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Stacy Keach, Sr., Hollywood Veteran of Hundreds of Films, TV Shows To Share Half-Century of Tinsel Town Memories at IWU, Oct. 26-27

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October 17, 1994

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From TV's "Get Smart" to Birdseye & Mini-Van Commercials

**Stacy Keach, Sr., Hollywood Veteran of Hundreds of Films, TV Shows,
To Share Half-Century of Tinsel Town Memories at IWU, Oct. 26-27**

*Education,
Entertainment*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Actor, director, producer, and writer Stacy Keach, Sr., will share 50 years of Hollywood memories in a public lecture and conduct four master classes with Illinois Wesleyan University theater students during a campus visit, Oct. 26-27.

*Feature Writers
Composite
Mailing
Nat'l News Media*

Keach--who played the inventive Dr. Carlson on the long-running hit sitcom "Get Smart" and who brought to radio and TV the popular series, "Tales of the Texas Rangers"--is coming to IWU under the auspices of the E. Melba Johnson Kirkpatrick Theater Artists Series. Since 1971, the series has sponsored IWU appearances by the likes of stage and screen actress Helen Hayes, long known as the "first lady of the American theater;" actor-producer-director John Houseman, a seven-time Academy Award winner, who won acclaim for his portrayal of the crusty law professor Dr. Kingsfield in "The Paper Chase;" New York City Ballet star Edward Villella, and Broadway-Hollywood director Joshua Logan, associated with many box office hits, including "Annie Get Your Gun" and "Mr. Roberts."

A veteran of several hundred feature films and TV series, Keach will conduct master classes from 10 a.m. to Noon and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Oct. 26 and Oct. 27. His speech, which is free and open to the public, is slated for 8 p.m., Oct. 26. All events will take place in IWU's McPherson Theater, 304 E. Graham, Bloomington.

Master class topics include:

- How Keach got his show business start and career highlights.
- A discussion of stage and radio experiences. Keach will play a 30-minute radio episode of "Tales of the Texas Rangers," projecting the script on a screen to help the students follow the action. This session also will include other recordings and some discussion of television.
- Reminiscences of his experiences in radio, television, and films with several studios--Universal, RKO, and Columbia Pictures--and the National Broadcasting Co. (NBC).

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Keach Visits IWU/2

- Insights into how to plan and successfully have a show business career. This session will include discussions about industrial films, commercials, voice-overs, records/tapes, feature films, television, and infomercials. Labor union rules and residuals will be covered.

Keach's public address will feature anecdotes about his career experiences. He also will take questions from the audience.

The two-day program is titled, "Stacy Keach, Sr. Reflects on His Career in the Theater, Films, TV, and Radio."

"Stacy Keach brings a long perspective on theater to our students," said Jared Brown, professor of theater arts and director of IWU's School of Theater Arts. "He has a broad background in theater, stretching back to before World War II, as well as experience in film, TV, and radio.

"Keach's experience in radio is particularly interesting," Brown added, "since we are considering producing radio dramas for distribution to other campuses. The idea is in the formative stage and would involve our students generating scripts and doing the productions.

"Radio is different from theater," Brown explained. "It's intriguing since actors can only use their voice for characterizations--not their eyes or their hands. You have to convey everything vocally. If you can do that and carry it to the stage, your voice can be a richer, more expressive instrument. So radio can be helpful in training actors."

Among Keach's film credits are appearances in "Pretty Woman," "Armed and Dangerous," "Friday the 13th," "Deal of the Century," "Best Defense," "Parallax View," "Sybil," "Abraham Lincoln," and "The Heist." His television credits include "Young Riders," "Matlock," "Dynasty," "Falcon Crest," "Dallas," "Barnaby Jones," "Fantasy Island," "The Incredible Hulk," "Ironside," "Kojak," "Mannix," "Marcus Welby, M.D.," and "The Rockford Files."

In 1980, Keach performed in 38 commercials, which aired at the same time. He was signed a year later to an exclusive contract with General Foods to play Clarence Birdseye, founder of the frozen food company in the firm's commercials. Keach also was the voice of "Grandpa Werewolf" on the Saturday morning CBS cartoon series, "Teen Wolf." He has been the on-camera spokesman for National

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Keach Visits IWU/3

Home Life Assurance Company, DuPont, U.S. Surgical Corp., and others. Keach particularly enjoys playing the gruff chairman of the board in Mercury Villager mini-van commercials.

Keach's wife said, "Stacy playing the gruff chairman is perfect typecasting."

Born in Chicago in 1914, Keach attended Northwestern University's School of Speech, where he received bachelor of arts and master of science degrees in speech and theater. As a graduate student, Keach was appointed an instructor in dramatic arts.

He was a member of the faculty of Armstrong College in Savannah, Ga., from 1936 to 1941, where he founded the Savannah Playhouse.

After World War II, Keach became a director at the Pasadena Playhouse in California. Subsequently, he was signed to a three-way contract as an actor-director-writer by Universal Pictures, working on a wide range of motion pictures.

RKO signed Keach as director-in-charge of the company's New York City studio after his four and one-half year stint with Universal. When RKO sold its New York operation to NBC three years later, Keach returned to Hollywood as an RKO producer.

His radio and TV versions of "Tales of the Texas Rangers," which Keach owned, were produced for NBC and CBS.

Keach founded an industrial motion picture production company in 1946.

Kaydan Records, Keach's educational record company, has produced numerous award-winning projects, including "The Living Constitution of the United States" and "The Declaration of Independence," which won awards from the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge, Pa. Among other educational records Keach has produced are "Speed Reading Made Easy" and "Travelanguage." He recently completed "Approved Exercises for Senior Citizens" and "Approved Exercises for the Heart Patient," which include three audio cassettes and booklets consisting of five different sets of exercises. Keach produced and narrated these programs.

As a young man, Keach received a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship, which was annually awarded to the "most outstanding young theater person in the United States." Among his other honors and awards are the Los Angeles City Council Award for his achievements in theater and work in community affairs. Keach received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in 1987 from Columbia

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Keach Visits IWU/4

College. The Los Angeles Heart Institute has honored Keach for two films he produced for heart patients and their families. Keach also produced and directed on a volunteer basis a 30-minute anti-drug use film for the Los Angeles police and Board of Education.

Keach is a member of the Association of Visual Communicators, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and has served as a director of the Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters Association.

Keach and his wife, Mary, his college sweetheart, are the parents of Stacy, Jr., known for several roles, including television's hard-boiled detective, "Mike Hammer," and James, a well-known director and actor. Stacy, Jr. is married to Polish actress Malgosia Thomassi, and James is married to Jane Seymour, star of CBS television's hit western series, "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman."

Keach can be reached at Stacy Keach Productions, 3969 Longridge Ave., Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91423; phone: 818/905-9601.

The E. Melba Johnson Kirkpatrick Theater Artists Series was established 23 years ago by Charles Kirkpatrick and named for his sister-in-law, an IWU alumna and former director of the university theater. IWU's Laboratory Theater was named for E. Melba Johnson Kirkpatrick last November.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,800 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. In recent years, the university's endowment has grown to more than \$90 million; a \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$24 million science building will open in 1995. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 164 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *U.S. News* ranks IWU the second most efficient national liberal arts college--a key gauge of the campus' quality academic program and relatively reasonable cost. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition. IWU receives more than 2,800 applications annually for about 500 seats in the freshman class. IWU's 1994 freshman class scored an average 27.9 on the ACT exam, compared to the national average of 20.7.