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Howard Fricke Named Commencement Speaker

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Celebrated business and civic leader and Illinois Wesleyan University alumnus Howard R. Fricke will deliver the address “Hearing Voices” for the University’s 159th Commencement ceremony on Sunday, May 3 at 1 p.m. on the Eckley Quadrangle.

In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will be held in the Shirk Center (302 Emerson St., Bloomington).

Fricke, named the most powerful person in the city of Topeka, Kan., by the *Topeka Capital-Journal* in 2000, was inducted into the Kansas Business Hall of Fame in 2008. He is the former chairman of the board for the financial services company Security Benefit Group. He has also had an active public service career as the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Administration and the Secretary of Commerce both in Kansas and Illinois.

Born near Springfield, Ill., Fricke graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1960 with a major in insurance. He went on to graduate from the Harvard University Graduate School of Business.

Fricke joined Security Benefit as chief executive officer in 1988. By the time he stepped down as the board chairman in 2006, his innovative leadership in the financial services and retirement planning industry helped the company’s assets grow from \$2 billion to more than \$36 billion. Both *Fortune* and *Working Mother* magazines selected Security Benefit Group as one of the 100 best companies to work for in America.

A leader in the Topeka community, Fricke set the pace for Security Benefit’s nationally recognized volunteer program. He served as director of the Menninger Foundation and Stormont-Vail HealthCare. He is also the past chairman for both the United Way of Greater Topeka and the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce.

A 1993 recipient of Illinois Wesleyan’s Distinguished Alumnus Award, Fricke will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree during the Commencement ceremony. Fricke, his wife Sharon and two of his three children are alumni of Illinois Wesleyan.