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## **Carrie Newcomer Celebrates New CD With Performance at Illinois Wesleyan University's Blue Moon Coffeehouse**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Carrie Newcomer, the first artist to perform at Illinois Wesleyan's Blue Moon Coffeehouse when it was originated in 1991, will return on Saturday, May 15, to celebrate the release of her latest CD.

Newcomer will perform at 8 p.m. in Westbrook Auditorium of Presser Hall, 1210 Park St., Bloomington. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. for the event, which is free and open to the public.

The seasoned artist's new album, *Betty's Diner: the Best of Carrie Newcomer*, was created in commemoration of the decade she has spent with independent record label Rounder/Philo. The CD, which features previously released tracks as well as three new ones, is a well-chosen moniker, according to Philo, because the songs on the 15-song collection are as diverse and human as the denizens of the diner itself.

"She does an excellent job of fully integrating the new tracks with her previous work, and yet they are able to stand alone," said Darcy Greder, associate dean of student affairs at Illinois Wesleyan, who is the coordinator of the coffeehouse.

Newcomer's music is a blend of urban culture and Midwestern charm. The artist describes her work as spiritual but not necessarily religious, and says she infuses many of her experiences into her music. She has shared the stage with such music legends as Bonnie Raitt, Alison Krauss, and Mary Chapin Carpenter.

"She has an ability to write with a very intimate universality," said Greder. "Carrie writes openly about social circumstances, world troubles and world triumphs. She truly touches people's hearts and minds."

Greder said that Newcomer has performed 16 times at IWU's Blue Moon Coffeehouse and her skills as a singer-songwriter have made her the coffeehouse's most requested artist. The intimate setting and warm reception she receives when she performs at Illinois Wesleyan, according to Greder, are two of the things that Newcomer looks forward to in her visits to the Blue Moon. "Carrie is very open with her admiration for the venue and almost always takes the time in her performances at the university to mention that Illinois Wesleyan is one of her favorite locations in the world to perform," said Greder.

In recent years, Newcomer has also earned praise from music media such as *Rolling Stone*, *USA Today*, and *Acoustic Guitar*, and in 2002 she won the Folkwax Album and Artist of the Year Award. Her song, "I Should've Known Better" was covered by the string band Nickel Creek on its 2003 Grammy Award-winning and Gold CD *This Side*.

However, Newcomer's talents extend beyond singing. She is becoming as well known for her giving heart as for her heart-warming music. Newcomer was named Bloomington, Indiana's "Woman of the Year" for 2004 for her civic work and dedication to community service and for her artistic contributions. She has raised funds for hunger and health organizations in addition to a variety of charitable institutions including Habitat for Humanity, Planned Parenthood of America, Literacy Volunteers of America and The Nature Conservancy.