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Illinois Wesleyan Announces 20 New Scholarships

Sept. 30, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Twenty newly created scholarships were announced and 140 benefactors were celebrated Sept. 29 during Illinois Wesleyan University's annual Benefactors Dinner.

In all, more than 260 people – the largest crowd ever – attended the event, which brings together, often for the first time, named scholarship recipients and the donors who made the scholarships possible. Monetary support from alumni and friends allows Illinois Wesleyan to provide \$36 million in financial aid each year to more than nine out of 10 Illinois Wesleyan students.

One of those students is Marissa Cozzi '17, an economics major from Norridge, Ill. Speaking on behalf of student scholarship recipients, Cozzi told the audience Illinois Wesleyan didn't seem possible for her when she was looking at colleges. "My parents didn't go to college," she said. "I didn't grow up watching cable TV, and there weren't many 'family vacations' in my memory box."

Because her parents helped and encouraged her, however, and because of the generosity of donors, in May she'll be the first in her family to receive an undergraduate degree. "That just wouldn't be possible without the generosity of you amazing donors," she said. "Thank you for helping us pursue our passions. Thank you for encouraging our dreams to become realities, and thank you for putting faith in our abilities."



Ann Sullivan '77 has been a donor for years but was attending her first dinner, and met her student recipient, Emily Erdmann '19.



Mark and Nicky Beaupre met Cameron Ward '17, left, who benefits from the scholarship they support.

President Eric Jensen and his wife, Elizabeth, established one of the newly created scholarships. "It's fun to play two roles, to be one of you donors, and also to represent the institution in thanking you donors for everything you've done," he said.

Jensen provided an update of the continuing need for financial support for students. He said 21 percent of the students who began their Illinois Wesleyan careers in August are Pell Grant eligible. "Most Pell money goes to families that earn than less than \$20,000 per year, so 21 percent of our class comes from families with very limited abilities to support them," said Jensen. "That means that people like you are making a difference for them." He also noted 24 percent of the class is eligible for MAP (Monetary Award Program), a grant program funded by the State of Illinois providing payment toward college tuition at Illinois institutions that participate in the program.

The tradition of named scholarships at Illinois Wesleyan dates back to 1893, when the Board of Trustees decided it was important to recognize supporters by naming scholarships in honor of those contributing \$1,000 or more. In 1895, named scholarships honoring William W. Anderson of Taylorville and Martha Elzina Cameron of Greenfield were the first recorded in Illinois Wesleyan history.

"That's a long tradition of student support," Jensen said. He called attention to the newly created scholarships announced at the Benefactors Dinner, and noted that in nearly every case, a benefactor wanted to "pay it forward" by making a difference in someone else's life.

To learn more about providing support for Illinois Wesleyan, contact the Advancement Office at 1-800-689-9743 or advancement@iwu.edu.

