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Poet-Playwright Derek Walcott Nobel Laureate to Address IWU's President's Convocation, Sept.

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Sept. 2, 1997

Contact: Bob Aaron, 309/556-3181**Poet-Playwright Derek Walcott**

Hometown

Nobel Laureate to Address IWU's President's Convocation, Sept. 10**Editor's Note:** Nobel laureate Derek Walcott teaches at Boston University.

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Nobel Prize-winning poet and playwright Derek Walcott will keynote Illinois Wesleyan University's President's Convocation on Sept. 10.

Walcott will receive an honorary doctor of humanities degree at the 11 a.m. Convocation, marking the start of the 1997-98 academic year. The Convocation will be in Westbrook Auditorium, Presser Hall, 303 E. University Ave., Bloomington. It is open to the public, free-of-charge.

Walcott's Sept. 10 IWU itinerary includes:

- 8 a.m.--Breakfast with faculty and students (by invitation only), Cartwright Room, Memorial Student Center, 104 E. University Ave.
- 9 a.m. --Class discussion in a practical criticism course taught by Robert Bray, R. Forest Colwell professor of English, E. Melba Johnson Kirkpatrick Laboratory Theatre, 303 E. University Ave. (attached to Presser Hall on the Graham St. side), Bloomington.
- 11 a.m.--Convocation
- 12 p.m.--Luncheon (by invitation only), Davidson Room, Memorial Student Center, honoring IWU's 44 Presidential Scholars, including 15 new scholars in the class of 2001.

Walcott won the 1992 Nobel Prize for Literature. When the Swedish Academy announced the award, it said: "He [Walcott] has both African and European veins. In him West Indian culture has found its great poet."

The academy cited Walcott's writing for its ". . . poetic [and] great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of a multicultural commitment."

The Boston Globe reported in 1992 that Walcott was honored and surprised by the Nobel Prize.

"When you say Nobel suddenly I realize that's who I am," the Boston Globe quoted Walcott as saying at the time. "It's hard to associate me with that sound."

Walcott, who was born on the West Indian island of St. Lucia, Windward Islands in 1930, shares the famed literature award with many of the 20th century's greatest writers,

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Nobel Laureate to Visit IWU/2

including Russia's Boris Pasternak, France's Albert Camus, the United Kingdom's Winston Churchill, and Toni Morrison of the United States.

Walcott, who for more than 20 years has maintained a permanent residence in Trinidad, graduated from the University College of the West Indies. In 1957, he was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship to study American theater.

He founded the Trinidad Theater Workshop. His plays have been produced by the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, and the Negro Ensemble Company.

In 1969, Walcott received the Eugene O'Neill Foundation-Wesleyan University fellowship for playwrights.

Walcott has published several books of plays: *Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays*, *The Joker of Seville* and *O Babylon!*, *Remembrance and Pantomime*; *Three Plays: The Last Carnival*; *Beef, No Chicken*; and *A Branch of the Blue Nile*, and *The Odyssey*.

Dream on Monkey Mountain won the Obie Award for a distinguished foreign play in 1971.

Walcott's poems have been published in *The New Yorker*, *Kenyon Review*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Nation*, *London Magazine*, *Antaeus*, and other periodicals.

He is the author of eight books of poetry, including: *Selected Poems*, *The Gulf*, *Another Life*, *The Star Apple Kingdom*, *The Fortunate Traveller*, *Midsummer*; *Collected Poems, 1948-84*—which won the 1986 Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Poetry—*The Arkansas Testament*, and *Omeros*.

Among Walcott's honors are the Guinness Award for Poetry, a Royal Society of Literature award, the Cholmondeley Prize, the New Statesman's Jock Campbell award, and the Welsh Arts Council International Writers Prize. He was awarded the Queens Medal for Poetry in 1988.

In 1981, Walcott received a five-year fellowship from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, popularly known as a "genius" award.

Walcott is an honorary member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Walcott lives in Trinidad except during the academic year when he lives in Boston and teaches at Boston University.

<p>Editor's Note: Nobel laureate Derek Walcott will meet with the news media, Wednesday, Sept. 10, at 1 p.m. in the Henning Room, lower level, IWU Memorial Student Center, 104 E. University Ave.</p>
