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## Alumni Association Welcome

Scott E. Huch '86

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I once saw a statue on a college campus. The statue was a long-ago gift from the college's alumni. On its base was inscribed: "Alma Mater: To thy happy children of the future, those of the past send greetings."

Here at Illinois Wesleyan, we have something better than a statue to greet you on your graduation day. We have an Alumni Association of more than 23,000 living alumni in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, plus 52 other countries all around the world.

You are now a part of it.

So today, I'm here as President of the Illinois Wesleyan University Alumni Association to bring you greetings and congratulations and a message of welcome from your fellow alumni. My name is Scott Huch. I crossed this platform and collected my degree 33 years ago, in 1986. Today, it's your turn. Welcome to the club, fellow alumni.

You won't remember what I say today, and the words will become unimportant. But deep down I hope you will hear the message that we are all counting on you to stay connected with your *alma mater*, Illinois Wesleyan.

The best parts of any long journey are the first and last miles. Today is a special day for you because you are simultaneously celebrating the last mile of your long journey to earn a degree from Illinois Wesleyan, while anticipating the first mile of the long journey ahead that will be the rest of your life.

Now, the middle of a journey, which is coming sooner than you might think, offers challenges and

tests, which you can usually overcome with the help of other people, like your classmates and, now, your fellow alumni.

I hope everyone in today's graduating class will take advantage of the many Alumni Association programs that will be available to you for the rest of your lives, now that you are all "officially" members of the Illinois Wesleyan University Alumni Association.

When you descend the steps from this platform, after having collected your diploma, you will be greeted by officers of the Alumni Association. They will present you with your official "IWU Alumni" pin.

I hope you will wear it proudly, for it is a symbol of your hard work in reaching this point.

I'd like to leave you with a word of advice.

If I could go back in time to the point where you are in your lives today -- to the day I graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University at the age of 21 -- and if I could change just one thing about my life, something that I could do differently between then and now ... I would floss my teeth every day.

That may sound odd, or even funny, but just think for a minute about what I'm saying.

I've learned that very small actions -- when undertaken diligently and consistently on a regular basis over a very long period of time -- when their collective effect is considered, those small actions can make a massive impact that cannot be achieved through any other method. There is almost never a silver bullet, there is no magic pixie dust, that "windfall" almost never comes.

And the biggest mistake is doing nothing because you can only do a little. I hope you'll keep that in mind as opportunities come along to stay connected with Illinois Wesleyan.

But now, and rightly so, you're about to leave Illinois Wesleyan, which has been your home for the last four years. They say home is a place you grow up wanting to leave, and you grow old wanting to get back to. I promise you'll feel that way about Illinois Wesleyan soon, if you don't already.

To send you off in style, your Alumni Association invites everyone to a reception immediately following the program, here [on the quad / in the arena], where your professors look forward to greeting you and your families. I hope to see you all there.

Thank you for inviting me to be part of your celebration today. You did it! Well done, graduates **and fellow alumni** -- well done!