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Documentary to be Shown in Honor of National American Indian Heritage Month

Teresa Sherman
Illinois Wesleyan University

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November 8, 2006

Contact: Teresa Sherman, (309) 556-3181

Documentary to be Shown in Honor of National American Indian Heritage Month

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – In recognition of National American Indian Heritage Month, the Illinois Wesleyan University Office of Multicultural Student Affairs will sponsor a presentation of *In the White Man's Image* with a discussion to follow. The film will begin at 8:00 p.m. in the Multicultural Center, 1405 N. Park St., in Bloomington.

The event is free and open to the public.

In the White Man's Image is a documentary examining the late nineteenth century practice of using government-run Indian Boarding Schools to anglicize American Indian children. Developed by Richard Henry Pratt in 1879, the schools were created to promote the doctrine of "assimilation through total immersion." Students were forbidden to speak their own languages and forced to adopt Euro-American religious and cultural practices. The documentary includes firsthand accounts of Indian Board Schools as seen through the eyes of the men and women who attended them as children.

The movement that lead to the establishment of November as National American Indian Heritage Month began in 1912 when a Seneca Indian, Dr. Arthur C. Parker, director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, New York, persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to adopt a day of recognition for the "First Americans." In 1915, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association issued a proclamation to declare the second Saturday of each May as American Indian Day. The governor of New York agreed to the request the following year. In the decades following, several other states adapted the day of recognition as well, though some changed the date to the fourth Friday in September. While it has no legal recognition as a national holiday, Columbus Day is sometimes celebrated as Native American Day.

In 1990, a proclamation signed by President George H. W. Bush designated November as

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National American Indian Heritage Month. Each year since 1994, a new proclamation has been issued. The 2006 proclamation can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

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For additional information, contact the Multicultural Center at (309) 556-2611, or the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs at (309) 556-3412.

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