



Spring 3-4-2002

The Naked Truth: Advertising's Image of Women Jean Kilbourne to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan March 12

Stew Salowitz
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

Recommended Citation

Salowitz, Stew, "The Naked Truth: Advertising's Image of Women Jean Kilbourne to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan March 12" (2002). *News and Events*. 1192.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/1192>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

March 4, 2002

CONTACT: Stew Salowitz, 309-556-3206

The Naked Truth: Advertising's Image of Women
Jean Kilbourne to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan
March 12

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -- Jean Kilbourne, who has devoted her professional life to raising people's collective consciousness about advertising's messages and motives, will speak at Illinois Wesleyan University on Tuesday, March 12.

The internationally-known media critic, lecturer and writer will speak at 7:30 p.m. in the Main Lounge of the Memorial Student Center, 104 E. University, Bloomington. Her program, "The Naked Truth: Advertising's Image of Women," is free and open to the public. It is part of Gender Issues Week at IWU and is sponsored by Student Senate, the President's Office, and The Body Project.

The average American is exposed to over 3,000 advertisements a day and watches three years' worth of television ads over the course of a lifetime. Kilbourne paints a gripping portrait of how this barrage of advertising drastically affects young people, especially girls, by offering false promises of rebellion, connection, and control. She also offers a surprising analysis of the way advertising creates and then feeds an addictive mentality that often continues throughout adulthood.

In Kilbourne's most recent (2000) book, "Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel," she points out how many advertisements today make us feel as if we have an intimate, even passionate, relationship with a product. She warns the dreamlike promise of advertising always leaves us hungry for more and we can never be satisfied, because the products we love cannot love us back.

Her award-winning documentaries on the advertising industry's twisted image of women, its obsession with thinness, and alcohol and tobacco companies' dirty dealings have brought her widespread recognition and respect, including an advisory role to two surgeons general.

In her 1999 book, "Deadly Persuasion: Why Women and Girls Must Fight the Addictive Power of Advertising," she reveals that ad agencies research and exploit the pathology of alcoholics and smokers to keep them hooked. She says advertisers deliberately make women feel "empty," only to offer products to "fill" us. While not causing society's ills, Kilbourne says, ads contribute to an atmosphere that is hostile to healthy relationships.

Kilbourne has twice received the "Lecturer of the Year" award from the National Association for Campus Activities and it is estimated she has lectured at over one-third of all the colleges and universities in the United States and all of the major universities in Canada.

Kilbourne's documentaries and videos are used widely by health groups, church groups, community groups, and corporations. Her first film, "Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women" (and the remakes "Still Killing Us Softly" and "Killing Us Softly III") are among the most popular educational films of all time. Her other videos include "Slim Hopes: Advertising and the Obsession with Thinness" and "Pack of Lies: The Advertising of Tobacco."

She has also written articles in The New York Times, USA Today and The Journal of the American Medical Women's Association.

Kilbourne served as an advisor to former Surgeons General C. Everett Koop and Antonia Novello and has testified for the U.S. Congress. In 1993 she was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services to the prestigious National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. She has also advised the Attorney General of Massachusetts.

She has been deeply involved in the national campaign to stop the marketing of tobacco products to young people. She was the sole expert featured in a 1996 television special on this issue hosted by President Clinton and Linda Ellerbee.

Kilbourne earned a bachelor's degree in English from Wellesley College and a doctorate in education from Boston University. Upon her graduation, she received an award from Wellesley that enabled her to spend three years in Europe, working for the British Broadcasting Corporation in London and for a French film company in Paris. She has been a Visiting Scholar at Wellesley College since 1984.

She serves on many national boards of directors and advisory councils, including those of the Junior League, the Women's Action Alliance, and the Media Education Foundation. She won a "Woman of the Year Award" from the National Organization for Women and, in 1995, she received the WIN (Women's Image Now) Award from the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.