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Best of the Best

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Best of the Best

Three outstanding alumni received honors at Homecoming 2016.



Alumni Award winners were introduced at a special reception and during halftime of the football game. From left are Robert E. Lewis '56, Denny Matthews '66 and Diana Hammer Tscheschlok '01.

interview and the line ups before the game," he recalled. "Eventually, they got me into the play-by-play."

That experience started him on the path to his life's work. "I did basketball (announcing) my sophomore, junior and senior years at Wesleyan. It was like having a college course, it was on-the-job training," Matthews said. "About three years after I graduated, I was fortunate enough to get the job at the Royals. That's how Wesleyan steered me along the path, and I appreciate everything Wesleyan has done."

The 2016 Robert M. Montgomery Outstanding Young Alumna, Tscheschlok is the community, national resource and economic development educator for the University of Wisconsin – Extension, Fond du Lac County. She designs and facilitates practical educational programs that empower local residents and community leaders to deal effectively with issues including natural resources, energy conservation, diversity and inclusion efforts and more.

She recalled her non-music major scholarship to play the bassoon at IWU, including bi-weekly lessons with instructor Jill West, and a studio class where she felt intimidated by the music majors surrounding her. "In spite of my limited talent in that room, Mrs. West made it seem like I should be there, that I should be playing loudly and confidently, and actually wrote across my sheet music, 'Reckless abandon.' So those were my directions," Tscheschlok told those in attendance.

As a Spanish major, she studied abroad in Costa Rica. "I got to experience what it really means to be a white American in Central America. And with reckless abandon, I was able to do that." She says she left Wesleyan "with the self confidence from bassoon lessons and the sense of who I am in the world and what that really means. And now, what is my responsibility since I understand that? How can I help this world work for everyone, even those who don't look like me?"

Loyalty Award winner Lewis has been a committed annual donor to IWU for as far back as the records show – 60 years. He's also served as chair of several of his class's reunions and, alongside his wife Janice, is a regular presence at Titan athletic events. "It's pretty easy to be loyal to an organization like this," he said.

Lewis launched his 48-year career with State Farm just days after starting as a Wesleyan student. He recalled influential figures from his academic career, including insurance professor William T. Beadles and Coach Jack Horenberger. "When you talk about loyalty, it's more than just alums," he said. "It's alums, it's faculty, it's staff, it's friends."

[Learn how to nominate a classmate for next year's awards or to read a list of past winners.](#)

Three notable alumni were honored at Homecoming 2016 during a Friday evening reception. Denny Matthews '66 received the Distinguished Alumnus Award. Diana Hammer Tscheschlok '01 was the year's Outstanding Young Alumna. Bob Lewis '56 received the Loyalty Award.

Matthews has broadcast for baseball's Kansas City Royals since the team's inception in 1969. In 2007, he received the Ford C. Frick Award from the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

In accepting his award, Matthews explained how he got his start in sports broadcasting as an IWU student. Coach Jack Horenberger introduced Matthews to a local radio news director who offered him a job in sports announcing at high school basketball games. "I think they gave me five bucks to do the halftime