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Affordable Housing Advocate to Give Founders' Day Address

Jan. 12, 2023

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — An Illinois Wesleyan University alumnus with experience designing and implementing affordable housing programs in the Chicago area will deliver the keynote address during the 2023 Founders' Day Convocation.

[See the program booklet.](#)

Richard Koenig '89, executive director of Housing Opportunity Development Corporation, will deliver a keynote address titled "The Place of Affordable Housing in an Age of Affluence," in conjunction with the University's [annual intellectual theme](#), The Power of Place.

The Convocation will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 18 at Westbrook Auditorium in Presser Hall. The presentation will be recorded and available to view on demand after the event at www.vimeo.com/iwu.

The ceremony will include an invocation given by Dean of Students for Inclusion and Advocacy Prince Robertson, remarks from President S. Georgia Nugent, an introduction of the keynote speaker by Provost and Dean of Faculty Mark Brodl and the keynote address by Koenig.



Richard Koenig '89 will be the keynote speaker for the 2023 Founders' Day Convocation on Wednesday, Jan. 18.

After graduating from Illinois Wesleyan in 1989 with a bachelor's in economics, Koenig received his master's in urban planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Koenig then began his work of designing and implementing affordable housing programs in the Chicago area as the HOME program supervisor with the Illinois Housing Development Authority.

In 1997, Koenig became the Executive Director of Housing Opportunity Development Corporation. In his 20-plus-year career, Koenig has completed 30 affordable housing developments throughout Chicago's northern suburbs containing over 500 affordable units valued over \$150 million.

Koenig also completed his master's and doctorate degrees in community economic development from Southern New Hampshire University where he is an adjunct professor. He has published numerous articles on affordable and supportive housing, and in 2022 he was named a fellow by the American Institute of Certified Planners (FAICP).

Since 2000, Koenig has been an active member on several community and housing development boards including serving as the chair of the Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County as well as the Association of Homeless Advocates. He currently sits on the boards of the Illinois Housing Council and the Collaborative Community Housing Initiative.

Koenig's lifelong dedication to providing access to affordable housing aligns with the spirit of the University's "Power of Place" theme, summarized as "Place is where we live. Our thoughts, values, perceptions, and actions are influenced by how we conceptualize a place and our place in the world. A place can be a physical location or the way a location develops social, cultural, political, and even economic meaning."

Students, faculty and staff are also welcomed to explore a new month-long display in the exhibits area at The Ames Library on Founders' Day: The History of Illinois Wesleyan. The exhibit, which also complements the University's annual theme, illustrates the growth and change the University has seen since its founding.

By Maria Harmon '23