



11-14-2019

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### **Recommended Citation**

Twork, John, "Georgia Nugent Named 20th President of Illinois Wesleyan" (2019). *News and Events*. 3949.

<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/3949>

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# Georgia Nugent Named 20th President of Illinois Wesleyan

Nov. 14, 2019

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — S. Georgia Nugent, Ph.D., president emerita of Kenyon College, will lead Illinois Wesleyan University as the institution’s 20th president.

Nugent, who joined the University as interim president in August of 2019, becomes the first woman to serve as President of Illinois Wesleyan. The Board of Trustees announced her appointment Thursday at a [campus event](#).

“I originally arrived at Illinois Wesleyan as interim president, planning only to be on the campus for one year,” Nugent said. “But I quickly came to love the institution, its mission, and its people — faculty, students, staff and alumni. I felt that we could work together to build a stronger Illinois Wesleyan University for the future. When it became clear that the Trustees felt the same way and asked me to stay on at the University, I could not have been more pleased and honored. I’m very excited about what we can accomplish together.”

A widely published scholar of the classics and of higher education, Nugent earned a bachelor’s degree from Princeton University and a doctorate from Cornell University. Before beginning her decade-long presidency at Kenyon, Nugent served at Princeton as assistant to the president, associate provost, and dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and as professor of classics at Princeton and Brown universities. She also taught on the classics faculties of Cornell as well as Swarthmore College and Kenyon.

Nugent later served as interim president at The College of Wooster during the 2015-16 academic year and is currently senior fellow at the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC).

Board Chair Timothy J. Szerlong '74 said, “Georgia’s influence on the Illinois Wesleyan community was evident from the day she arrived on campus. Her wealth of experience in higher education, her engaging leadership style, and her unwavering commitment to academic excellence gives our Board of Trustees every confidence that she will have a profound impact in shaping the future of IWU.”

Presidential Search Committee Chair W. Thomas Lawrence '80 added, “Our search committee unanimously recommended Dr. Nugent as the 20th President of Illinois Wesleyan. She presented the Committee a unique opportunity to recommend a candidate whose work we have been able to analyze in real-time. As our Interim President, Georgia has exhibited strong leadership skills in an honest and transparent manner that have won her the respect of the University community.”

As president of Kenyon from 2003 to 2013, Nugent focused on strengthening the college’s core academic values while also overseeing the launch of new programs. During Nugent’s tenure, funding for faculty research was increased, new endowed professorships were created, and new hires increased the diversity of the faculty as a whole. Under Nugent’s leadership, the “We Are Kenyon” campaign, which raised more than \$240 million, brought in \$60 million in new endowment dollars for financial aid, doubling endowment funds for that purpose.

As a senior fellow at the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), Nugent helped design, develop and oversee a public information campaign advocating for the value of a liberal arts education. The national, multi-pronged initiative directed attention to the compelling evidence that smaller independent colleges produce graduates who are among the best prepared for success in their personal, career, and community lives. Nugent has also shared her nationally respected higher education insight as a [contributing writer for Inside Higher Ed](#).

“I believe Illinois Wesleyan is in a tremendously strong position to succeed, because of our outstanding combination of a strong liberal arts education with the opportunity for pre-professional development — whether that be in nursing, business, music, or many other fields,” Nugent said. “This is the ideal education for today and for the future. The intellectual breadth of liberal arts education is what contributes to the problem-solving, innovative thinking, and continuous learning that employers find so valuable — and that contributes so powerfully not only to long-term career success but to a fulfilling life. Here at IWU, we have exactly the kind of education that students need most to succeed and to flourish in tomorrow’s world.”

While serving as Illinois Wesleyan's president, Nugent will continue to assist with some CIC projects, as an advocate for the value of liberal arts education. As a scholar, Nugent specializes in epic poetry and Greek tragedy. She has numerous articles and presentations to her credit, as well as a book on allegory.

Nugent is married to Tom Scherer, who practices international law.

Founded in 1850, Illinois Wesleyan is a nationally recognized, highly selective liberal arts university. The University is exclusively undergraduate and enrolls approximately 1,700 students from across the nation and around the globe. Illinois Wesleyan prides itself on producing graduates who are well-rounded, broadly educated individuals with a spirit of inquiry who can successfully adapt to the demands of a rapidly changing, complex world.



Georgia Nugent will lead Illinois Wesleyan University as the institution’s 20th president.



Watch the announcement of Georgia Nugent as IWU President.