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Richard F. Wilson Named 18th President of Illinois Wesleyan University

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Richard F. Wilson, associate chancellor for development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and vice president of the University of Illinois Foundation, has been named the 18th president of Illinois Wesleyan University.

Craig Hart, president of the Illinois Wesleyan Board of Trustees, announced Wilson's election today (April 6, 2004).

Wilson, 57, will assume the presidency on July 1. He was selected following a national search and succeeds Minor Myers jr., who died on July 22, 2003. Myers had been president at Illinois Wesleyan since 1989.

"Our search ranged far and wide. But the right candidate was closer than we ever expected," Hart told members of the Illinois Wesleyan community as he introduced Wilson at a campus-wide meeting in the University's Hansen Student Center.

"Dick has spent the past 26 years at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he has been involved in virtually every aspect of the university's life," Hart said. "As we were told over and over by those who have known Dick Wilson for many years, he is a student of higher education, a person who understands what makes colleges and universities work, and someone who cares deeply about people, ideas, and higher education as a whole."

Wilson expressed his excitement about the appointment and emphasized his the University's commitment to excellence.

"I am extremely pleased and excited to have been selected to serve as the next President of Illinois Wesleyan University," Wilson said. "I am impressed with the strong sense of loyalty that exists among the faculty, staff, students, and trustees and with the pervasive commitment to teaching, creative, and scholarly excellence. These characteristics provide a solid foundation for continued efforts to provide national leadership in higher education. My wife and I look forward to the move to Bloomington and to becoming part of the Illinois Wesleyan community."

The search for Illinois Wesleyan's 18th president was conducted by a 16-person committee consisting of trustees, faculty, students, and staff. Gilbert Dorsey, an alumnus and first vice-president of the Board of Trustees, chaired the committee.

MORE

FIRST ADD: Richard F. Wilson Named President of Illinois Wesleyan

"Illinois Wesleyan is fortunate to have selected Dick Wilson," said Nancy Cantor, chancellor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "He has been intimately involved in every aspect of the academic and administrative issues at the University of Illinois. He will support the faculty, students, and staff fully."

"I think there is an incredibly good fit between Dick Wilson and Illinois Wesleyan," said Stanley O. Ikenberry, president emeritus of the University of Illinois and also former president of the American Council on Education. "I have known Dick for at least three decades. He has deeply rooted academic values and great instincts. He is an effective leader. More important, he is an incredibly decent human being."

Larry Faulkner, president of the University of Texas at Austin, worked closely with Wilson during Faulkner's tenure as provost, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and professor of chemistry at the University of Illinois.

"In Dick Wilson, Illinois Wesleyan is getting a president with great people skills and broad experience with issues relating to higher education, both on the academic side and the operational side," Faulkner said. "In addition, the university is getting a president with excellent integrity and very fine values. I have a very high regard for Illinois Wesleyan. This is a great choice for Dick and his wife, Pat. It is also a great choice by Illinois Wesleyan."

In Wilson's current assignment at the University of Illinois, his responsibilities include all private fund-raising for the Urbana campus. This entails coordinating the efforts of 70 professional staff in campus units; soliciting gifts from individuals, corporations, and foundations; and leading the campus efforts to achieve a \$1-billion goal as part of the university's campaign.

Wilson's experience goes well beyond his current role. He previously served as assistant director in the Office of Planning and Evaluation and as assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs. Among the campus-wide initiatives that Wilson has led at the University of Illinois are

- Design and implementation of two comprehensive planning efforts, one in the 1980s focused on resource allocation and the other defining priorities for campus investments in the 1990s;
- Development and implementation of a system for assessing the quality of academic units and the effectiveness of administrative units;
- Identification of computing priorities and coordination of campus-wide efforts to integrate computer technologies in the instructional process.

In addition, Wilson has spearheaded efforts to diversify the University of Illinois, including funding of the new Center for Democracy in a Multi-Racial Society. Wilson has also served as liaison between the campus administration and the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics and has worked to develop mutually beneficial programs between the university and local organizations and businesses in Champaign-Urbana.

MORE

SECOND ADD: Richard F. Wilson Named President of Illinois Wesleyan

Wilson is an adjunct professor of higher education at the University of Illinois. He has taught courses on the American college and the organization of higher education and has published on topics in higher education.

A native of Point Pleasant, W.Va., Wilson received his bachelor's degree from Alderson-Broadus College in Philippi, W.Va., where he majored in mathematics and earned both academic and athletic honors. He was the West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Association Athlete of the Year as a senior. After spending a year teaching high school algebra and geometry, he returned to his alma mater and served for four years as director of admissions.

Wilson pursued graduate degrees at the University of Michigan, earning both the M.A. and Ph.D. in higher education. He joined the University of Illinois in 1978 as assistant director in the Office of Planning and Evaluation.

In addition to his work at the University of Illinois, Wilson has been active in several community initiatives. He has served on the Urbana School District Technology Committee, the Carle Hospital Foundation, and the Champaign-Urbana Community Schools Foundation.

Wilson and his wife, Pat, have two children: a son, Adam, of San Francisco, Calif., and a daughter, Rachel, in Springfield, Ill.