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Transforming Lives Campaign Reaches Endowed Professorship Milestone

Feb. 17, 2014

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—A gift from Sally A. Firestone, class of 1969, established the 10th endowed professorship in Illinois Wesleyan's *Transforming Lives* fundraising campaign. The Firestone gift will be used to create the *Ben '69 and Susan Rhodes Professorship in Peace and Justice* and will bring the total number of new endowed chairs and professorships to 20, because of a matching gift made by alumni Chuck '50 and Jay Ames'49 as part of their lead gift to the campaign in 2009.

"Sally Firestone has recognized special people in her life with gifts over the years and this new endowed faculty position is the latest example, this time honoring her good friends, Ben and Susan Rhodes," said University President Richard F. Wilson.

"What makes this even more significant is that it will bring the total number of endowed faculty positions—including the 11 we had before the campaign—to 31. I know of no other University of our size and type that has this number of endowed chairs and professorships."

Firestone, who resides in Kansas City, Mo., established the Sally A. Firestone Foundation after her life was changed in 1981 when a suspended walkway at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center that she was standing on collapsed. The most serious among the 239 injured was the 34-year-old Firestone. In addition to supporting Illinois Wesleyan, the Firestone Foundation has funded a wide range of civic and creative activities over the years.

The Ames Challenge, which offered to match up to 10 new endowed faculty positions funded during the campaign, was part of the \$25 million lead gift made by Chuck and Jay Ames when the *Transforming Lives* campaign was announced in 2009.

Chuck Ames was quoted as saying at the time that an "outstanding faculty attracts outstanding students," which was a major motivation for the gift he and his wife made. The alumni couple have made a number of significant gifts to Illinois Wesleyan over the years. Of particular note were gifts naming The Ames Library, student scholarships and the recent addition to the Joyce Eichhorn Ames School of Art.

Endowed professorships and chairs are the University's highest honor bestowed upon faculty members. Endowed positions are important to retaining and attracting top faculty to the University. Each endowment provides a stipend to the faculty member being honored, an expense budget that can be used for that person's teaching and research activities, and funding for the recipient's department to use for disciplinary activities.

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