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Pride of the Titans

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Alumni awards highlight eventful Homecoming weekend



Associate Anthropology Professor Rebecca Gearhart (center) greets Alumni Award winners Chad Maxwell '02 and Alice Fairchild Heath '52. Gearhart was Maxwell's guest at the ceremony. (Photo by Marc Featherly)

Nearly 1,300 registered alumni celebrated Homecoming in October, enjoying a diverse program of activities, including tours of State Farm Hall, IWU's new classroom building. There was also a ribbon-cutting dedication of the west building of the new student apartment complex, The Gates at Wesleyan, named Fricke Hall in honor of alumni Howard '60 and Sharon (Linton) '60 Fricke for their support of the project.

As in years past, a highlight of the weekend was the Alumni Awards Lunch, in which the 2013 Alumni Award Winners were acknowledged: Distinguished Alumnus, Bob Page '79; the Robert M. Montgomery Outstanding Young Alumnus, Chad Maxwell '02; and Loyalty Award winner, Alice Fairchild Heath '52.

As president and CEO, Bob Page '79 helped transform the University of Kansas Hospital from a financially troubled organization with poor patient and staff satisfaction to one of the top academic medical centers in the country. (To read more about Page, [see the related story.](#))

Young Alumnus award winner Chad Maxwell '02 is senior vice president of the Integrated Insights, Human Experience and Intelligence Group at Starcom, one of the world's leading media agencies in developing communication strategies for Fortune 500 companies. At Starcom, Maxwell and his team develop research and measurement strategies to understand changing consumer behavior and attitudes.

Maxwell studied Spanish and cultural anthropology at IWU, and earned his M.A. in applied anthropology from the University of Florida. He sees a direct application of anthropology in his work at Starcom. Teaching a "Back to College" class during Homecoming weekend, he discussed the social scientist's role in studying the human condition in the era of Big Data. At the Awards Lunch, held in the Shirk Center, Maxwell discussed how Wesleyan has impacted his life in other ways.

"The truth of it is that Wesleyan provided me education, values and skills that have served me well in my career, served me well in my professional life. My professors taught me to be a strategic, imaginative thinker. ... Wesleyan definitely taught me how to build relationships and respect others — how to engage one another, how to engage the world and how to care about one another."

This year's Loyalty Award winner, Alice Fairchild Heath '52, comes from a long line of relatives who attended IWU, including three uncles, her mother, her sister and her late husband Bob '49. The longtime chair of the Rockford, Ill., Regional Alumni Club, Heath chaired her 60th class reunion in 2012 and acted as mistress of ceremonies for the Golden Titans Reunion Dinner. A consistent donor to the Wesleyan Fund for over 15 consecutive years, she has also served as president of the Rockford Chapter Lyric Opera Chicago and is the Deputy Voter Registrar for the League of Women Voters and president of the Winnebago/Boone Counties Genealogical Society.

Heath recalled that her first encounter with IWU was taking piano lessons at Presser Hall when she was 7 years old. A sociology major and psychology minor, she said her Wesleyan classes were especially helpful in her 20 years as a volunteer services coordinator for a state residential treatment facility in Rockford.

Heath recalled how professors such as Samuel C. Radcliffe, who taught sociology at IWU from 1927 through 1968, opened her mind to different perspectives. “When we were studying comparative economic systems — communism, socialism, democracy — Dr. Radcliffe was forward-thinking enough to have us read *The Communist Manifesto*. Now keep in mind what academic courage that took for Dr. Radcliffe to have us reading that during the height of the McCarthy era.” She added: “In today’s coursework, I commend Illinois Wesleyan University for allowing professors to be what I call to be a purist in their philosophy of education — that is, to read and discuss all sides of the issue.”

In a separate ceremony, Joanne (Maske) Miller ’73 received the Annual School of Nursing Distinguished Alumna Award. Miller is an associate professor and specialty coordinator for the Adult Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurse programs at Rush University College of Nursing, Chicago. An active researcher and gerontological nurse practitioner, Miller publishes extensively and presents at national and international venues.



The School of Nursing’s Distinguished Alumna, Joanne Miller ’73, got a congratulatory kiss from her husband Richard. (Photo by Marc Featherly)

"Next years homecoming will be on October 18 and 19," says Alumni Relations Director Ann Harding. "We'll celebrate 150 years of the School of Music and many other fun and worthwhile activities . If you have ideas for homecoming 2014, please contact the Alumni Relations Office at 888-498-2586."

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