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## Preserving the Past (Time Capsule)

Nancy Steele Brokaw '71

*Illinois Wesleyan University*, [iwumag@iwu.edu](mailto:iwumag@iwu.edu)

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## Time capsule of University history invites alumni exploration

By Nancy Steele Brokaw

### Preserving the Past

You finally make the trip. You return to the Illinois Wesleyan campus filled with the spirit you promised in song — “true to our alma mater, Wesleyan.”

The only problem — where is there any record of your undergraduate life? Where is something to show that you were once an on-campus part of the Titan community? The old Dugout, where you played countless games of bridge, has been remodeled and doesn’t really look the same. Ditto for the dorms and the dining hall. The library, where you dozed or snuck a kiss or actually studied, be it Buck or Sheean, is no longer a library.

Welcome home, to Illinois Wesleyan’s Tate Archives, where you are encouraged to relax and get back in touch with your younger self. Wander over to the enormous windows and get a panoramic view across the quad. Open the glass-cased bookshelves, and select Wesleyana yearbooks from your era. Sit down, browse and remember. Course catalogs, issues of *The Argus*, and literary magazines from your undergraduate years are also at-the-ready. You can find out what it cost your parents to send you to IWU (is that all?), how many students shared your major and what it was you were supposed to have learned in “Introduction to Astronomy and Astrophysics 220.”



Among the rarest items in the Tate Archives (above) is a book of University board minutes from 1850, the year of Illinois Wesleyan’s founding. *(Photo by Jamie Stukenberg)*

Tracing your heritage? This is a great place to research ancestors who may have attended Illinois Wesleyan or Hedding College or Chaddock College, schools IWU once absorbed (along with their records). Also represented is the Brokaw Hospital School of Nursing, a precursor to the current nursing school. Donna Hartweg, the Caroline F. Rupert professor of nursing and director of IWU’s School of Nursing, makes frequent use of the archives for research and in planning events such as the 2002 celebration marking the centennial of the founding of the Brokaw School. For that event, the display cases at The Ames Library were filled with letters and photos donated by alumni — as well as a leather medical bag carried to dorms by former

University nurse Velma Arnold — which remain part of the permanent collection.

Other Tate Archives items of potential interest to alumni, young and old, include:

- A freshman beanie from the 1950s.

- The original, pen-and-ink version of the IWU “Alma Mater” song written by IWU professor William Schultz in 1935.
- 239 hand-written master’s and doctorate dissertations from the 19th century, a time when IWU granted graduate degrees. Sample titles: “The Date and Authorship of the Apocalypse,” “The History of Table Salt,” “Should Andrew Jackson Have Been Impeached?”
- The charters of IWU’s two major academic honorary societies, Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Beta Kappa, dated 1922 and 2001, respectively.
- A diary and scrapbook of college memories created by Florence Kasiske ’33. Included are photos, dance cards, newspaper clippings, graduation cards, programs, and a cupcake paper. This material was donated by a friend on Kasiske’s behalf (a retired librarian herself, Kasiske now resides in a nursing home in Edwardsville, Ill.) According to Anke Voss-Hubbard, the donation is a great example of the kind of material she is actively seeking that relates to or depicts the student experience at Illinois Wesleyan.



A college scrapbook donated by Florence Kasiske captures college life in the 1930s. (Photo by Jamie Stukenberg)

“There are many parts of student life for which we have no documentation,” Voss-Hubbard says. “We are looking for ‘informal commentary’ such as diaries, memoirs, letters to parents, photographs, scrapbooks, and underground publications.”

The archives have limited storage space for 3-D memorabilia such as teddy bears, sweatshirts, mugs, and fraternity paddles. But Voss-Hubbard says she’d still like to take a look. She keeps some of these items for display purposes and may “pipeline” others to a Greek house, the Alumni Association, or into holding for future display in the soon-to-be-built Minor Myers Welcome Center.

“When in doubt, don’t throw it out — call me, instead!” is Voss-Hubbard’s acquiring battle cry.

**If you have materials related to your IWU experience or that are pertinent to other areas of the archives or Special Collections, contact: Anke Voss-Hubbard, Illinois Wesleyan University, #1 Ames Plaza, P.O. Box 2899, Bloomington, IL 61702-2899. Phone: (309) 556-3559**