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Hoop Dreams' Coach--Luther Bedford--Of Chicago's Marshall H.S.--Profiled

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Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine

Hoop Dreams' Coach--Luther Bedford-- Of Chicago's Marshall H.S.--Profiled

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--High school teacher . . . basketball coach . . . movie star?

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Luther Bedford, a 1959 Illinois Wesleyan University graduate, is the physical education teacher at Chicago's 1,700-student Marshall High School who coached Arthur Agee, one of the two high school basketball players featured in the critically acclaimed film documentary *Hoop Dreams*.

Bedford, who plays himself in the movie, is profiled in the Fall, 1995, edition of *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine*. The article, "Hoop Dreams: Coach an Inner-City Inspiration," was written by Stew Salowitz, IWU's director of news services and a 1976 IWU graduate. A copy of the article is attached to this news release.

Hoop Dreams won the 1994 Sundance Film Festival audience award for "Best Documentary." It is the true story of two high school basketball players who dream of someday playing professional basketball and the pressures in their lives as they work toward that goal and others.

Chicago Tribune columnist Barry Temkin, who covers high school sports, said, "Marshall is in a tough neighborhood on the city's west side, but coaches like Luther [Bedford] and Dorothy Gathers [Marshall girls' basketball coach] have been anchors for not only the school's athletic success, but for the entire school."

"The filmmakers," Bedford explained, "came to me with their plans to follow Arthur's progress, but I didn't want them to interfere with our team concept by following one kid and taking pictures of just him."

"[The filmmakers] offered to talk to the others on the team and I told them that wouldn't be necessary, I could talk to them myself. I finally gave in and they did a good job for the first year, staying out of the way. But by the time Arthur was a senior, they were really in the way of some of the things I was trying to do as a coach."

Now available in movie rental stores, *Hoop Dreams* will make its television debut in November on Public Broadcasting System stations nationwide.

(more)

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Cent, Chicago,
minority,
composite
Rockford
Bellwood

Hoop Dreams-Bedford/2

Since 1973, Bedford has amassed a career basketball coaching record of 378 wins and 198 losses. His teams have represented the Chicago Public League in the "Sweet 16" of the Illinois High School Association state basketball tournament four times.

The 58-year-old Bedford, who lives in Bellwood, Ill., was elected to the Chicago Public League Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in June, 1995. He is a native of Rockford, Ill.

IWU, founded in 1850, has a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. The university's endowment is valued at more than \$100 million. A \$25 million Center for Natural Science Learning and Research opened Aug. 28. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994. 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. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition. *101 of the Best Values in America's Colleges and Universities* calls IWU "undoubtedly one of the finest small colleges in the country," adding, "Illinois Wesleyan has surged to national prominence on the basis of its reputation as a school with a rock-solid academic program."