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For Immediate Release - R. Dwight Drexler

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Cent. 12***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.-- Illinois Wesleyan University School of Music will present duo-pianists Susan Brandon and R. Dwight Drexler at a free concert in Westbrook Auditorium, Thursday, Sept. 23, at 8 p.m.

The program will include *Bagatelles in Variation* (1992), an original work by R. Bedford Watkins (1925-) written specifically for Brandon, a faculty member and Drexler, professor emeritus.

Watkins, who joined the IWU faculty in 1956, served as chairman of the piano department at Illinois Wesleyan University and upon his retirement in 1988, he and his wife moved to Eastpoint, Fla.

Included in the program are *Slavonic Dances* by Anton Dvorak, *Bilder aus dem Osten*, by Robert Schumann, and *Three Pieces for Four Hands*, an undated manuscript by Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn (1805-1847) which was published in 1990.

Program notes for the recital discuss the exclusion of women "as composers and performers in standard histories of music because of social attitudes of the times. Fanny Mendelssohn was not only a gifted pianist, but a composer of chamber music, piano pieces and songs, some of which were published under her brother's name."

Brandon is associate professor of piano at the School of Music at IWU. She earned her undergraduate degree at Bowling Green State University in Ohio and a master of arts and master of fine arts degree in performance from the University of Iowa. In the fall of 1985, Brandon was on sabbatical leave in Vienna, Austria, where she studied two-piano literature and also music for piano-duet with Hans Graf, professor of piano at the Vienna Academy of Music.

Brandon was in Vienna and Prague from March through June studying original manuscripts by the German composer Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), as well as the music and lives of Franz Schubert (1791-1828) of Austria, Robert Schumann (1810-1856) of Germany, and Anton Dvorak (1841-1904) of Czechoslovakia. While in Vienna, Brandon saw Graf and his daughter perform

in concert, including the one piano, four hands composition by Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn, sister of composer Felix Mendelssohn.

For more than a decade, she has performed in duo-piano recitals with Drexler.

Drexler, professor of piano and theory emeritus, was a member of the piano faculty for 45 years, became chairman of the piano department, and on two occasions served as Interim Director of the School of Music at IWU. In addition to receiving a degree from IWU in 1934, he earned degrees at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago and the University of the Pacific. Drexler was named Illinois Wesleyan Century Club Honoree in 1961 for outstanding teaching, as well as for his many contributions to the university. He has performed extensively as a piano soloist and ensemble player.