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Garrett Rapp
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Contact: Garrett Rapp '10, (309) 556-3181

IWU Senior Places Third on *So You Think You Can Dance?*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – He may not be “America’s Favorite Dancer,” but Evan Kasprzak is still Illinois Wesleyan University’s favorite dancer, as well as the favorite of millions who voted for him across the United States. Kasprzak, an IWU senior from West Bloomfield, Mich., has won third place on Fox TV’s *So You Think You Can Dance?*, a hit reality TV show in the style of *American Idol*.

A music theatre major and a dancer since the age of six, Kasprzak was the first contestant dancing the Broadway style to compete on the award-winning show’s top 20. He was also the only dancer of the top 20 in season five who did not have to “dance for his life” to stay in the competition. Each week, the TV audience phoned in votes for their favorite dancer, and there were sufficient votes for Kasprzak to advance without impediment every round of eliminations this season.

“It’s been an awesome journey and I couldn’t ask for anything else,” said Kasprzak in front of an audience of over 3,000 at the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles. He said one of his favorite aspects of the show has been working with the various professional choreographers, many of whom have won Emmy awards for their work. Hostess Cat Deeley asked him if he was glad he had been on the show. “I’m ecstatic,” he said.

Kasprzak’s final episode was greeted with cheers from an audience of over 60 at IWU’s Minor Myers, jr. Welcome Center auditorium. Members of the campus community gathered to celebrate the Illinois Wesleyan student’s weeks of dancing on the show, and many wore shirts with the phrase “Proud Kasprzaktivist” on them.

Although he will not receive the first-place prize of \$250,000, Kasprzak will be part of the show’s 40-city tour that runs through November. The tour will stop in Champaign, Ill. on Sunday, Oct. 4 and Chicago on Tuesday, Oct. 6. Because of the tour, Kasprzak will not be returning to IWU for classes during fall semester. However, he has stated that he will return to complete his bachelor of fine arts degree in spring 2010.

During the show, Kasprzak became known for his distinctive Broadway style of dancing, which various critics and judges have compared to dancers such as Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire. “I think America’s ready to be exposed to this style again,” he said. Over the weeks of competition he has been praised for his personality by every judge on *So You Think You Can Dance?*, including guest judge Ellen DeGeneres. “Evan, I love your face,” she said.

Kasprzak auditioned for the show in April with his brother Ryan, who choreographed his routine and dances with a comedy theater troupe in New York. Ryan was eliminated just before the top 20 contestants were decided, but has auditioned for season 6 of the show, which airs this fall.

Upon winning third place, Kasprzak thanked his friends, fans, and family for their support. When asked whether he would continue his career in dance, he responded, “Heck, yeah!”