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John Twork  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

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# Author Empowers Students to be the Messengers of Change

Sept. 5, 2018

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Pulitzer Prize-winning author Amy Ellis Nutt urged Illinois Wesleyan University students to fight ignorance – and prejudice – with knowledge and truth during her address at Wednesday's President's Convocation.

"Knowledge is difficult to acquire; understanding hard to absorb; and finding the truth can sometimes seem insurmountable. But, that's usually the way with any question worth asking," Nutt told the crowd in Presser Hall's Westbrook Auditorium. "A truth-seeker must be patient, but above all, willing to forego the easy answer, the low-hanging fruit, if you will, on the tree of explanations."

Nutt is the author of Illinois Wesleyan's [Summer Reading Program](#) selection [Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of An American Family](#), which tells the story of Wyatt Maines in her journey of asserting her gender identity and "becoming Nicole." In the process, Nicole challenges those around her to reassess their previously held beliefs in light of a rapidly changing world.

Similarly, Illinois Wesleyan's annual theme "[Changing Climates](#)" challenges the campus community to examine and re-examine the racial, religious, political, environmental and economic climates present in our world.

"I'm not alone in the belief that it is your generation in particular that is driving the pace of many of the positive sociological changes we see today," Nutt told the students.

However, while she acknowledged that "diversity is the norm" for most college students today, she cautioned that "ignorance is still the lazy enemy of truth."

Nutt emphasized the importance of "sharing our stories, exchanging information, learning our way closer and closer to the truth." Nicole Maines and her family provided Nutt the opportunity to share their transformative narrative with an international audience.

"Nicole summed it all up for me a couple of years ago: 'Stories move the walls that need to be moved,'" Nutt shared.

In closing, Nutt challenged Illinois Wesleyan's students to fight ignorance by making their voices heard.

"In today's world, we are all messengers of change," she said.



Author Amy Ellis Nutt urged students to fight ignorance and prejudice with knowledge and truth during her address at the President's Convocation.

By John Twork