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## **Symposium Honors Retirement of Long-time Faculty, the Crileys**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – For more than 35 years, Illinois Wesleyan University students have turned to biology professors Bruce and Norma Criley for guidance and insight. Many of those students came to say thank you and to honor the Crileys as they retire from the University. The Bruce and Norma Criley Retirement Celebration was held Saturday, Nov. 1, on the Illinois Wesleyan campus. University alumni who majored in biology and chemistry were invited to the event, which centered around an educational symposium titled “Small Feedings for the Mind.”

Greg Poland, a 1977 Illinois Wesleyan graduate, was one of the organizers of the event. “Out of respect and admiration for our professors and mentors, Bruce and Norma Criley, we, their students and friends, thank them for touching our lives,” said Poland, who is director of the Mayo Vaccine Research Group in Minnesota.

Ann Stroink said the Crileys have long been admired for their dedication to students. A 1976 Illinois Wesleyan graduate and neurosurgeon, Stroink founded a neurosurgery resident program in Bloomington. “I remember one crisp, sunny, September morning in 1975, Dr. Criley sought me out at the library to inform me that I had received early acceptance to the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. His delight in telling me stayed with me to this day,” said Stroink of Bruce Criley, who served for many years as chairman of the Pre-Med Advisory Committee. Both Crileys are known for helping maintain the high levels of acceptance for Illinois Wesleyan students into medical school, added Stroink, who was one of more than 50 former students who wrote their memories of the Crileys in a book that was presented to the couple during the symposium.

The symposium highlighted several Illinois Wesleyan alumni, who shared research and advances in the fields of biology and chemistry. Participants included Poland, who advised the White House on bioterrorism, who spoke on the topic “Avian Influenza: What’s the Flap?” Timothy Pritts, an assistant professor of surgery at the University of Cincinnati and a 1991 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan, discussed genomics – the studying and mapping of DNA. Thomas

Griffith, a 1990 Illinois Wesleyan graduate and director of urological research at the University of Iowa, spoke on gene therapy in urological cancer. Also speaking were 1981 graduate Eric Langenwalter, associate dean of information technology at the Southern Illinois University (SIU) School of Dental Medicine, on health informatics; 1992 graduate Nicole Sommer, a plastic surgeon in Springfield, Ill., on breast reconstruction; 1975 graduate and surgeon Bradford Blakeman on surgical treatment of atrial fibrillation; 1982 graduate David Resch, an associate professor of at the SIU School of Medicine, on managing heart failure and depression; and 1986 graduate Matthew Troyer, of Merck Research Laboratories, on maintaining stemness. The Crileys also offered a talk titled, "Undergraduate Science Education: Insights of a Master Professor."

"I love seeing former students," said Bruce Criley, who served as chair of the Biology Department from 1971 to 2002 and received the University's top teaching award in 1985. "Some will look at me and say, 'You remember me from the 70s?' And I will give them some little anecdote about their lives to let them know I do. Of course, some will avoid asking me that question because they know I *do* remember," he added with a laugh.

"That is one of the pleasures of teaching," said Norma Criley, "keeping in touch with the students and seeing what they accomplish."

Bruce Criley joined the Illinois Wesleyan faculty in 1971 as the chair of the Biology Department, and was named to the Beach Lewis Chair of Biology in 1979. An experimental embryologist, he has been awarded fellowships and grants from the National Science Foundation, the University of Illinois and the University of Colorado.

Norma Criley joined the Illinois Wesleyan University faculty in 1973 as a specialist in biology. She continued teaching students for more than 20 years in the areas such as embryology, histology, zoology and anatomy. She is a member of the American Society of Zoologists, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, and the Phi Sigma Society, an honorary society for the study of biological sciences.