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Local Resident Donates \$1,000,000 to Illinois Wesleyan and University High School

July 18, 2007

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – John L. Wroan III, a retired Bloomington contractor and businessman, has donated \$1 million worth of stock to Illinois Wesleyan University and University High School, both in Bloomington-Normal.

A graduate of IWU and U-High, Wroan allocated \$500,000 worth of stock to Illinois Wesleyan for an endowment to support student scholarships. He is also donating \$500,000 worth of stock to U-High to support the remodeling of its Vocational Arts area into an Engineering/Technology Center – the very building Wroan’s company built in 1964.

“The importance of supporting education cannot be stated enough,” said Wroan. “These gifts are a challenge to everyone who can lend a hand in strengthening education in our community. I consider these gifts to be a ‘pay back’ for all the support Bloomington-Normal has given to me over the years.”

A native of Deer Creek, Ill., Wroan transferred to U-High his junior year, where he played football and basketball and ran track. After graduating from U-High in 1945 and spending one and one-half years in the service, he attended Iowa State University for one year and then transferred to Illinois Wesleyan, where he played basketball under famed coach Jack Horenberger. “I have a soft spot for U-High and Illinois Wesleyan,” said Wroan, who graduated from IWU in 1951 with a degree in business administration.

Entering the construction business was a natural choice for Wroan, whose grandfather, step-grandfather, and father were in the house contracting business from the mid-1880s. Wroan, who had helped in the business since he was 12, joined his father in the business in 1951. At that time he and his father went into commercial contracting. In 1955, he and his father formed a partnership known as J. L. Wroan & Sons, Inc. At the time, his father retired but remained active in the company until his death in 1958. The company, which reached 600 employees before Wroan retired in 1983, worked on building and construction projects across Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa. From The Baby Fold, the company’s first big project, the company went on to major projects in those three states.

“We cannot thank John enough for his continuing support of University High School and Illinois State University,” said Illinois State President Al Bowman. “He is a gentleman who has given back to his community in many important ways.”

“John has done a lot for us over the years as he enthusiastically communicated the message about how his education at U-High changed his life,” said Robert Dean, superintendent of the local laboratory schools. “We appreciate his active support and the fact that he truly is a humble and gracious leader.”

The endowment established by Wroan will assist IWU in its mission to attract the best and the brightest students, according to Illinois Wesleyan University President Richard F. Wilson. “John’s support of education will enable the University to offer qualified students the chance to experience an excellent education at Illinois Wesleyan,” said Wilson.



John L. Wroan III