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### Winners' Circle

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# Winners' circle

**At Homecoming, five alumni carve out their place in Illinois Wesleyan history.**

**Story by NICOLE TRAVIS '11**

During Illinois Wesleyan's Homecoming 2009 celebration, several alumni were recognized for their professional achievements and for their support of the University and its mission.

Lawrence Herbolsheimer '72 was given the Distinguished Alumnus Award in recognition of his professional achievements, which include international trade with China that has spanned 30 years of his career. The Loyalty Award went to Chet '43 and Helen Sheldon '40, who have remained active in their involvement with the University for over 60 years. The recipient of the Robert M. Montgomery Outstanding Young Alumnus Award was Arman Dabiri '94, who is an attorney working in international law and litigation.



**And the winners were ... (from left) Arman Dabiri '94, Lawrence Herbolsheimer '72, and Chet '43 and Helen Sheldon '40. (Photo by Marc Featherly)**

At the Alumni Awards Lunch, where Todd French '93, president of the Alumni Association, presented the alumni with their awards, President Richard F. Wilson remarked, "As Pat and I travel around the country meeting with alumni, I am reminded on a regular basis that the relatively short time that our alumni are here is very special. The friendships are deep, the memories are vivid and the loyalty is intense."

This observation was reflected in Herbolsheimer's comments about his Illinois Wesleyan experience in one of Homecoming's many Back to College classes taught by IWU faculty and alumni.

"I'm glad I went here because I needed this kind of school," he told his audience in The Ames Library's Beckman Auditorium. "I was a very introverted young guy and I still am, but it brought me out, gave me chances to do things I had never done before."

Particularly memorable in Herbolsheimer's Wesleyan experience was taking an international business course taught by then-President Robert Eckley.



**Dan Anderson '75 created the centerpiece for the Homecoming Decade Dinner held in Young Memorial Center. Close to 1,300 alumni returned for this year's festivities. (Photo by Marc Featherly)**

“He really opened up the whole issue of how the interplay of countries and economies worked, and I was intrigued by that, so it led me to go abroad and get some experience in another part of the world,” Herbolsheimer said. “Because of that, because of his encouragement, I think that I benefited greatly.”

After graduating from Illinois Wesleyan, Herbolsheimer received an M.B.A. from Harvard University in 1980 before becoming a member of President Ronald Reagan’s staff and later the deputy assistant administrator of NASA’s Office of Commercial Programs. In 1991, Herbolsheimer became CEO of United Pacific Holdings, which is focused on manufacturing companies in China and East Asia. Since that

time, he has facilitated the development of a number of businesses, on which he maintains a position of ownership or a seat on the Board of Directors. He is also co-chairman of Comway Capital Group, a Shanghai holding company of 14 Chinese companies, and managing director of The McLean Group of Virginia, a middle market investment banking firm.

In presenting Chet and Helen Sheldon with the Loyalty Award, French noted that the distinction was “long-overdue for these individuals.” The Sheldons have remained active members of the Wesleyan alumni community, maintaining interest in the music and theatre arts programs, in the experience of international students and in Titan athletics. Two of their sons, Roger Sheldon ’64 and Mark Sheldon ’70, also attended IWU.

“It does something to old hearts to be warmed this way, to be given such a wonderful distinction,” Chet said.

After earning a degree in law from Drake University, Young Alumnus winner Dabiri opened Arman Dabiri and Associates in Washington, D.C., an international law and litigation firm focused on representing foreign governments and heads of states before U.S. federal courts and tribunals. Dabiri’s specialty is counseling countries with business and government-relations issues that are pertinent in the United States. The firm has additional branches in Brussels and Paris.

Upon accepting the award, Dabiri remembered several important people from his Wesleyan experience, including Ryan Beaupre ’95, a Sigma Pi brother and one of the first casualties of the

war in Iraq; Jack Fields '71, a founding member of Sigma Pi and University registrar, who died in 2004; and former University President Minor Myers, jr.

The School of Nursing also awarded Rear Admiral Denise Canton '74 the 2009 Distinguished Alumna for Nursing Excellence recognition at its School of Nursing Homecoming Brunch and Award Program.

After graduating from Illinois Wesleyan, Canton earned a master's of nursing and a doctor of nursing science degree from The Catholic University of America and a juris doctor from Georgetown University Law Center, where she was named a Public Interest Law Scholar. Professionally, Canton has worked for the United States Public Health Service while alternately assuming active duty in the Commissioned Corp. In addition, Canton has had assignments in the Commissioned Personnel Operations Division of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, including a position as a commissioned personnel placement officer-senior staffing officer. Formerly she served as deputy and acting director of the Division of Commissioned Personnel in the Program Support Center.



**Rear Admiral Denise Canton '74 was named the Distinguished Alumna for Nursing Excellence. (Photo by Marc Featherly)**

Canton currently serves as second director of the Office of Commissioned Corps Force Management in the Office of Public Health and Science (PHS). In addition to receiving a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for community service, Canton has also received the honors of the Commendation Medal, the Public Health and Sciences Citation, the Outstanding Unit Citation, the Unit Commendation and three Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medals.