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# Former DreamWorks Chief Damaschke to Speak at Commencement

April 5, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University alumnus Bill Damaschke, the producer of two Broadway-bound musicals, will present the address at the University's [Commencement](#) on Sunday, May 1, at 1 p.m.

The ceremony will take place at the Kemp Commencement Plaza in front of State Farm Hall. In case of inclement weather, Commencement will be held at the Shirk Center Performance Arena. The event will be [live streamed and available online](#) after the event.

Damaschke is a producer of *Gotta Dance*, directed and choreographed by Tony Award-winner Jerry Mitchell with a planned Broadway opening this fall, and *The Prom*, directed and choreographed by Tony Award-winner Casey Nicholaw. Prior to working independently on theatrical production, Damaschke spent 20 years at DreamWorks Animation, 15 of those as chief creative officer. He was also head of creative production and development, where he was responsible for leading the creative and artistic direction of the studio. During his tenure, he was integrally involved in overseeing 28 of the company's animated releases, including the Academy Award-winning *Shrek* in 2001. The film and its sequels have become one of the biggest film franchises of all time. Other films under Damaschke's creative and artistic direction include *Kung Fu Panda*, *The Croods* and *How to Train Your Dragon*. The films have taken in roughly \$12 billion in worldwide box office and have been nominated for 14 Academy Awards, winning two.

Damaschke joined the studio in 1995 as a production assistant on *The Prince of Egypt* before serving as co-executive producer for *The Road to El Dorado* in 2000. Separate from his responsibilities for Feature Animation, Damaschke was named president of DreamWorks Theatricals in 2007, a then-new studio division overseeing all live theatrical production for the company. The division's work has included the Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Circle Award-winning *Shrek The Musical*.

A native of Chicago, Damaschke earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in music and theatre from Illinois Wesleyan in 1985 and began his career in animation working on the feature film *Pocahontas* for Disney Animation. He received Illinois Wesleyan's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011. Damaschke recently joined the Roundabout Theatre's Board of Directors Leadership Council in New York, and provides support and fundraising efforts for several charities focusing on healthcare and the arts, including the Motion Picture & Television Fund Foundation and the Hammer Museum at UCLA.



Bill Damaschke '85

