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IWU Receives Third Award for Campus Landscapes from Bloomington City Council

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Illinois Wesleyan University received its third Citizens Beautification Award from the Bloomington City Council for attractive landscapes on its campus. The most recent award was presented for the Jack Horenberger Baseball Field located at the corner of East and Kelsey streets. Dennie Bridges, IWU professor of physical education and director of athletics, accepted the award Sept. 11 on behalf of the university.

Horenberger Field, one of 11 sites chosen in Bloomington to receive the award, was selected from 50 nominations. Of the nominations, half were private homes and half were area businesses in the city of Bloomington.

"This is really something special," said Bridges. "When we take over property we want to improve on it. We turned a piece of land that was mostly old rental houses and vacant lots into a beautiful ballpark."

The IWU grounds services designed and completed the landscape surrounding the field. The university contracted with Pachnow Landscaping to lay the sod on the field and the surrounding picnic areas.

"When we improve the Illinois Wesleyan community we are improving the surrounding community," said Eric Nelson, manager of grounds services. "It's nice to be recognized for our work and that IWU can give back to the community that gives so much to us."

IWU received a Citizen's Beautification Award for Evelyn Chapel in 1986 and for the North Gate located at Franklin Ave. and Emerson St., in the early nineties.

Jack Horenberger Field

The field was named for 1936 IWU graduate Jack Horenberger and dedicated on April 11, 1999.

Horenberger graduated from IWU with a degree in business and economics. While at Illinois Wesleyan, he played baseball and served as captain of the university's only undefeated basketball team.

Horenberger joined the IWU faculty in 1942 and gained legendary status as a baseball and basketball coach. He coached basketball from 1942 to 1965 and achieved 264 wins and 212 losses. His basketball squads saw seven College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) Championships. In his 37 years with the IWU baseball team, beginning in 1943, Horenberger amassed 509 wins, 401 losses and 16 CCIW Championships.

He served as athletic director until 1981 and was later named athletic director emeritus.

The baseball field also celebrated a more than half-century friendship between Horenberger and the late Russell Shirk, a 1943 IWU graduate, founder of Shirk Products Inc. and co-founder of Beer Nuts Inc., based in Bloomington. Shirk initiated the stadium's construction financing with a \$750,000 challenge grant that was met by 457 gifts and pledges.

The stadium features a grandstand with 239 chair seats, 115 bleacher seats and seating for handicapped individuals, a batting cage, enclosed press box, a scoreboard, a crushed stone warning track, dugouts and an extensive underground drainage system.

About IWU

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls more than 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 the \$1.65 million Jack Horenberger baseball stadium. A \$26 million library and a \$6 million student center are under construction.