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Life Begins at 90? Three Active People in their Mid-90s Put Others to Shame

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Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine

Life Begins at 90?

Three Active People in their Mid-90s Put Others to Shame

Locals
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Features
Education
Sci/Tech/Health

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--If you think George Burns, the cigar-smoking quipster, is the only 90-year-old having a ball, then you haven't met Arnold Beckman, Lloyd Bertholf, or Pearl Bower.

Beckman, who turns age 95 next month, is an inventor, businessman, and philanthropist, who in the 1980s alone gave away more than \$170 million to colleges and other worthy causes.

Bertholf, who turned age 95 last December, was president of Illinois Wesleyan University from 1958-68. He still keeps up with his scientific interests--Bertholf is a biologist--by listening to tape recordings of *Scientific American*.

Bower, who is age 94, is addicted to a daily exercise regimen, particularly swimming. A homemaker who raised three daughters, she was a board member for 20 years of the Baby Fold, a child welfare agency in Normal, Ill., and helped place children in adoptive homes.

These 90-year-olds, who are living active lives well into their 10th decade, are profiled in the spring 1995 edition of *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine*.

Beckman, who lives in Corona Del Mar, Calif., is a member of the National Inventors Hall of Fame for coming up with devices like the pH meter for use in citrus processing--a discovery that led to the formation of Beckman Instruments, one of the world's largest manufacturers of scientific and medical instruments. He also played a key role in developing radar in World War II. Beckman directs the activities of the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation, which supports educational programs in chemical and biological research.

Exercise is not a key to Beckman's longevity.

"My passport lists me as an executive," Beckman says, "so I reserve the right to delegate, and I delegate the exercise to others."

Bertholf, a Bloomington resident, on the other hand, *leads* an exercise class every Monday and Thursday at 8 a.m.

Bertholf's recent notoriety has focused on his dedication to exercise, which

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prompted this observation from the retired educator and honeybee expert: "I don't want my closing years to be remembered for that, as though that's the only thing in my life. I suppose the answer is that college presidents are a dime a dozen, but people who can exercise when they're 95 are pretty rare, so that's what people look at."

Bower, a wiry, white-haired woman with a mischievous smile who lives in Bloomington, said: "I don't find life boring, and I have trouble getting everything in that I want."

In addition to swimming, Bower plays bridge, reads, cooks, knits, and crochets.

A common thread linking Beckman, Bertholf, and Bower is a positive outlook on the future.

"I figure since I wasn't taken at 90," Bower said, "that I'm working toward 100." In fact, she said, "I'm watching the catalogs for a new bathing suit."

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 \$92 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's 1994 freshman class scored an average 27.9 on the ACT exam, compared to the national average of 20.7.

Editor's Note: The article, which is attached to this news release, is written by *IWU Magazine* Managing Editor Elaine Graybill. It is headline: "There is an unspeakable dawn in happy old age," a quote by French novelist Victor Hugo. For permission to reprint the article, please contact: *IWU Magazine* Executive Editor Bob Aaron at 309/556-3181.