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Scholarship-Mentoring Program for Inner-City Youth, Linking Chicago Public Schools,

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February 14, 1996

Contact: Bob Aaron, 309/556-3181**Embargoed Until 11 a.m. CT, Feb. 14**

Scholarship-Mentoring Program for Inner-City Youth, Linking Chicago Public Schools, 24 Illinois Private Colleges, Set for Unveiling at IWU's Founders' Day Convocation, Feb. 14

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--A sweeping new high school mentoring and four-year college scholarship program, linking Chicago public school students with 24 Illinois private colleges and universities, will be announced at Illinois Wesleyan University's Founders' Day Convocation, Feb. 14.

Harold R. Wilde, secretary of the Associated Colleges of Illinois' Board of Trustees and president of North Central College in Naperville, Ill., will announce the ACI-Chicago Scholars Program at the IWU convocation, an annual event marking IWU's founding in 1850. IWU is among campuses slated to participate in the program aimed at expanding educational opportunity to inner-city youngsters.

Linda M. Henry, senior advisor for guidance and counseling for the Chicago Public Schools, will respond to Wilde's announcement.

Rebie R. Kingston, director of the Office of Guidance for the Detroit Public Schools and an IWU trustee, will be the convocation's keynote speaker.

The ACI-Chicago Scholars Program is modeled on Detroit's Wade H. McCree, Jr. Incentive Scholarship Program, launched in 1986. Kingston helped establish the McCree program and her office administers it. IWU, which joined the McCree program in 1994, is the only private university and non-Michigan campus in the McCree program.

Jerry Fuller, executive director of the Associated Colleges of Illinois, said, "ACI colleges and universities are uniquely suited to working with gifted inner-city students because these campuses are smaller communities of scholars with nurturing environments that help ensure students' success."

Fuller pointed out that 51 percent of students attending ACI campuses graduate in four years, compared 26 percent statewide. "ACI institutions," he said, "have a 25 percent higher graduation rate for African-American students than other colleges and universities in the state."

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Eventually, Fuller said, he hopes that 1,000 students each year will be ACI-Chicago Scholars.

"The purpose of the ACI-Chicago Scholars program," said IWU President Minor Myers, jr., "is to ensure the college readiness of academically talented inner-city youth.

"What we're saying to these students is clear and simple," Myers added. "Work hard in school, keep your grades up, and 24 campuses across the state of Illinois will make sure the money--and academic support--is there for you to go to college."

The ACI-Chicago Scholars Program, Myers said, is a strong three-way partnership, linking the Chicago Public Schools, 24 campuses, and ACI for the benefit of Chicago's youngsters.

"This program," Myers said, "shows just how much can be done to help our communities and give opportunity to our children through new types of creative partnerships."

The Founders' Day Convocation theme is concern for children. Consequently, Kingston and two other leading advocates for youngsters will receive honorary Doctor of Laws degrees at the convocation for their lifetime contributions to education and youth:

■ Nancy Stevenson, chief executive officer of the Chicago-based Voices for Illinois Children. She is the wife of former Illinois U.S. Sen. Adlai Stevenson III.

■ Silas Purnell, executive director of educational services for Ada S. McKinley Community Services, a community services organization in Chicago. For 25 years, Purnell has guided and placed thousands of black students in college.

ACI-Chicago Scholars Program

The ACI-Chicago Scholars program will begin in the 1996-97 school year. High school participants will enroll in a college preparatory curriculum.

"Students must perform to get through the program," Fuller explained. "In high school, they have to have a "B" average, a 95 percent attendance record, and at least a composite score of 21 on the ACT to enter college under the program."

The ACT or American College Test is a leading college admissions exam.

While ACI-Chicago Scholars are in high school, they will be assigned a mentoring relationship with ACI-member institutions and invited to campuses for

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various events and programs.

Students selected for the program--and their parents--must attend a mandatory orientation session. Students and parents must sign a contract, pledging to meet specified academic performance standards.

Tutors, a summer enrichment program, and mentoring by participating campuses and corporate supporters are program features.

Participating ACI campuses will determine how many students they can financially support. Students will be randomly assigned to these campuses, accordingly. Under certain conditions, students will be able to switch the campus they are assigned to during their last semester in high school. For example, students may switch campuses, if their assigned college or university does not offer a program in a chosen field of study.

Participating colleges will meet the financial need of each ACI student. In addition to state and federal financial aid that students may qualify for, ACI-Chicago Scholars will receive assistance from the campuses and funds raised from corporations and foundations.

Additional details of the program's operations are still under development.

Reble Kingston

Reble R. Kingston is an educator with broad experience in guidance and counseling with special emphasis on "at-risk" students. She is among far-sighted educators who launched the Wade H. McCree Jr. Scholarship Incentive Program.

The McCree program provides targeted Detroit high school students with mentoring, financial, and other resources designed to enhance their participation and retention rates in colleges.

"The students in the McCree program can compete with any in the nation," Kingston said. "They take honors classes, they study math, science, and foreign languages--every semester. They are excellent students."

Twenty-eight Detroit high schools and 1,000 students participate in the Wade McCree Program, as well as 10 Michigan universities--all public institutions --and IWU.

Kingston has served as an educator in Pine Bluff, Ark.; Flint, Mich.; and Detroit. She has taught French and English and has served as a guidance

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counselor and in several administrative posts involving guidance.

She has traveled extensively in Europe and as a French teacher has taken students to Europe for summer study.

Kingston has been affiliated with several civic and other organizations over the years, including: the Student Motivational Program, NAACP, Conflict Resolution for Schools for the State of Michigan, Professional Women's Network, and the National Association for Counseling and Development.

Kingston earned a bachelor's degree in French from the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff, a master of education degree in educational sociology from Wayne State University, and a doctorate in counseling from the University of Michigan.

Nancy Stevenson

Voices for Illinois Children, a Chicago-based organization headed by Nancy Stevenson, champions the full development of every Illinois youngster.

Stevenson, wife of former U.S. Sen. Adlai Stevenson III (D-Ill.), became chief executive officer of "Voices" in 1991 after serving as a member of the group's board of directors from 1987-91.

"Voices" is particularly concerned with children who live in poverty or are vulnerable because of discrimination, ill health, or family stress. It analyzes strategies for improving the lives of Illinois' children and engages in public education and coalition building to achieve its goals.

Stevenson is a longtime children's advocate. President John F. Kennedy appointed her to the Joint Youth Development Committee and she has served on the Advisory Board of Headstart, the widely respected, federally supported pre-school education program. Stevenson also was a member of the Illinois Board for the 1970 White House Conference on Children. As a Washington, D.C., resident, she served on the Scholarship Committee for Sidwell Friends, a private school, and as a board member of the Black Student Fund and the Capitol Historic Society.

Stevenson's civic activities have included membership on the Illinois Humanities Council from 1980-90, serving as council chair from 1983-85. She also was a member of the Federation of State Humanities Councils from 1985-90, chairing the federation from 1988-90. Mrs. Stevenson has been a member of the women's boards of the Chicago Urban League, Northwestern University, and the

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University of Chicago.

Stevenson is a trustee of the University of Chicago and is a director of Bank One.

The former Nancy Anderson, born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, is a 1955 graduate of Smith College. She received a master of arts degree in history from American University in Washington, D.C., in 1985. She married Adlai Stevenson III in 1955. Nancy and Adlai have four children: Adlai, Lucy, Katherine, and Warwick.

Silas Purnell

Operating out of a basement office in Chicago's Dearborn Homes housing project, Silas Purnell has helped more than 40,000 African-American men and women to enroll in about 200 colleges and universities nationwide.

Asked why he works in a poverty-stricken neighborhood just blocks from where he was born in 1923, Purnell said in a 1992 interview it's because "that's where the people are."

Purnell is executive director of educational services for Ada S. McKinley Community Services.

Over the years, he has established working relationships with hundreds of educational institutions to assist black and other minority students, as well as non-minority students, to gain admission to public and private, historically black and predominantly white, large and small colleges and universities.

Purnell was honored by Illinois Wesleyan University's Minority Alumni Network at Homecoming '92 for his lifetime contributions to helping extend educational opportunity to youth. He was introduced at the ceremony by Dr. Ansel Johnson '81, an optometrist, whose first acquaintance with IWU was on a bus trip to the campus organized by Purnell.

In an interview prior to receiving his IWU award, Purnell said: "Our students are doing some of everything--medicine, dentistry, engineering, and law--and many of them came right out of the projects."

Purnell has a strong faith in education. "Education," he said in a 1992 interview, "gets the kids off the street. Education is the key to all our problems. It helps solve problems like housing, unemployment, teen pregnancy, and crime. But kids need money to stay in school--and many young people who want to go

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to school don't think it's possible since they don't have money."

Purnell resigned in 1967 from the Coca-Cola Company, where he had been a marketing manager for a dozen years, and spent a year as a volunteer with Ada S. McKinley Community Services. This experience fueled his determination to get minority youth off the streets, encourage them to finish high school and, if qualified, counsel and support their efforts to attend college.

Purnell has logged more than 100,000 air miles in some years visiting colleges, giving, lectures and fundraising.

He is known for his "no nonsense" approach to education, counseling students based on what they need and not necessarily what they believe they want. However, Purnell has his "soft" side and a reputation of going beyond the call of duty, helping less advantaged students with anything from bus fare to eyeglasses.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,860 students in 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 and was dedicated Oct. 7. 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 161 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."

Editor's Note: IWU's Founders' Day Convocation will take place Wednesday, Feb. 14, at 11 a.m. in Westbrook Auditorium, Presser Hall, 303 E. University St., Bloomington. The convocation is open to the public, admission free. **For more information** about the Associated Colleges of Illinois-Chicago Scholars Program, contact: Jerry Fuller, executive director, Associated Colleges of Illinois, 150 N. Wacker Dr., Suite #1350, Chicago, Ill. 60606, telephone: 312/263-2391.