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National Expert in DNA Presents Lecture at Illinois Wesleyan

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National Expert in DNA Presents Lecture at Illinois Wesleyan

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Jacqueline K. Barton, professor of chemistry at California Institute of Technology, will present a lecture at the dedication of the Wilma B. Beckman Auditorium in The Ames Library at Illinois Wesleyan University.

The lecture, "DNA: A Different Perspective," will be at 4 p.m. on Friday, October 25. The public is invited. There is no admission charge.

Wilma B. Beckman, for whom the 75-seat auditorium is named, graduated from Illinois Wesleyan in 1926 with a bachelor of science degree and was a forerunner and role model for many women majoring in the sciences today. Wilma Beckman was the sister of philanthropist Arnold Beckman who, with his wife Mabel, has supported Illinois Wesleyan through the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation. In addition to a grant to complete the auditorium that will bear Wilma Beckman's name, the Beckman Foundation also supported the construction of Illinois Wesleyan's Center for Natural Science, Learning and Research, which features the Frederick Beckman Lecture Hall named for the brother of Arnold and Wilma.

In presenting the inaugural lecture for the Beckman Auditorium, Barton will discuss her pioneering work that examines the way in which metal complexes designed in the laboratory interact with DNA.

Barton is the Arthur and Marian Hanisch Memorial Professor of Chemistry at California Institute of Technology. A native New Yorker, she received her bachelor's degree from Barnard College and then earned the Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry from Columbia University where she later served on the faculty until 1989, when she joined Caltech.

Barton has received numerous awards, including the Alan T. Waterman Award of the National Science Foundation, which is awarded to the outstanding young scientist in the United States. In 1991, she received the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Barton was a fellow of the Sloan Foundation, a Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar, and a National Science Foundation Presidential Young Investigator.

In addition to the work with metal complexes and DNA, the Barton Group at Caltech is also attempting to develop an understanding of DNA as a medium for long-range electron transfer chemistry and is currently exploring the design and application of DNA-based electrochemical sensors and other materials.