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Three IWU Risk Management Students Win 11 Scholarships, Awards

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—About \$20,000 in scholarships and other awards have been won by three juniors majoring in risk management and insurance at Illinois Wesleyan University.

The awards were sponsored by industry leaders, including Bloomington-based State Farm Insurance, foundations, and professional organizations.

The award winners are:

- Korey H. Coon, from East Peoria, Ill., scholarships valued at \$17,000.
- Melissa D. Hill, from Texico, Ill., a \$1,000 scholarship, plus an all-expense paid trip to San Francisco to attend the annual meeting of Insurance Marketing and Management Services, a professional group.
- Julie Waryjas, from Burr Ridge, Ill., scholarships valued at \$1,500.

David C. Marlett, IWU assistant professor of risk management, said: "The fact that these students won these scholarships tells me I have great students. Most of these scholarships are large and they are from national organizations. So, our students are going up against students from much larger schools and programs like Stanford, the University of Illinois, and Florida State.

"Compared to their peers," Marlett added, "our students are winning. It's very satisfying."

IWU has about 25 students majoring in risk management. However, about 125 students annually enroll in the program's introductory course, and others enroll in upper-level courses. Students from various disciplines take risk-management courses, including nursing majors, whose focus is health insurance and related issues.

Risk management, Marlett said, zeroes in on exposures to loss by profit making, non-profit, large, and small organizations.

"Risk management," he explained, "deals with what organizations have to do to minimize harm from potential exposures. Businesses, for example, can be liable if they sell a product that hurts someone, or if an employee is injured by slipping on the floor. Organizations have exposures if they own property that can be damaged or destroyed by fire, or by theft or vandalism, or by natural disasters. Part of this exposure could involve how long an organization might be shutdown."

Marlett believes IWU's risk-management program is strong because of the quality and creativity of its students. "Our students," he said, "want to learn and they ask good questions." He also believes that because of IWU's smaller size there is program flexibility.

"Our philosophy here," Marlett explains, "is that students may not take as many courses in risk management as at larger schools, but they have a broader background because of IWU's liberal-arts orientation."

For example, Marlett points out that theatre students, who take risk-management courses, often give the best presentations because of their natural creativity and public-speaking skills.

"Some of our best students," Marlett said, "are nursing majors. They have a great perspective on managed care. For them, risk management is where insurance companies and health care come together."

Marlett sees strong career opportunities for risk-management graduates.

"In just the last few days, I've talked to two recruiters, who say they can't hire enough good people, especially from good schools," Marlett said in an April interview. "There's a strong job market and opportunities are quite good now. I see it continuing for at least the next two or three years."

Korey Coon

Coon, a 4.0 grade-point average risk management student and GTE College Division Academic All-America basketball player, said "it's definitely an honor" to receive seven scholarships and to be "recognized as a top student in the field in the country."

Coon has received these scholarships and awards:

- State Farm Insurance—\$3,000.
- Spencer Foundation—\$5,000.
- Million Dollar Roundtable—\$5,000. The Million Dollar Roundtable is a national life-insurance organization that awards 10, \$5,000 scholarships annually. Coon will receive the scholarship at the group's national conference, June 12-17, in New Orleans.
- Central Illinois Chapter, Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters—\$1,500.
- Derek Hughes National Association of Professional Surplus Lines Offices Educational Foundation—\$2,000.
- Business Tomorrow National Conference—After a highly selective selection process, he was invited to attend the conference free-of-charge.

- Fellow Life Management Institute—\$500 and an invitation to attend a regional meeting.

For Coon, the most interesting aspect of risk management is financial services and investments. "Insurance classes," he said, "give you a better idea of how investments work."

Coon has minors in economics and history. A member of the IWU Economics Society, he is the author of "The Ripple Effect of Union Strikes: Micro- and Macroeconomic Effects of the GM Strike of 1998," which was published last month in the *Park Place Economist*, IWU's economics journal.

A sharp-shooting guard on IWU's basketball team, Coon was elected in March the GTE College Division "Academic All-America of Year" and was a first team Academic All-America choice after being on the second team as a sophomore. He was named to the second team of the National Association of Basketball Coaches Division III All-America squad.

Coon was co-winner of this year's College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) "Fred Young Most Outstanding Player" award and was a first team all-CCIW selection for the second straight year. He also was one of 10 finalists for the 1999 Jostens Trophy, recognizing the outstanding student-athletes in NCAA Division III basketball.

Coon's 512 points during the 1998-99 basketball campaign is the 18th best in a season and his 74, 3-point field goals is second best in a single season at IWU. He scored in double figures in 25 or 26 games and led the Titans in scoring 14 times, including a career-high 38 points with a school record-tying eight 3-point field goals at Olivet Nazarene.

Coon, a first team all-Midwest Region selection for the second straight year, rose to No. 18 in career scoring at IWU with 1,232 points and has made 292 free throws, good for 8th in school history. His 88.8 free throw percentage (292 of 329) is a school career record and he ranks No. 2 at IWU with 180 career 3-point field goals.

"Athletics helps me be a better time manager," Coon explained. "Athletics force me to study and do my homework. It helps me set priorities."

Coon is a 1996 graduate of East Peoria High School.

Coon's father, Larry, is employed by Caterpillar in Mossville, Ill., and his mother Nancy, is a second-grade teacher at East Peoria's Woodrow Wilson Elementary School. The Coon family resides at 601 Oakwood Rd., East Peoria, Ill.

Melissa Hill

Hill's interest in the insurance industry began after high school when she worked in Allstate offices in Normal and Salem, Ill., dealing with billings, customer service, promotions, and a computerized database. Things "clicked," she said, after she took an introductory risk-management course with Marlett.

Hill's scholarships include:

- Risk and Insurance Management (RIMS), Northeast Illinois Chapter—\$1,000.
- Jeffery Nordhaus Memorial Scholarship—An all-expense paid trip to San Francisco to attend a three-day professional conference, Insurance Marketing and Management Services. Ten students nationally were invited to the conference to attend professional and student workshops.

"It was a big honor to receive the Nordhaus scholarship," Hill said, "especially since I was only a sophomore. It connected students with professionals and helped teach students about the industry. It gave me a better idea about insurance careers."

Hill is attracted to the insurance industry because of its problem-solving orientation and the industry's professionalism.

As an IWU student, she has gotten a glimpse into the insurance industry, working as a customer service representative for Bloomington-based Country Companies. Hill also has completed the property and casualty licensing exam and one of 10 exams offered for various designations by the Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter Association Institute. Her goal is to perhaps have three of these designations by the time she graduates from IWU. Hill also has worked as Marlett's research assistant on risk-management issues, including a project dealing with statistical information about natural disasters. She was an intern with the Capital Development Board, a unit of the Fiscal Department of the state of Illinois, working with vouchers, two mainframe computers, and bonding companies.

Hill has served as president and speaker coordinator of IWU's Finance & Risk Management Association. She also has worked with Big Sibs (vice president of the group that provides Saturday activities for youngsters), IWU's Ambassador's Club, and IWU's Student Alumni Council.

Hill's career goal is to be a risk manager for a large corporation.

Hill is a 1996 graduate of Salem Community High School. Her parents, John and Gloria, reside at 7071 Walnut Hill Rd., Texico, Ill., a community in the vicinity of Salem, Mt. Vernon, and Centralia.

Julie Waryjas

Risk management was the fifth major Waryjas declared at IWU after economics, political science, public relations, and business. "Risk management," Waryjas said, "has elements of the other four [majors]."

Waryjas sees risk management as an exciting field, especially with the uncertainties surrounding Y2K and possible computer software glitches at the turn of the century. She sees risk management as "constantly going forward" and dealing with uncertainty and catastrophe.

"Risk management," she said, "is always on the cutting edge of technology and policy issues. Everything involves risk. If you don't understand that, you're missing a lot."

Waryjas' scholarships include:

- Edward B. Rust Fellowship—\$500. The Edward B. Rust Endowed Scholarship Fund was established by friends and family of Mr. Rust who was the president of State Farm Insurance Cos., and a trustee of Illinois Wesleyan from 1970 until his death in 1985.
- Risk and Insurance Management Society, Northeast Illinois Chapter—\$1,000.

"I always wanted to drive a boat for The Jungle Cruise, but Mike Fink's Keelboat was where I ended up," Waryjas quipped, as she told the story of how she landed a 1997 summer job at Walt Disney World in Florida.

"I love the company," Waryjas said, referring to Disney.

In addition to running boats that accommodated 30 passengers, Waryjas "shadowed" some of her supervisors, getting insights into their duties, and worked on the parade audience control staff, supervising a dozen staffers at one time.

The saga continued when Waryjas attended a professional conference in Chicago, where the keynote speaker was Steve Wilder, Disney's vice president for risk management.

"After his speech," Waryjas said, "I introduced myself to him. He gave me his phone number in Burbank. I must have called his secretary 22 times, I sent several copies of my resume. In April, 1998, I had a telephone interview and found out I was one of three candidates" for a summer job in Disney's risk-management unit.

About 10 days after the telephone interview, Waryjas received a call from Steven Dietz, a risk-management financial analyst in charge of Corporate Risk Management's summer associates program, asking her if she wanted to spend the summer in California with Disney.

"I was stunned," Waryjas said. "And, I'm the only intern they've asked back. I'm going back [to work at Disney] this summer."

Waryjas' responsibilities included writing Disney's corporate risk-management intranet site and she worked on their Owner Controlled Insurance Program (OCIP), which deals with construction, contractors, safety checks, and related issues.

Her Disney experience, Waryjas said, has contributed to her education. She notes that when textbook topics have come up in class she has known about them from personal experience. Disney also has given her a range of professional contacts, including insurers and brokers worldwide.

"Professor Marlett," Waryjas said, "has done wonders for the risk-management program and for me personally. I have never encountered a more supportive professor. In my professional endeavors, I couldn't have accomplished any of this without his support and help."

Waryjas is a 1996 Hinsdale Central High School graduate.

Her father, Ronald, is an orthodontist, and her mother, Maryann, is a partner in Jenner & Block, a Chicago law firm. The Waryjas family resides at 4 Brighton Pl., Burr Ridge, Ill.

David C. Marlett

Marlett, a native of Pittsburgh, grew up in Crystal River, located on the Gulf Coast of Central Florida.

Marlett, who joined the IWU faculty in 1997, has a wide range of academic experience and as a risk-management professional.

He worked as a commercial lines underwriter for United States Fidelity and Guaranty, managing new and renewal business for 18 agencies with insurance premium volume of more than \$3 million. (USF&G). While with USF&G in Tampa, he was selected to the company's High Potential Training Program. In 1997, he worked as a consultant for the Hawaiian Hurricane Relief Fund.

His academic posts have included serving as a research assistant at Florida State University, including FSU's Institute for Science and Public Affairs, where he completed several projects funded by the Florida Department of Insurance. Marlett also was an instructor at FSU, where he taught "Principles of Risk Management and Insurance." At IWU, he teaches "Introduction to Risk Management and Insurance," "Property and Liability Insurance," "Risk Management Seminar," and "It's A Disaster: Catastrophes and Insurance Fraud." He continues to serve as a regional supervisor for the American Institute for the Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters.

Articles authored by Marlett have been published in the *Journal of Insurance Regulation*, *Journal of Reinsurance*, *CPCU Journal*, and *the Risk Management and Insurance Review*.

He is a member of several professional organizations, including the American Risk and Insurance Association, Financial Management Association, and the Central Illinois Chapter of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters.

Marlett received a bachelor of science degree in risk management and insurance from Florida State University in 1990. He returned to FSU in 1993 to enter a doctoral program, where his major area of study was risk management and insurance, with a support area in finance. His dissertation focused on "Evaluation of Legislatively Mandated Residual Market and Catastrophe Financing Programs."

About IWU

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts, and a \$1.65 million baseball stadium.