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Record Crowd Celebrates Life-Changing Scholarships

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Record Crowd Celebrates Life-Changing Scholarships

Oct. 13, 2017

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. —Elijio “Isaiah” McBride Rosales is the first in his family to have ever graduated high school. In 2019, Rosales will achieve another academic milestone when he earns a bachelor’s degree from Illinois Wesleyan University.

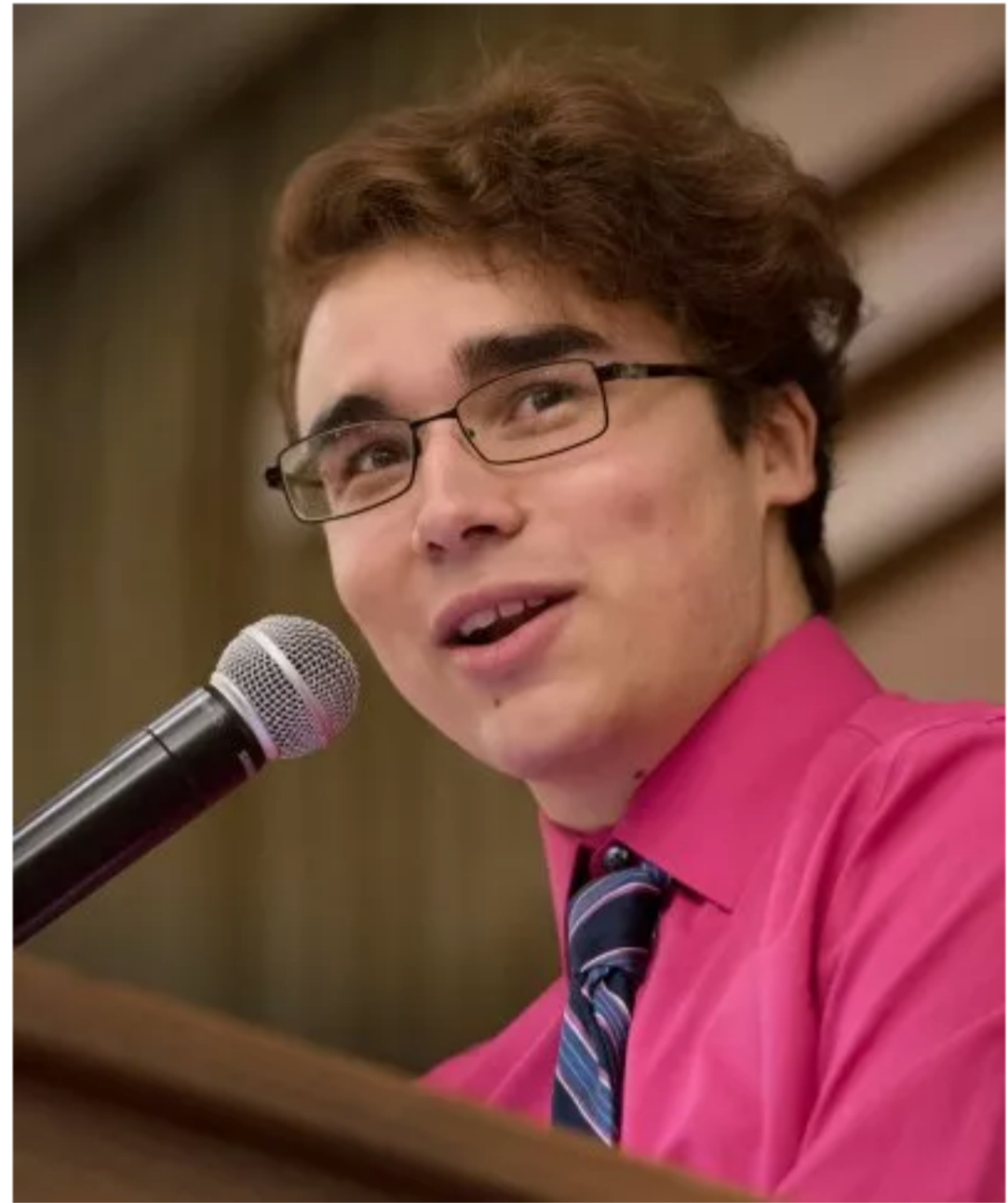
“As a first-generation college student, I thank you from the bottom of my heart,” Rosales told a record 268 attendees at Illinois Wesleyan’s Scholarship Benefactor Dinner Oct. 12. “The financial assistance you provide gives students like me the opportunity for a higher education.”

Rosales was one of 97 students who joined 146 benefactors to celebrate 301 scholarships – including 10 new scholarships – awarded to 339 recipients. A record 82 alumni attended the 21st annual event.

“We are proudly a place that transforms lives,” Illinois Wesleyan President Eric Jensen told the crowd. “We are among the very best in the country at taking students from middle class and lower incomes, and elevating them to the top of the income distribution. That’s socially transformative. That’s changing people’s lives in a way that makes me deeply proud. We couldn’t do this without the support of each of you.”

Rosales said traveling more than 2,000 miles away from his home in Aloha, Oregon to pursue a music theatre degree initially seemed “impossible.” However, after visiting Illinois Wesleyan and realizing his financial assistance options, Rosales could envision his dream become reality.

“Because of you, I’m privileged to see my future as a world of opportunity and open doors. I’m able to pursue what I’m passionate about,” Rosales said. “Next year, when I receive my degree, I’m confident I’ll have the tools I need and the strong connections necessary to take on the world.”



Elijio “Isaiah” McBride Rosales



Caleb Green '20 – recipient of the Honorable Judge Amanda Toney-Logan '74 Endowed Scholarship for African-Americans – joined his parents Cornelius and Anne Green and Judge Amanda Toney-Logan at the Scholarship Benefactor Dinner.

More than 90 percent of Illinois Wesleyan students receive some form of financial assistance from the University. Six out of 10 students receive funds on the basis of financial need, meaning they could not attend the University without assistance.

Scholarships created by alumni and friends meet part of the needed funds for those students, allowing Illinois Wesleyan to provide \$36 million in annual financial aid.

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.

To learn more about providing support for Illinois Wesleyan, please contact the [Advancement Office](mailto:advancement@iwu.edu) at 1-800-689-9743 or advancement@iwu.edu.

By John Twork