



Summer 8-25-1997

Western Springs Family Leads Scholarship Fund Effort

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Recommended Citation

Aaron, Bob, "Western Springs Family Leads Scholarship Fund Effort" (1997). *News and Events*. 6858.

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Aug. 25, 1997

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Western Springs Family Leads Scholarship Fund Effort

Editor's Note: *Western Springs residents David and Ann Lawrence live at 5409 Franklin. They are among organizers of a gala dinner next month to raise scholarship funds for Illinois Wesleyan University students from the Chicago area.*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--What's bringing together the Chicago Bulls, Bears, Cubs, White Sox, and Blackhawks?

The same thing that's drawing together the plush Ritz-Carlton hotel along the Magnificent Mile, Zanies comedy club, and Wheeling's posh Le Francais restaurant, which the *Chicago Tribune* has called "arguably Chicago's finest French restaurant."

Answer: Illinois Wesleyan University.

A silent auction of items provided by these Chicago sports teams, restaurants, hotels, and others will help raise scholarship funds for Chicagoland students who attend IWU.

Western Springs residents David and Ann Lawrence are spearheading a gala scholarship dinner, highlighted by the silent auction. The 6:30 p.m. cocktail reception and dinner, expected to attract hundreds of IWU alumni and friends of the university from throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, will be at the La Grange Country Club, between 47th and 55th, in La Grange, on Sept. 20.

The Lawrences are not IWU alumni. David Lawrence is a graduate of the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign and Ann Lawrence is a graduate of Boston's Simmons College. However, their son, David, Jr., graduated from IWU in 1979, and daughter, Lisa, is a 1983 IWU graduate. David, Jr., is with the U.S. State Department and Lisa is employed by Chicago's Northern Trust Bank.

"We have been involved with IWU since the fall of 1976 when David started school," said Ann Lawrence. "We believe David and Lisa got a wonderful education."

Ann Lawrence added: "We believe in smaller schools, where there is more one-on-one with students and professors, and professors teach classes--not teaching assistants."

More than 6,000 IWU graduates--25 percent of IWU alumni--live in the greater Chicago area. More than 1,200 IWU students from Chicagoland are enrolled at IWU. Last year, they received \$5.5 million in financial aid from IWU. Illinois Wesleyan's annual

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financial aid budget is about \$9.6 million. Eighty-seven percent of IWU students receive financial aid.

"IWU has so many students attending from Chicago and so many need financial help, we have an obligation to try to help," Ann Lawrence said, referring to the scholarship dinner's goals.

David Lawrence became involved in the scholarship dinner because of the "proactivity of IWU in bringing Chicago area students to campus and encouraging them to further their education. The concept of a scholarship dinner to help support these efforts was most appealing."

Scholarship funds also will be raised through \$75 per person dinner ticket sales and donations. Silent auction items include hotel packages, restaurant gift certificates, theater tickets, autographed team pennants, and tickets to sporting events. Among other silent auction participants are Arlington race track, Things Remembered, Marriott, Drury Lane, Maggiano's restaurant, Westin hotels, and Ravinia.

"IWU alumni have been blessed with a fine education at a wonderful institution," David Lawrence said, "and we all feel a responsibility to repay, in part, those blessings we've enjoyed in our lives and business careers. We encourage IWU alumni to come to the dinner and have a great time."

Benjamin Rhodes, IWU's director of development and a 1969 IWU graduate, expects the scholarship dinner will become an annual event.

"One benefit of this scholarship program," Rhodes explained, "is that IWU alumni from Chicago will have an identifiable group of students who they are financially helping. They'll have the opportunity to develop personal relationships with those students and perhaps help them with job opportunities and internships.

"I see how successful our student-alumni are down the road," Rhodes said. "Scholarships are the best dollars you can spend. They are a lifetime investment."

A challenge grant also is in the works, according to Rhodes. "We are working with a group of people," Rhodes said, "alumni, parents, and friends of IWU in the Chicago area," who will supplement funds raised by the scholarship dinner.

David Lawrence, an executive with Gooding Rubber Co., in Countryside, Ill., and Ann Lawrence are part of a six-member scholarship dinner planning committee. Planning for the dinner began last March. The dinner is sponsored by IWU's Chicago Region Alumni Association.

For more information and scholarship dinner tickets, call: Yvonne Jones, IWU

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Chicago office, 312/943-4561 or David and Ann Lawrence, Scholarship Dinner Committee members, 708/246-1281.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,900 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and its Schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletic center, a \$25 million science building, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million liberal arts center. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching ranks Illinois Wesleyan a "Baccalaureate I" institution, a classification that places it among the 161 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges. IWU won the 1997 NCAA Division III men's basketball championship.