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Kevin Maliszewski, one of the co-captains of the Illinois Wesleyan football team, addresses the Memorial Service for teammate Doug Schmied while fellow captains Tom Kudyba, Levi Derber, and Damon Banks join him at the podium.

Illinois Wesleyan Remembers Doug Schmied with Memorial Service

August 31, 2005

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -- More than 700 members of the Illinois Wesleyan University community gathered at the Shirk Center on Wednesday to pay tribute to Doug Schmied, a member of the Class of 2006 and co-captain of the Titan football team, who died on August 24.

Throughout the Memorial Service, Schmied was remembered for his dedication, his compassion, and his integrity as classmates, teammates, coaches, teachers, and members of his family described his impact on all those whom he met.

During his remarks, Illinois Wesleyan football coach Norm Eash announced that the University was establishing a new prize in Schmied's honor. The Doug Schmied Titan Award will be presented annually to the Illinois Wesleyan senior who best exemplified traits that Schmied exhibited.

In welcoming the crowd, which included the entire football team dressed in their game jerseys, Illinois Wesleyan President Richard F. Wilson recalled that Schmied's father, Mike, had told those who attended his son's funeral that his heart was in a thousand pieces.

"[Mike Schmied] captured in a sentence what we all felt," Wilson said. "Today there are 3,000 hearts in a thousand pieces on this campus."



Head football coach Norm Eash speaks at the Memorial Service for Doug Schmied.

Added Wilson: "This morning we gather together, a circle of family and friends on this campus to support one another in our grief, to look for ways to patch our hearts back together, and to celebrate the life of Doug Schmied."

Eash said that Schmied knew the way to measure greatness and that is by the impact you make on other people's lives.

He went on to say that the best way to honor Schmied would be to honor those traits that Schmied exhibited.

"If you admired his commitment to excellence, honor that anytime you do something important," said Eash. "If you admired his integrity, honor that in your own life and realize that Doug lived with integrity — not when it was convenient, but always. If you admired his attitude of helping others, remember that and practice it in your daily lives."

Schmied's teammates recalled how he had led by example while classmates described him as "irreplaceable" in their lives.

Tom Kudyba '06, a football co-captain, noted that Schmied was not the loudest or most outspoken member of the team. "But when he did speak up, people listened," Kudyba said. "He earned their attention by displaying a great work ethic."

Natalie Hackett '06 called Schmied "a big guy with an even bigger heart" while Amanda Solliday '06 pointed to the impact he had on Illinois Wesleyan when she said: "I can hardly step on the campus without someone telling about something that Doug had done for them. It's obvious how deeply Doug has touched this entire campus."

Schmied was an accounting major with a computer science minor, and his professors recalled that his work ethic in the classroom was as exemplary as it had been on the football field.

"Doug was the epitome of the student-athlete and represented all the ideals that we wish our students would pursue," said Jerry Olson, professor of accounting.

Susan Anderson-Freed, professor of computer science, called Schmied "one of the kindest, most decent students I have encountered in my 29 years of teaching," adding that he possessed an "infectious enthusiasm that permeated everything he did."

Schmied's father read an emotional letter that he had written to his son that morning, citing many of the events of that past week and recounting how the Schmied family had joined together to deal with their loss.

"The newspaper called you a gentle giant of a man," Mike Schmied concluded. "To me, you'll always be my hero, my boy, and Mama Schmied's baby."

In her comments, Mrs. Schmied encouraged all members of the community to show support not only for the football team but also for all athletic teams and student organizations.

"Doug was concerned that not as many fans were coming to the games anymore," she said. "I want to see those stands packed. Support this university. The kids work hard no matter what they're in, and they need to know you're behind them. Every group on this campus needs your support."

Speaking specially to the football team, she said: "Mama Schmied is going to be there. When we lost Doug I gained 97 boys."