



Fall 9-1-1998

Garrett to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan University's President's Convocation

Sherry Wallace
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

Recommended Citation

Wallace, Sherry, "Garrett to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan University's President's Convocation" (1998). *News and Events*. 7006.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/7006>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Sept. 1, 1998

Contact: Sherry Wallace, 309/556-3181 or
Heather Hahn, 309/556-3182

Garrett to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan University's President's Convocation

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -- Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and acclaimed author Laurie Garrett will speak at Illinois Wesleyan University's President's Convocation, Sept. 9, 1998 at 11 a.m. in Westbrook Auditorium of Presser Hall, 303 E. University Ave., Bloomington. The title of her speech is "The Coming Plague: Russia and Its Neighbors."

Garrett's recent work has explored how the current financial and political turmoil in Russia and its surrounding regions heightens the threat posed by hundreds of infectious diseases already prevalent in the country. Such illnesses as HIV, diphtheria, and tuberculosis are easily spread to neighboring states by people fleeing the troubled land. "There are several 'super bugs' emerging in that part of the world," says Garrett. "Different strains of HIV co-circulate and produce new forms of the virus with capabilities that we can't anticipate."

Garrett, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Berkeley, in immunology before completely changing career paths to become a writer, is the only individual to ever have been awarded all three of the Big "P"s" of journalism – The Peabody Award, The Polk Award and The Pulitzer Prize.

A recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in Explanatory Journalism in 1996 for her article on the Ebola Virus outbreak in Zaire, Garrett was nominated for the same honor in 1998 for her coverage of the public healthcare crisis in the regions of the former Soviet Union.

As a freelance journalist, Garrett has reported on some of the world's most prominent scientific issues for National Public Radio, the British Broadcasting Corporation, CBS, *Omni*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. She has also appeared on such television shows as *Dateline NBC*, *The McNeil/Lehrer Newshour*,

and *Nightline*. Since 1988, Garrett has had an award-winning career as a health and science reporter for *Newsday*.

In addition to co-authoring and contributing to several books on cancer, AIDS and disease evolution, Garrett has most recently been raising international awareness of new breeds of viruses and bacterial infections. She believes these evolving strains of disease are emerging from rain forests around the globe with the deadly potential to wipe out entire populations in a matter of days.

Garrett's book, *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance*, published in 1994, tracks the progression of "hot" viruses, or mutations of already-existing strains of disease that resist cures. Garrett gathered a comprehensive survey of emerging and persistent infectious diseases, as reported by field epidemiologists, and used detailed accounts to explain how epidemics occur. She also examined how vulnerable American cities are to potential epidemics and what members of the global community can do to prevent such outbreaks.

The Coming Plague was named "One of the Best Books of 1994" by both the *New York Times Sunday Book Review* and *Library Journal*. Malcolm Jones, Jr. of *Newsweek* wrote that *The Coming Plague* is "the ultimate short course in new killer diseases." *The New Yorker* called Garrett's work "brilliant," and Peter Jaret of *The Washington Post* said, "Garrett knows her stuff. She's as skillful at explaining the tricks bacteria use to elude antibiotics as she is at tracing the complex genetic clues that hint at how the AIDS virus emerged."

In April 1997, Turner Original Productions aired a four-hour documentary entitled *The Coming Plague*, which Garrett co-produced. The program was subsequently nominated for the prestigious International Documentary Award. In October of that same year, Garrett hosted the five-hour PBS series *Great Minds of Medicine*, which aired on 80 television stations nationwide and was published in concise form in *Health* magazine.

Garrett has won several accolades for her scientific reporting in both print and broadcast journalism. These include the Front Page Award from the Newswomen's Club of New York in 1995, the Newsday Publisher's Award for Best Beat Reporter in 1995, a Presidential Citation from the American Public Health Association in 1996, and the Best Beat Reporter Award from the Long Island Press Club in 1997.

In addition, Garrett was named a National Public Health Hero by the University of California School of Public Health in 1998. She also served as the commencement speaker for Yale University's School of Public Health in 1998.

Born in Los Angeles in 1951, Garrett graduated with honors from the University of California in Santa Cruz after studying biochemistry. She is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a former President of the National Association of Science Writers.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 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.