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Daniel Sherrod '03 (right) is congratulated on his Shining Example award by Illinois Wesleyan President Richard F. Wilson.

Sherrod '03 Named As Alumni Shining Example

May 1, 2006

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - Illinois Wesleyan University alumnus Daniel Sherrod '03 is one of four honorees named a Shining Example by the Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI), a group of 24 private colleges and universities in Illinois. ACI is rooted in the liberal arts tradition that brings college, business and community leaders together to provide underserved students with the educational opportunities they need to become productive members of society.

This year's awards, built around the theme The Road to College Success, honors ACI alumni who have overcome significant obstacles, achieved success in their chosen fields and are outstanding role models.

Nominated by Illinois Wesleyan, Sherrod received his award at the general session of ACI's 54th Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 27 at the Union League Club of Chicago (65 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago). IWU's President Richard Wilson attended the event.

At the recognition ceremony, each of the Shining Examples received a commemorative plaque and will have their biography published in the program book developed for the event. The program will be distributed to those attending the meeting, as well as a select list of business leaders and politicians throughout the state of Illinois.

Now the CEO of The Sherrod Group, a contracting and construction company he founded, Sherrod grew up in Cabrini Green, a Chicago neighborhood known for its gangs and violence, where he began working at the age of eight to help support his family. "I knew my mom needed the help, and I wanted a little money of my own, so I got a job bagging groceries."

As a student at Near North Career Metropolitan High School, Sherrod became involved in the Cabrini Connections Tutor/Mentor program, where one of his tutors, an Illinois Wesleyan alumnus, encouraged him to apply to the university. Daniel Bassill, IWU class of '68 and a 2004 ACI Shining Example award-winner established Cabrini Connections in 1992.

Sherrod put himself through college by working at the university's Physical Plant, Office of Residential Life, Dean of Students' Office, Hansen Student Center and as a Peer Event Monitor. During his tenure at Illinois Wesleyan, Sherrod was named Senator of the Year by the university's Student Senate and completed an internship with Senator Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) in Springfield.

After graduating from Illinois Wesleyan with a degree in political science, Sherrod returned to his old neighborhood to start his own company, The Sherrod Group, LLC. His company is an interior construction firm that works with public housing residents to provide them with job skills and opportunities for the future. "I know I could've gone anywhere and made a lot of money right away," said Sherrod. "Coming back home has allowed me to help my family escape the cycle of drugs and poverty that we were locked into. My greatest success is happening right now--being in a position where I can be a positive example and help other people."

Most recently, Sherrod traveled to New Orleans, where he volunteered in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, refurbishing and repairing hotels in the La Quinta chain. He intends to return to continue his reconstruction efforts.

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