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## Research Conference IWU Students Vie For Awards at 9th Annual John Wesley Powell

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### Research Conference

### **IWU Students Vie For Awards At 9th Annual John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Ever wonder why those last few Cheerios migrate and cling together at the bottom of your cereal bowl? With a gleeful chuckle Illinois Wesleyan University's Assistant Provost, Roger Schnaitter, produced Tom Davidsmeier's paper titled, "Cheerio-Cheerio Interactions In A Milk Matrix," from last year's John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference at Illinois Wesleyan University, stating, "There's the answer." While the title and topic might seem a bit mischievous, Schnaitter points to the underlying intellectual intrigue of the experiment: "taking Cheerios and an actual physical phenomenon, then scientifically explaining why and how the molecular process occurs."

The 9th annual John Wesley Powell Research Conference, co-sponsored by the Illinois Wesleyan Provost's office and the IWU Chapter of the Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, takes place Saturday, April 18, 1998, in the IWU Center for Natural Science, 201 E. Beecher St., Bloomington.

Poster setups begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Science Commons, and poster sessions as well as oral presentations run through mid-afternoon. At 2:30 p.m. Robert Spear '77, Illinois Wesleyan's 1990 Outstanding Young Alum and Doctor of Pediatric Intensive Care at the University of California San Diego Medical Center, will make a presentation to the conference participants in the Science Center's Anderson Auditorium.

Spear previously was at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore for four years. In 1987, he was a member of a Johns Hopkins surgical team that performed one of the most difficult and unusual surgical procedures in history-- the successful separation of conjoined twins which were attached at the head.

Spear was among seven pediatric anesthesiologists on the team and was present throughout the 22-hour operation except for three half-hour breaks.

According to Schnaitter, most of the 50-plus research projects are

presented by IWU juniors and seniors, yet sophomores "and the occasional brave freshman" are encouraged to participate. The conference affords all students producing research projects "a chance to present their work and be recognized for their accomplishment."

Accordingly, Phi Kappa Phi will be awarding three research awards of \$100 each to students participating in the conference. The award decisions will be made by an interdisciplinary committee of faculty who are members of Phi Kappa Phi with the recipients recognized at the conference awards ceremony Saturday afternoon.

While a majority of the presentations come from the scientific fields--organic chemistry, biology, physics, psychology, mathematics, et.al. with titles like "Isolation of Curcumin from Turmeric," "Anisotropic Etching of SrTiO<sub>3</sub>," and "Bernstein-Bézier Polynomials and Vertex Splines"--the social sciences and humanities are not forgotten.

Works titled "The Use of Financial Derivatives by Commercial Banks," "A Feminist Critique of Prenatal Care in the U.S." and "Wandering on His Way: An Examination of Kerouac's Spiritual Progress in *The Subterraneans* and *the Dharma Bums*" include Economics, Philosophy, English, and Anthropology.

The first Research Conference was spearheaded by Psychology Department Associate Professor Wayne Dornan and the Biology Department's Gail Lima in 1990. The conference was named for explorer and geologist Powell, a Civil War veteran, founder of the National Geographic Society and professor of geology at IWU for two years. Schnaitter relates, "In 1867 Powell took Illinois Wesleyan students on what appears credited as the first extended research expedition to the Colorado mountains," hence the connection to the current conference.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and its Schools of Music, Theater 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 159 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges. IWU won the 1997 NCAA Division III men's basketball championship.