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TV Anchor, Alumna Addresses Commencement

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Award-winning television reporter and Illinois Wesleyan alumna Demetria Kalodimos urged graduates to “question everything” in her speech at the University’s 157th Commencement ceremony Sunday, May 6 on the Eckley Quadrangle.

“Question everything until you are satisfied that your truth has been revealed,” said Kalodimos speaking to the 518 graduates amid the brisk breeze that swept the Quad. “Question everything until you know where you need to go, and how best to get there. Question everything. Then do the work and put in the time to find the answers.” Her speech and the entire Commencement ceremony can be viewed online at www.iwu.edu.

Kalodimos encouraged students to take an active role in their future. “Write the first draft of your story *after* Illinois Wesleyan,” said Kalodimos, who graduated from Illinois Wesleyan in 1981 with a degree in music education, then went on to earn a master’s degree in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

A news anchor at WSMV in Nashville, Tenn., Kalodimos has been awarded 15 Emmy awards, two National Headliner awards, the Investigative Reporters and Editors National Award, and a national citation from American Women in Radio and Television, Inc. She recently won an award from the Society of Environmental Journalists and was chosen the 1996 Tennessee Associated Press Broadcaster of the Year.

“You know, in all my years of news reporting, I’ve been exposed to some bad guys, been caught in a shoot-out, talked face-to-face with a serial killer, even witnessed the Olympic bombing. But I have to tell you, nothing tops a commencement speech for pressure,” said Kalodimos in her often humorous remarks that looked back on her days on the Illinois Wesleyan campus 26 years ago. Her main message, however, spurred graduates to pursue the questions that face them. “If we’re persistent, focused and a little lucky, our questions lead to answers, and action,” she said.

Illinois Wesleyan University President Richard F. Wilson presented Kalodimos with an honorary doctor of humane letters degree.

The audience of several hundred students, faculty, family and friends also heard from Associate Professor of Political Science Greg M. Shaw, who was voted the 2007 Student Senate Professor of the Year. “Generosity is, of course, contagious,” said Shaw. “Strive to be the most generous person you know.”

During the ceremony, Wilson led a moment of silence for the victims of the shootings at Virginia Tech and their families. An empty chair on the Commencement stage was draped with Virginia Tech colors. “Each of us were deeply affected by the events on that campus,” said Wilson. “We all find ways to express our grief.”

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