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Former Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign to Appear at Illinois Wesleyan University

February 21, 2005

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -Elizabeth Birch, former executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender advocacy organization, will speak at Illinois Wesleyan's Hansen Student Center on Thursday, March 3 at 8 p.m.

Birch will speak as a part of Illinois Wesleyan's annual Gender Issues Week, sponsored by the University's Student Senate.

The event is free and open to the public. A reception will follow the talk.

Birch served as the executive director of the HRC from January 1995 until January 2004 and built for the campaign a reputation across the nation as a top political mainstream organization. Under her leadership, the institution more than quadrupled its membership to 500,000 and became known nationwide for its professionalism and cutting-edge advocacy techniques. During her tenure, Birch built the organization from grassroots into the modern corporate model with an outstanding senior management team and 100-person staff.

Birch previously served as worldwide director of litigation for Apple Computer Inc. and general counsel to Claris Corp., Apple's software subsidiary. In addition, she has helped various Fortune 500 companies develop and implement non-discrimination and domestic partner benefits policies.

Birch also has authored many HIV/AIDS anti-discrimination policies, which have been adopted in California's legislature. In 2002, she received high civil rights honors from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights for her extensive work in the civil rights community.

Birch is a 1980 graduate of the University of Hawaii with bachelor's degrees in political science and oceanography and a doctorate of the humanities. She attended the University of Santa Clara School of Law from which she graduated with honors in 1985. During law school, Birch clerked at the California Supreme Court and later became the 9th Circuit's Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year. Birch lives in Maryland with her partner, Hilary Rosen and their three-year old twins.

The schedule of events for IWU's annual Gender Issues Week is as follows:

Feb. 28 (Monday)

8 p.m. - Lieutenant Mark Kotte of the Normal Police Department will speak on "Domestic Violence 101," Hansen Student Center, 300 E. Beecher St., Bloomington

March 1 (Tuesday)

11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.-7 p.m. - Bake Sale for the Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal at the steps of the Berthoff Commons, Memorial Center, 104 E. University St., Bloomington

9:30 p.m. - Movie, Normal (about a Midwestern husband and father who announces his plan to have a sex change operation), Beckman Auditorium, The Ames Library, 1 Ames Plaza, Bloomington

March 2 (Wednesday)

11 a.m. - Reverend Carol Lakota Eastin, "Native American Spirituality and Feminism," Evelyn Chapel, 1301 N. Park St., Bloomington

11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.-7 p.m. - Toy Collection Drive for the Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal at the steps of the Berthoff Commons, Memorial Center, 104 E. University St., Bloomington

7:30 p.m. - "How Do You View Gender?" discussion and free write activity in the Davidson Room, Memorial Center, 104 E. University St., Bloomington

March 3 (Thursday)

"Art on the Quad" sponsored by Kappa Pi, international honorary art fraternity at IWU

11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.-7 p.m. - Toy Collection Drive for the Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal at the steps of the Berthoff Commons, Memorial Center, 104 E. University St., Bloomington

8 p.m. - Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign Elizabeth Birch, "Where Are We Now: Civil Rights and Gender Issues," Hansen Student Center, 300 E. Beecher St., Bloomington

9 p.m. - Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign Elizabeth Birch will hold a "Meet and Greet," Hansen Student Center, 300 E. Beecher St., Bloomington



Elizabeth Birch