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## **IWU Unveils New Book: Illinois Wesleyan University: Continuity & Change, 1850-2000**

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**IWU Unveils New Book**

**Illinois Wesleyan University: Continuity & Change, 1850-2000**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--"It all began with one building and one sidewalk in the 1850s. Now, 150 years later, the campus of (Illinois Wesleyan University) has grown to more than 2,000 students, 27 major buildings and 73 acres," according to *Illinois Wesleyan University: Continuity & Change, 1850-2000*, a new book released by the university this fall.

*Continuity & Change*, co-authored by IWU President Minor Myers jr. and Carl Teichman, class of 1980 and executive assistant to the president, was inspired by the celebration of the university's sesquicentennial. The book also is a product of Myers' and Teichman's mutual and longstanding interest in the history of the university.

The 242-page book which includes over 200 photos, many of which have never been published before is a hardcover, coffee-table-style book. In 12 chapters, the text covers 150 years of history and examines the liberal-arts tradition at Illinois Wesleyan, provides details of students' extracurricular life and documents the many contributions that IWU alumni have made to science, government, education and the arts.

While previously published books about the school's history have addressed specific portions of IWU's past--among them, memoirs by former Illinois Wesleyan presidents Lloyd M. Bertholf and Robert S. Eckley--there has only been one other truly comprehensive volume prior to *Continuity & Change*. The earlier volume, *The Illinois Wesleyan Story, 1850-1950*, was written by Elmo Watson, a historian, who was commissioned to write the book in conjunction with IWU's centennial celebration in 1950.

According to Myers, *Continuity & Change* differs from Watson's volume, by offering a history not just of what happened, but of "what happened in terms of the questions and interests" that are current to this era. "What we are asking about now, often are ideas that were not on Watson's mind, such as: What is the nature of a great liberal arts college and how we have moved toward getting there?"

Myers and Teichman credit several people for helping with the research of the book. Among them are Sara Scobell, class of 2000, a history major from Arlington Heights, Ill.; Kate Weber, class of 2002, an English major from Arlington Heights; and Katherine Edwards, class of 2002, a business administration major from Darien, Wis. According to Myers, Bob Aaron, former director of University Communications at IWU, also "did a tremendous amount of work" on the project before leaving IWU last February to become marketing director at Illinois State University.

In addition to the university's archives, many materials used for the book--including newspapers, maps, and city directories--were found at the McLean County Historical Society in downtown Bloomington. "You find little threads and follow them any place they lead," said Myers.

By studying original historic records, the authors were able to document and, in some cases, reassess the importance of various people and events associated with IWU's origins. Peter Cartwright, a Methodist circuit rider, Illinois state legislator, and one of IWU's 30 original founders, was one such person.

"If you talked to alumni from 30 or 40 years ago and asked them, 'Who was the most influential person in the university's history?'" said Teichman, their answer would likely be Peter Cartwright. However, two other founders that surface in making even greater contributions to the university's founding were New England-born teacher and journalist Charles Merriman and a Virginia-born minister John Barger, who was an early opponent of slavery.

In *Continuity & Change*, Teichman and Myers also point to scientist-explorer John Wesley Powell, and the rich legacy he left IWU with his commitment to student research and scientific exploration. Powell taught at Illinois Wesleyan after the Civil War, and later led a group that included IWU students to the Dakota Badlands and Rocky Mountains on a field trip thought to be among the first of its kind in American higher education's history.

According to Teichman, there are several consistent aspects of the character of the institution that can be seen throughout IWU's history. "Powell set a sense of exploration and that theme carries on even today. We are still very much interested in faculty research and encourage students to do honors research. There's certainly a pioneering spirit that was present early on in IWU's history that also is present today. And added to that, there is a sense of practicality that has stayed with Illinois Wesleyan throughout time."

However, the overall impression that Myers and Teichman would like the reader to have after reading *Continuity and Change* is that Illinois Wesleyan is an extraordinarily strong institution that has roots of strength dating back 150 years and, according to Myers, "the place just keeps getting better and better."

**Note:** Illinois Wesleyan University: *Continuity & Change, 1850-2000*, is available at the IWU Bookstore, 1207 1/2 N. Main St., Bloomington, for \$49.95 plus \$5.95 shipping and handling.