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## Wesleyana Yearbook Returns to Campus After 10 Years

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## *Wesleyana* Yearbook Returns to Campus After 10 Years

March 9, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – It has been a decade without seeing the smiling faces of Illinois Wesleyan University students gracing the pages of a yearbook. The last issue of the *Wesleyana* was printed in 2000, and then discontinued when no one stepped forward to take up the helm.

This year, the *Wesleyana* returns. The planned 160-page tome with its theme of “restart” is set to be printed in April, with sophomore Cameron Ohlendorf at the head. A business major from Beecher, Ill., Ohlendorf said he felt something was missing on campus without the *Wesleyana*. “Where is the history of what our classes are doing? There really isn’t one right now,” he said.

Sitting in the sparse *Wesleyana* office in the Memorial Center, Ohlendorf flops open a 1985 yearbook to answer the question of what inspired him to resurrect the publication. “Those are my parents,” he said, pointing to a smiling couple in the glossy pages. Greg and Melissa (Packard) Ohlendorf were both editors of the *Wesleyana* when they attended IWU. “They got me interested in yearbooks in high school, and when I got here I figured it was something I could restart,” said Ohlendorf, who notes his parents have been proud of his efforts.

This is Ohlendorf’s second try at restarting the *Wesleyana*. His first attempt came last year. “It started too late,” he said. “I tried to get it going in February of 2009.” Looking at his list of page deadlines for the 2010 book, he points out he already has 99 of 160 pages to the printer. “When I knew things were not working for the 2009 book, I cancelled the whole process and stepped back, deciding to get ready for this year,” he said.

Ohlendorf started again last fall, and attended the Registered Student Organization Fair with old editions of the *Wesleyana*. “There are so many students who have parents that graduated from IWU, so people were combing through the books and looking for their parents,” said Ohlendorf, who now has 10 staff members and two auxiliary photographers for the yearbook.

One staff member is sophomore Kelly Cantlin, who worked on her high school yearbook and decided the *Wesleyana* would be a good fit. “I like seeing people that made our school great in the past, and seeing who is creating history now,” said Cantlin, a nursing major from Downers Grove, Ill., who is helping to assemble and proof pages. “Yearbooks are fun memories, but they are also a way preserving our history for future classes of IWU.”

Holding onto memories lured sophomore Erika Olsen to the *Wesleyana* as well. “When a friend of mine asked me to help out with the yearbook, I realized I was given the opportunity to create something at Wesleyan,” said Olsen, a sophomore nursing/psychology major from Rockford, Ill. “Not only will we have the memories for ourselves, but future students of IWU will see how amazing this school is.”

*Wesleyana* advisor Meg Miner, university archivist and special collections librarian at Illinois Wesleyan, told staff members this is not the first time there has been a gap in yearbooks. “The first *Wesleyana* was published in 1895, and the second one was not published until 1905. So a



10-year gap has a precedent,” said Miner, who noted The Ames Library digital collections will soon have issues of the *Wesleyana* available online from the 1940s to 2000.

Though people remember the name *Wesleyana*, the new book is practically a start-up venture, said Ohlendorf. “The book has not been around for years, so people are wary when you say there will be a new one,” he said, adding students and organization leaders have wished him well, but generally buffer their comments with a certain amount of skepticism. “It takes a lot to make people believe it really is coming.” In years past, photographers would offer to take individual pictures of students for free, hoping to sell photo packages to parents. Without a book to show photographers, Ohlendorf said this *Wesleyana* will go without individual pictures of students. “We’re looking to add it next year,” he said. Ohlendorf, who plans to go into marketing when he graduates, said relaunching the *Wesleyana* has helped him prepare him for the future. “This will be a good real-life experience in how to sell something from nothing,” he said with a smile.

Ohlendorf is adamant about ensuring the legacy of the *Wesleyana* continues. “I want to make sure this isn’t something that is only here while I’m here,” he said. “The *Wesleyana* needs to keep going when I am gone.” Part of his determination stems from a belief the *Wesleyana* is more than just a collection of memories, he said.

Looking up at the yearbooks that line the wood-covered cabinets in the yearbook office, Ohlendorf explained, “When I see a book from 1909, I know we have the chance to glimpse the campus when we had a law school, and different organizations that don’t exist anymore. Things that no one remembers them because it was so long ago,” he said. He closes a yearbook sitting close to him. “People may not understand now that they are becoming part of history, but when they look back at a yearbook, they will see more than the great times at college, they will understand the history and how they were part of that.”

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