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Eckleys Make Half Million-Dollar Gift to Illinois Wesleyan

April 5, 2012

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — The longest serving president in Illinois Wesleyan University history is also among its most loyal and generous supporters, said President Richard F. Wilson in announcing two new gifts from President Emeritus Robert S. Eckley, his wife Nell and the Eckley Family Foundation. The gifts, which total \$515,000, will fund an endowment for the Robert S. Eckley Lecture in Economics and a second endowment for the Robert S. and Nell B. Eckley Summer Scholars and Artists Program.

"Bob and Nell touched the lives of thousands of students during his 18 years as president and they truly understand the importance of the *Transforming Lives* campaign to our students and academic programs," said Wilson. "We have entered the second half of this fundraising campaign and friends like Bob and Nell are stepping forward with support that enhance the excellence of our academic offerings."



Nell and Robert S. Eckley

The Eckley Summer Scholars and Artists endowment will support summer research and creative activity for four to five students each year, enabling them to stay on campus over the summer to work under the direction of faculty mentors. The Eckley Lecture in Economics will enable economics faculty to bring a distinguished scholar to campus each year to speak on a topic that will enhance the intellectual experience of students and faculty. These lectures will also broaden the understanding of economic analyses and perspectives among others on campus and in the community, according to Wilson.

"We've been fortunate in our lives and a big part of that good fortune has been because of Illinois Wesleyan," said the Eckleys. "We hope that others will join us in helping the University and its students and faculty through the *Transforming Lives* campaign."

In addition to these new gifts, the Eckleys have funded the Robert S. Eckley Professorship in Economics and the Eckley Family Foundation Endowed Scholarship Fund.

Eckley, who was Caterpillar's first chief economist prior to being named president of Illinois Wesleyan, served the University from 1968 to 1986. During his tenure the University's endowment grew from \$6.6 million to \$47.4 million, five new buildings were constructed and more than 11,000 students were graduated. The University quadrangle was named the Eckley Quadrangle in honor of the former president and his wife, in 1998.

The *Transforming Lives* campaign, which was announced in May 2009, has raised more than \$96 million of its \$125 million goal. The campaign is scheduled to conclude in 2014.

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