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March 11, 2004

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"Growing Pains" Star Tracey Gold to Speak as Part of IWU's Gender Issues Week

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Many Illinois Wesleyan students grew up watching Tracey Gold on the popular ABC comedy series "Growing Pains." What attracts audiences of all ages today, however, are Gold's success stories about her struggles with real-life growing pains, especially her bouts with anorexia nervosa, the disorder primarily characterized by self-induced starvation.

Gold will speak to students about "The Myths and Realities of Eating Disorders" on Tuesday, March 23 at 7 p.m. in the Hansen Student Center, 300 Beecher St., Bloomington. Sponsored by Student Senate as part of its annual Gender Issues Week, Gold's appearance is free and open to the public. A meet and greet session with Gold will begin after her speech at 8 p.m.

Gold was first diagnosed with anorexia at age 12 by her pediatrician and fortunately recovered after four months of psychiatric treatment. In 1988, at age 19, she relapsed. Following a personal decision to lose 20 lbs., she went on a 500 calorie-a-day diet to reach her "ideal weight" of 113 lbs.

In the beginning of 1992, Gold reached 90 lbs. and was forced to leave the set of "Growing Pains." Although her weight dropped to as low as 79 lbs., she eventually recovered and resumed her acting career, including a starring role as Nancy Walsh, a young woman suffering from anorexia, in the 1994 television movie "For the Love of Nancy."

"Although there are many places to find information and assistance about eating disorders, it often takes a person who is recognizable and has been exposed to the public eye to get serious attention," said Student Senate Issues and Programming Commissioner Alyssa Stone. "Because students remember her well from 'Growing Pains,' Tracey Gold will provide a meaningful and personal viewpoint on this important topic to our campus."

Gender Issues Week at Illinois Wesleyan begins Monday, March 22 with a presentation by Alison Oliver from Choice USA, the national pro-choice organization founded by Gloria Steinem. Oliver will speak about what it means to be pro-choice at 7 p.m. in the Hansen Student Center.

Other events include a special University Chapel Hour entitled "Imagine: Celebrating the Ten Year Anniversary of Illinois Wesleyan University's Women's Studies Program" led by Vicki Magee, assistant professor of educational studies and psychology and director of Women's Studies, at 11 a.m. in Evelyn Chapel, 1301 N. Park St.

On Thursday, March 25, there will be a showing of the film "Senorita Extraviada, Missing Young Woman" at 7 p.m. in the Beckman Auditorium of The Ames Library, 1 Ames Plaza. A discussion will directly follow. The film tells the haunting story of the more than 200 kidnapped, raped, and murdered young women of Jurez, Mexico.

For the month of March, Titan TV is showing gender issue related movies, including: "To Wong Foo, Thanks For Everything, Julie Newmar," "Tootsie," "GI Jane," "Varsity Blues," "Frida," "Mulan," and "Boys on the Side." There will also be an art display about "Masculinity of the English Language" by Kappi Pi, the art honor society, on the Eckley Quadrangle for the entire week.

For more information about Gender Issues Week, contact Alyssa Stone at (309) 556-1370.