2015

President's Convocation (2015 Program)

Illinois Wesleyan University

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Illinois Wesleyan University

PRESIDENT'S CONVOCATION

Westbrook Auditorium
Presser Hall
September 9, 2015
11:00 AM

Celebrating the New Academic Year
PROGRAM
President Richard F. Wilson, Presiding

Prelude
Praeludium in C Major

Susan Klotzbach
Organist
Georg Böhm
(1661–1733)

Processional (please stand)
Grand Choeur

Theodore Dubois
(1837–1924)

Invocation for the New Year (remain standing)

Elyse Nelson Winger
University Chaplain

Welcome

Richard F. Wilson
President

Greetings from Student Senate

Jake Thaker ’17
President, Student Senate

Introduction of Speaker

Jonathan Green
Provost

Address

Kevin Roose

Alma Wesleyana

(please stand and join in singing led by Kate Masson ’18)

Ms. Klotzbach

NATIONAL HYMN
George William Warren
(1828-1902)

From hearts aflame, our love we pledge to thee,
Where’er we wander, over land or sea;
Through time unending, loyal we will be—
True to our Alma Mater, Wesleyan.
When college days are fully past and gone,
While life endures, from twilight gleam til dawn,
Grandly thy soul shall with us linger on—
Star-crowned, our Alma Mater, Wesleyan.
—Professor W. E. Schultz (1935)

Recessional (remain standing)
Concerto in A Minor

Ms. Klotzbach

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)
Kevin Roose was a self-described fairly typical Brown University student who "studied English lit, drank fair-trade coffee, attended the occasional anti-war protest, and sang in an a cappella group," until he became fascinated with Liberty University, the Christian liberal arts college founded by the Rev. Jerry Falwell. Transferring to Liberty, Mr. Roose spent a semester examining and attempting to understand the often-misinterpreted lives and beliefs of many of the students attending the school. His resulting book, *The Unlikely Disciple*, was selected for students at Illinois Wesleyan to read and discuss as a part of the university’s Summer Reading Program.

In *The Providence Journal*, one reviewer writes, "*The Unlikely Disciple* is by turns appealing and appalling, laugh-out-loud funny and sobering, serious and silly — just like a semester at college." Mr. Roose takes readers on a journey through a semester at Liberty, along the way training himself not to curse, meeting Rev. Falwell, and spending spring break at Daytona Beach trying to convert the unsaved. These and other experiences throughout the course of the book serve to both entertain and educate readers on a part of American culture that is still misunderstood.


As for his time at Liberty, Mr. Roose continues to learn from his experiences at the school, keeping in touch with several of his Liberty peers, many of whom have thanked him for his novel. As reviewer June Sawyers wrote in *Booklist*, "His stint at Liberty hardly changed the world but it did alter his way at looking at it. That’s a start."
The Summer Reading Program is an opportunity for incoming students to:

- participate in a shared intellectual conversation with the IWU community;
- express ideas about a common text that many IWU students, faculty, staff, and alumni are reading;
- respond respectfully to ideas others bring to the discussion.

It is also an opportunity to model for and mentor students on faculty expectations and the engaged classroom dynamics they will encounter at IWU. The Class of 2019 was further invited to participate in the inaugural First-Year Summer Reading Essay Contest to apply their voices and perspectives by reflecting on their reading of The Unlikely Disciple: A Sinner’s Semester at America’s Holiest University by Kevin Roose.

Students were challenged to respond to the prompt, “What did you learn from this book that might be significant as you begin this new chapter in your life?” Twenty-eight students responded with submissions, and a diverse group of first-year advisors and faculty representing disciplines across the curriculum evaluated responses and chose the three outstanding essays, which will be made available on the digital commons later this month.

This year’s winners:

**First Prize:** “Still a Jerk” by Benjamin Alan Zentner

**Honorable Mention:** “Between Two Worlds” by Emma Marie Haan

**Honorable Mention:** “The Complexity of Balance” by Kathryn Anne Halford

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