down how much he paid them. We talked about the upcoming fight for 10-15 minutes and I left. Ali was full of surprises, but that was the most unusual interview arrangement that I've been in. I've interviewed him in many places: showers, in cars going 85 miles an hour, down roads... that was in Pennsylvania; in fact, I asked him as we were bouncing like this between trees if he ever thought of dying and he said, "No", and I said, "Well good" ... [laughs]... "I feel better now". Illinois Wesleyan has to do with that because I came here... I was one of the people, I guess it has dawned on me now over the years that I was lucky that when I was 15 years old I knew what I wanted to do. My mother gave me a typewriter for Christmas, the first words I typed--- and you have to be a person of a certain age to know what this means, but I sat there at the kitchen table I typed something that I would remember forever this was now 59 years later and I can still tell you that I typed "Stanley Frank Musial". I was a Cardinal fan --so I became a sports writer when I was 15. I came to Illinois Wesleyan on a Pantagraph scholarship. Here I was an English major, went to class sometimes, played baseball, worked at the Argus, worked at the Pantagraph, chased a girl who was in Springfield. Still [21:54?] a lot of time to remember what people in the English department told me, that I was a baseball player and I can tell you still what Jack Horenberger told me. Jack Horenberger --there was a Horenberger street out here, there was a Horenberger baseball field... I can still remember the sign for a double steal. You run from first to third and if he's closing third base, Horenberger and his high pitched voice would say: "Hey you!" That's the double steal sign. You know, 55 years later I still remember that. I remember also him saying, "Kindred, move around, you're killing the grass!"... [laughter from audience] ...We-- I loved Horenberger, he was a—I loved Horenberger-- my shortstop was Dennis Bridges. All of you know Denny Bridges, he's been here forever. He was here even before I was. I don't know if he's here today or not, but he was a shortstop, I was a second baseman. 1997, this is now 69-- 59--53-- 34 years later, Bridge's team wins the Division III National Championship, I write a column about it for sporting news. In this column, I did what sports writers often do, I wrote rhapsodic. I called Illinois Wesleyan the fount of civilized thought. I said all Wesleyan men and all Wesleyan women are good-looking and beautiful and they read Plato and the original Greek... [laughter from audience] ...If Harvard—it's what Harvard would be, if Harvard had cornfields at the edge of town... [laughter for audience] ...Well my phone rings a couple weeks later, "Kindred, this is Minor Myers!" I knew who Minor Myers was because as Kevin points out you get these letters of encouragement that you'll be better looking and your life will be enriched if only you join the world of donors... [laughter from audience] ...I already knew who Minor Myers was. "Kindred,

This is Minor Myers, The question is not whether you want a statue, but how big do you want it?" ... [laughter from audience] ...There is still no Dave Kindred statue, but you all should see the Minor Myers statue...[laughter from audience]...I love that statue, it's great. First time I walked past it, I thought it was him. Anyway, he made me the alumnus of the year, that year I came back, I saw Horenberger, I remembered all these things that were said and I especially remember a team leading before we played at Mississippi State talk, so talk about collaboration and engagement. Team meeting, I have to leave because I have to go to the bathroom, I come back, I hear Horenberger's voice, "Kindred, flush it, you're in the big leagues now." So yes, Illinois Wesleyan is the big leagues to be, I wanted to be a big leagues sports writer and I became that. I thank you all for having me here. It's a great honor I appreciate it.

4. *Demetria Kalodimos '81*

Demetria: Thank you Steve for putting me after Dave Kindred. What a gift! Thanks! You know everyone on this front row at one point walked onto this campus, either relieved that it was small and homey or amazed that it was the biggest place they've ever been. I was a person who came back around to Wesleyan. I had come down to audition for the School of Music in high school and was accepted with a scholarship. Weren't my parents thrilled that I announced at the very last minute that I was staying home for college to be near my boyfriend. Yeah, the boyfriend lasted less than a semester and after two years at home, I was feeling regretful and more adventurous so I transferred to Wesleyan as a Junior. Hello Dodds Hall. At the time the only co-ed dorm on campus. Direct quote from my father on move-in day, "I've seen prison cells that look snappier than this". I laughed, but then I wondered, "Wait dad, you've been to prison?" ... [laughter from audience] ...I was a Felix Ungar neat Nick, my roommate was Oscar Madison on steroids. I wore headphones to listen to my music, the guys in the suite upstairs set new decibel records for enclosed spaces and it was the disco era so-- but as a campus DJ on WESN, I was album oriented cool rock chick and someone who thought I was about to change the world with a show we called, "The Bitch Line". The name was very bold and very naughty in those days, but the show was ready ahead of its time. Talk radio before anyone was truly talking. I learned how to cue up an LP and cross-fade, a skill that is now totally obsolete. How to talk up to a commercial break, another skill, totally obsolete. I returned glass pop bottles to the Kroger over there to cash in on the 5 cent bottle refund you get, you know, something that is now totally obsolete, but what is far from obsolete is the thirst for learning I started to quench here in this campus, sip by sip. And going with that analogy, you might say that I developed a drinking problem. I've been on television 5 nights a week now, 3 times a day for almost 35 years. I'm a household name, but no one could spell it still and just about everyday someone asks me, are you really there? I mean really at 10'oclock at night or do you record it? You know as tech savvy as we are, it doesn't matter how many times they scream the words "live" and

“breaking” across the screen, people are still not sure if I’m really there, if what’s happening then and there is real. It’s live TV thought and I tell people, many of us joke that when all hell breaks loose there are no do overs, there is no rewind. And come to think of it, there are a lot of little clever phrases we have in the TV business. Things reporters say from Nashville to Nova Scotia. When you have absolutely nothing interesting or exciting to report, pardon me, we say, “You better learn how to make chicken shit into chicken salad”... [laughter from audience] ...Sometimes we talk in code like the cops do, you know, “What’s your twenty? Where are you?”, “ I’m 10-7. I’m going home.” Someone came up with this horrible one if you need to cut some time out of the story, you think it’s absolutely exquisitely perfect, they say, “Close your eyes and start killing puppies.” It’s sort of a callous gallows humor that seeps into newsrooms everywhere. A way for some to cope with some of the truly awful things we hear and see every day. Things that we force you all to hear and see and it never bothered me much, I’m ashamed to say, I seem to be able to shake off some pretty terrible stuff and just move on. But when I was approaching 40, I had sort of an epiphany when some not so great things happened in my own adult life. I was suddenly aware how quickly a care free day could turn into one wrapped with worry and anxiety. I was fine one minute, transformed the next. The person who honked at me had no I idea that I just learned that my father had cancer. When I was grieving after a nasty divorce, everyone who laughed or looked happy made me sick. I was developing empathy, for real, for the first time in my life. The armor of this tough news reporter who has seen everything was more like tin foil or like gum wrapper and I started considering what someone else was struggling with. I started to become aware that my encounters that are brief with people could and do have a lasting impact. If somebody yelled, “Hey! Aren’t you the news lady?” I try then not to just shake them off or be in a hurry. I stopped, I shook hands, I listened, I hugged, I talked and I still do that every time, no matter how hurried I am. It’s been one of the best conscious changes I’ve ever made. Now I got to admit, this was before the age of selfies and “Can we take a picture and put it on Facebook?” I’m not crazy about that, but now I think, I actually think, about how it feels to see a loved one’s mugshot on the air or a crumpled car that looks terrifying familiar in a live shot or hearing the name of someone who’s been murdered over and over. You know, it can be like tearing up on a scab and I’m the person pulling on the Band-Aid. I’ve sat on the couch with grieving families more times that I can tell you. I’ve been to funerals for little kids, I’ve talked once a week for the past year with dozens of men on death row and I’m thinking, have I gone soft? Maybe. Is that a bad thing? I don’t think so. How do we teach empathy besides just living long enough to realize that one day we’re all in this together. You know, how does a person know when they’re being narrow minded, or insensitive, or exclusionary. Our news viewers reminds us every night when we get something wrong. People don’t like or trust the media and there are plenty of reasons for that. I’m amazed how many of my colleagues, especially the newer reporters have no idea that it’s insensitive to boast about getting to the scene of a fatal accident first or to be the only camera on the scene when the

body was brought out or to have exclusive copy of the frantic 911 tape, the worst moment in someone's life. Can it wait? I think it can and should and that people should give us credit for sensitivity when we demonstrate it. Maybe no one could teach good taste or civility or empathy, maybe it's like a stalagmite that drips through time and spiritual testing, we develop it. So I want to challenge the Wesleyan community to put empathy lessons high on the list. Keep doing service in the community, keep opening these doors in this campus to kids who might not look perfect on paper. Those are the people who surprise us, I think. Be eager to listen, even to points that offend us. Make every encounter count. That person you avoid in line, or pass on the quad, or never look in the eye, might be the one who unlocks your empathy. I'm going to steal from David Bowie to finish and I think this applies to everyone, young, old, and everyone in between. Bowie said right before he died apparently, "Aging is an extraordinary process, where you become the person you always should have been". And students with that there is a lot to look forward to. Thanks.

5. *Marcus Dunlop '08*

Marcus: Thank you Steve. I want to start off by thanking the university and Dr. Jensen for having me. It's truly an honor to even be thought about coming up here to speak among such esteemed and accomplished alums. I guess at some point they thought they needed a young guy... [laughter from audience] ...I was a 2008 graduate. It feels like I was just here yesterday. And seems like they've done a lot with the campus since then. I was a double major in economics and business, played football here, I was a running back on the team. CCIW champions my senior year, I wanted to add that... [applause from the audience] ...I always like to start my stories with sports and football because that would kind of help kind of drive my...drive me to my career that I'm in today. I always loved football. I always loved the action of the sport. I always loved the competitive nature of it and that's kind of how I thought about how I wanted my career to go. What career can I choose that can be...I can get into my competitive nature, that's always going to be new, always going to be challenging myself and continue to learn every day. And I went down a rolling pass a few times and if I had more time, I would tell you about those, but really it was here at Illinois Wesleyan and education as I took some finance classes, took some economic classes. I got involved and exposed to investing and I thought, "This is it." In football, I felt that you had to prepare. You practiced, you watched film, you had to go out there and compete versus an opponent that was always different and changing. There were no two games the same and I found that investing—I found something similar where you have to do your research, you have to know your stuff, you have to go out there and really compete. In my mind whenever I'm buying an asset, I believe that it is undervalued and I believe someone else is selling that asset and they're saying it's fairly overvalued. They're saying, you're an idiot for buying it. I'm saying, you're an idiot for selling it to

me at this price and that competition will help drive me in knowing that there's no two situations that are the same. And I have a scoreboard, I either make money or lose money. I kind of compete everyday so I went down that path for investing and thinking about collaboration, I kind of got my team together here from the career center to finance and economics professors and kind of told them that this is what I wanted to do and they kind of came back and said, "Well, if you want to know the nuts and bolts of finance, you should try to go into investment banking." I said, "Great! Awesome. Now I just got to find out what investment banking is." So I reached out to alumni, I reached out to all my contacts and mentors and I know that I was on a thin line between being persistent and being a pest and I probably was there right on that line to continue to try to get in front of people, try to meet people from New York, try to get interviews. I got a lot of Noes, but thankfully, I got a few Yeses and got an opportunity at Golden Sachs and I went out there. It was so exciting in New York, exactly what I wanted to do. Big city of dreams and got there in 2008, the great recession, so I remember leaving the train and getting to my desk the first weeks and you had finance professionals who were there for 20 or 30 years and they were frozen, looking at the TV, didn't know what to do. They never have lived through it and you had lay-offs every other week. You would meet people and in the morning, you would see them at the water crew and they would be gone in the afternoon. And it was really a scary time so I thought, I just made it to New York and I may be fired next week. Or worse yet they would come to people and say, you're not fired, but we need you to take a paid cut and work in New Jersey. —like alright—and I had a good opportunity there. I worked in a group that raised capital on the debt side for companies and in the recession all those companies that were in debt, now they couldn't pay their interest payments and they needed help renegotiating with their creditors and we were the groups that helped raise capital, so instead of raising capital, I became a restructuring analysis. I was helping companies avoid bankruptcy. It was a very exciting time. I loved it because I was busy and being busy meant that I might have more job security than other groups and I loved it. It was a great opportunity, but ultimately, as I said, I'm an action junkie. I was giving advice to companies and they were making the decisions, either the CEO or the board was making the decision on what action they wanted to take. And I wanted to have my finger on the trigger, I wanted to be the one to do the research and decide if I'm buying or selling assets. I got an opportunity to go to a hedge fund. The hedge fund I am at now is HG Vora. I met the founder who said, "I'm starting a fund." It's going to invest in dead end equity, long and short. I loved that because I didn't have to pigeon hole myself, but it's going to be entrepreneur, it's going to be small. I'm like all right, I got to go for it. It's alright to fail, but I got to go try it and I remember my first day at the new office. I'm looking around and I just left Goldman who had these beautiful offices with some floor to ceiling windows, it had a view of the river, it had a view of the Statue of Liberty and I look at my new office on the second floor of a hotel, no windows and it was like six people sitting on top of each other and I thought, "What have I've done?" But we rolled up our

sleeves, I—again—if you talk about collaboration we really came in together, we were a team, we built something together. We now manage about 2.5 billion dollars of assets. It's kind of that same strategies of dead end equity and distress situation equities and I'm a member of the team where I come in every now and then with some new ideas. I have to do research of the supply and demand factors, the drivers, the risks. I come in with evaluations and I come up with my own recommendations. Hopefully, I win more than I lose because I definitely make a lot of mistakes along the way, but that's kind of what I've learned from Wesleyan and sports that you have to learn from your mistakes, you have to keep going and I'm glad I've got a team to help me collaborate, so if I could leave you with anything it's to really find your passion, study it, pursue it, go after it and really enjoy your time here at Illinois Wesleyan. I really believe it's a special, special place. Thank you.

6. Dr. Stephen Ondra '80

Steve: Thanks Steve and thanks to everyone and President Jensen, congratulations. You're taking up as president in time of unprecedented challenge to liberal arts education in the country, so good luck with that... [laughter from audience] ...We need you to have good luck with that because even though there's a lot of questioning about the value of liberal arts education—is that people are very focused on a job market that has challenges. I will talk about why a liberal arts education is more essential today than at any time in the nation's history. And for those of you who are students here, it will prepare you more for what you are going to need because—there is a great line from a John Lennon song, “Life's what happens to you while you're making other plans”. And everyone comes to college with a plan. I came to college with a plan. Fortunately, my plan was very straightforward, you know: Pre-med, biology major, going to be a doctor. Fortunately, Illinois Wesleyan had more planned for me than I did and that liberal arts education prepared me for life. So I want to talk about why that is so important. Well in 1982, Buckminster Fuller talked about the knowledge doubling curve. In modern history, until the 1900s, knowledge doubled once a century. By 1945, it doubled every 25 years. Today, knowledge is doubling every 13 months so that means for the people that are graduating in 2016, the time you're 28, 25% of information they have will either be new or obsolete. So how important is it to learn how to think, understand, question, create, collaborate? It's everything because the shelf life of just the body of knowledge you leave here with is very time limited. But wait, there's more! IBM did a look at the human end of [45:06?] things about human intelligence and computer assisted artificial intelligence. It is now estimated that in the very near future, knowledge will double every twelve weeks. That's staggering. It's a staggering ability to analyze data, to think, to learn and that's why in education like Illinois Wesleyan provides is so critical. It's important to get that foundation from me in the sciences, but it was equally important for the foundation in the arts and in the humanities.

When I look at my career: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Calculus were all very important to me, but so was English Romantic Poetry, Humanities 301, 302 was the most...was the single most important course I ever took in my life. It provides that framework to evolve and to think and my own unlikely career is an example of that. I started out thinking, at Illinois Wesleyan, that I'd be a primary care doctor, probably in a small town like the one I grew up in and that seemed like the plan, but I was also one of those kids that was always inquisitive. Even as a little kid. I was that guy that had his nose around the corner, drove his parents' crazy. How far does a cave go into the rocks? How deep is this pond? By the way, what is that muck at the bottom of it? And so the inquisitive nature in me made me kind of seek out an edge. The edge for me was the neurosciences. It was sort of the last frontier for medicine, so I wanted to be a neurosurgeon. That edge, that ability to think outside the box and to collaborate with others became critical to my surgical—my own personal surgical success and the team around me that we've built because nobody can do it on their own. And so I went out to develop new operations for the brain for both children and adults and right when I was at the peak of that, I noticed that there was an explosion in knowledge in spine surgery and I pivoted again and changed careers and went to Paris, which by the way I highly recommend; and studied there with Jean du Vise, who was the leader of thought at the time. I came back, again thinking outside the box. Why are the problems we have that we don't deal with well, we don't solve well. I see somebody in the audience who is a beneficiary of that, an old patient of mine. And I have all these ideas in my head of new operations, but there was only one problem, we didn't have any equipment to do them. So that led to yet another part of the career which was as a bio-engineer and developed the equipment I needed to do the operations that I envisioned from the collaboration I did with Jean du Vise and many others. And that led to a series of patents and other things which, by the way works out pretty well too. So patients benefited from it and so did a lot of other people. So that was yet another career, but as I'm walking around the halls of Northwestern Memorial Hospital, you couldn't help but also notice some of the inequities that went on; how our health system itself was not well. And there were some real, real problems with how Healthcare was delivered. So kind of reaching back to that humanities background, there was a lot about what can we do to make healthcare better. How do you make it more accessible, more equitable, more financially sustainable for individuals in the nation? So that went back to going back to school and studying, really on my own and working with other smart people, thinking through how can we make the health system better? And then also the activism you ran on campus, half of life is showing up, so I volunteered to be on committees. I was in every committee there was to be on, as much as you did... [acknowledges someone in the audience] ...and I went to Medicare, CMS, Medical Coverage Advisory Committee, ended up in the Department of Defense, chairside of the advisory board. There was a member of congress, under the state legislature, who wanted to be a senator. He was the longest of long shots because after all who really thinks that an

African-American man named Barack Obama could ever become a senator? Not many, but I was one of the first and wound up changing my life and changing careers yet again. And so that took me to Washington, again on the same mission, how do you take care of people? How do you make the healthcare system more accessible, equitable, and affordable for people? So that led to a new career leaving medicine entirely and becoming a federal policy maker. That is a jump into the deep cold end of the pool, let me tell you. You have to have confidence in yourself, the courage to take the jump, which again really comes from the underpinning of believing in yourself and believing that you can evolve, which you all learn here at Illinois Wesleyan. So after I finish up the White House, which was an extraordinary experience, the hardest thing I've ever done and professionally, the most meaningful. I went back to Northwestern Memorial. This time, I was a neurosurgeon as the chief medical officer and I thought that's where I'm going to end my career right up until I got a call for Pat Hemingway Hall. She was the CEO of a health care service corporation, fourth largest insurance company, Blue Cross Blue Shield Plans: 15 millions lives and 70 billion dollars in healthcare a year. And she said, "I think healthcare is really going to change, and I'd like you to help me change it because this company is going to change." So that's why I took the job. I've been there—today is my 3 year anniversary and so I've been there for three years and I don't know what's next. I don't know what's around the corner, but I'm excited to find. Whatever that is, I know that based on the education that I got here, the ability to work with others, the ability to continue to learn, to question what's known and ask, "is it really true?", and find out. I know that I not only have the courage to take the jump, but I have the ability to succeed and that ability is what you get from a liberal arts education. So we're looking forward to your success. We're all counting on it as individuals, as university, and as a nation. Thank you.