2012

President's Convocation (2012 Program)

Illinois Wesleyan University

Recommended Citation
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From a 1931 booklet of pen sketches:

“THIS BUILDING WAS MADE POSSIBLE LARGELY BY A GIFT OF ANDREW CARNEGIE IN 1910 AND HAS CONSTANTLY BEEN KEPT MODERN IN EVERY RESPECT DURING THE PAST TWENTY YEARS. CHEMISTRY, BIOLOGY, ZOOLOGY, AND PHYSICS DEPARTMENTS ARE QUARTERED IN THIS ATTRACTIVE BUILDING.”

The Edgar M. Stevenson Hall of Nursing, formerly known as Science Hall, was dedicated on October 9, 1965.

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Please turn off phones and electronic devices

Illinois Wesleyan University

PRESIDENT’S CONVOCATION

Westbrook Auditorium
Presser Hall
September 12, 2012
11:00 AM

Celebrating the New Academic Year
Rebecca Skloot

Author of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, journalist, teacher

The author of the 2010 New York Times best seller The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot has explored a wide range of topics such as the moral and social implications of science research, through her narrative science writing. Her work has appeared in numerous publications.

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Ms. Skloot’s debut book, was chosen as the best book of 2010 by more than 60 media outlets, including Entertainment Weekly, USA Today, O the Oprah Magazine, Los Angeles Times, National Public Radio, People Magazine, New York Times and US News and World Report. The book, which is being translated into more than 25 languages, also received the Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize for Nonfiction, the National Academies of Science Best Book of the Year Award, the American Association for the Advancement of Science Best Young Adult Book Award, the Welcome Trust Book Prize, and two Goodreads Choice Awards for Best Nonfiction Book of the Year and Best Debut Author of the Year.

Immortal Life, completed after a decade of research and writing, chronicles the story of Henrietta Lacks, a poor tobacco farmer whose cancer cells were used for scientific research without her or her family’s knowledge. Despite the contribution Henrietta’s cells made to numerous scientific advancements, even after her death, neither Henrietta or her family were credited or compensated. It is this discovery that inspired Ms. Skloot to found the Henrietta Lacks Foundation, which strives to provide financial assistance to other disadvantaged and unacknowledged contributors to science. A portion of the proceeds from her book goes to the Foundation, which has been featured in The New York Times.

Ms. Skloot has a bachelor’s of science degree in biological sciences and a master’s degree in creative nonfiction. She worked in emergency rooms, neurology labs, veterinary morgues and martini bars to finance her education. She has taught creative writing and science journalism at the University of Memphis, the University of Pittsburgh, and New York University.

A guest editor of The Best American Science Writing 2011, Ms. Skloot is also a contributing editor at Popular Science Magazine, and has worked as a correspondent for WNYC’s Radiolab and PBS’s NOVA ScienceNOW. She has been featured on several television shows as well, including CBS Sunday Morning, The Colbert Report and Fox Business News. Ms. Skloot was named One of Five Surprising Leaders of 2010 by the Washington Post. She is currently writing a new book, yet untitled, which focuses on the human-animal bond.