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# An Era of Achievement

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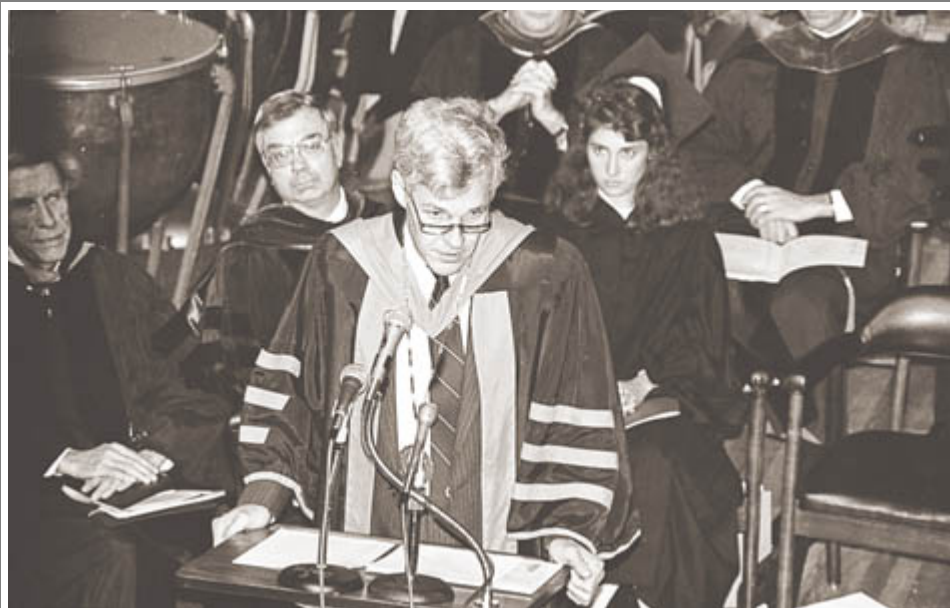
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## An Era of Achievement

**In his inaugural address, Minor Myers vowed to assist Illinois Wesleyan in its quest to “build on what is right.” During the next 14 years of his administration, he led the University into the national spotlight as a model of excellence in liberal arts education. Here are just a few of the many notable accomplishments from those years.**



**Sept. 13, 1989:** Minor Myers, jr., becomes the 17th president of Illinois Wesleyan. In his inaugural speech, he refers to the historic roots of the University’s educational mission. “This institution ... now stands, almost 150 years later, in its strongest condition ever,” says Myers, adding, “Our task here, as in every institution, is not to dwell on what is wrong, but to build on what is right.”

**1992:** The Collegiate Choir caps its six-state spring concert tour with a performance at New York’s famed Lincoln Center. The Camerata, IWU’s chamber music group, will take its “Music for Peace” program on a tour in 1993, including a performance at Carnegie Hall.

**Fall 1992:** The first *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine* is published, delivering campus and alumni news to some 23,000 readers four times a year.

**Spring 1994:** *U.S. News & World Report’s* annual rankings of colleges shifts Illinois Wesleyan from a top regional ranking into the national liberal-arts category. President Myers notes that the change is both expected and welcomed.

**Fall 1994:** Illinois Wesleyan becomes the first private college to join the McCree Scholarship Program, which guarantees talented minority students from Detroit will be able to attend college. In 1996, IWU joins a new partnership with Chicago public schools modeled on the McCree

program. Increasing campus diversity remains a priority for Myers' administration; as he says in an interview, "the goal of diversity is the inevitable task of the liberal arts college."

**Sept. 21-23, 1994:** During a campus visit, former British prime minister Edward Heath (left) teaches a class for aspiring political leaders, lectures on Japanese art, and conducts IWU's Civic Orchestra. "He symbolizes the kind of multitalented students IWU attracts and graduates," says President Myers.



Future visits from such stellar guests as director Spike Lee, U.S. Navy Admiral Leighton Smith, Latin American author Carlos Fuentes, and feminist Gloria Steinem generate excitement on the campus throughout the decade

**Oct. 15, 1994:** The \$15.2-million Shirk Center for Athletics, Recreation and Wellness is dedicated. The center — which includes a performance gymnasium for varsity basketball that seats 2,500, a six-lane track, squash courts, and exercise rooms — is funded in part by a gift from the Shirk Family Foundation.



**October 1995:** The University opens the Center for Natural Science. Providing nearly 130,000 square feet of space and 22 student-faculty research labs, the center is later featured as a model building by the National Science Foundation.

**April 1996:** In its seventh year, the annual student research conference evolves into the John Wesley Powell Research Conference, named after the IWU professor and famed explorer. Featuring a keynote address by Harvard evolutionary biologist Stephen J. Gould, the conference presents student research in several disciplines and provides what President Myers describes as "the real essence of all we are doing, ... bringing together creative students finding new things that no one in the world has ever known before."

**Spring 1996:** May Term is launched. The month-long semester offers innovative courses and off-campus study, as almost 200 students have their passports stamped for destinations such as China and the Czech Republic. May Term is only one of many study-abroad options for students — semester-long programs in London and Madrid become especially popular offerings.



**Fall 1996:** After installing a \$1.5-million fiber-optics system to enable faculty, staff, and students to communicate with each other by computer, Illinois Wesleyan University launches its own Web site. That same year, interest in computers takes a scholarly edge when the Illinois Wesleyan Information Network on Knowledge (IWINK) forms to develop teaching and research opportunities in artificial intelligence. Among its projects is Shelley, a learning robot (shown right, with Matt Weaver '98).

**1997:** After a \$5.1-million renovation, the old science facility, Sherff Hall, is transformed into the Center for Liberal Arts, a three-floor brick building housing 60 faculty offices, classrooms, and seminar rooms.

**March 22, 1997:** The men's basketball team wins the NCAA Division III national championship in Salem, Va., defeating Nebraska Wesleyan, 89-86, while All-American forward Bryan Crabtree '97 earns NCAA Division III "Player of the Year" honors. The Titans, led by Dennie Bridges '61, finished their season with a 29-2 record, which was a school record for wins in a season.



**Fall 1997:** A \$7-million, four-floor, coed residence hall opens. At a later Board of Trustees dinner, President Myers surprises lifelong University friend and benefactor Harriett Fuller Rust with the announcement that the hall would be named in her honor.

**Fall 1997:** In what President Myers calls "Illinois Wesleyan's version of a Rhodes scholarship," six students from IWU attend Pembroke College at Oxford University — living and studying for one academic year at one of the world's most elevated homes of higher education. More IWU students will follow.



**October 1997:** The Greek Affairs Task Force — consisting of faculty, staff, students, and alumni — explores the substantial role that Greek organizations serve on campus and recommends how that role might be more positively enhanced. It is one of several institutional reviews of programs affecting IWU's quality of life.

**Fall 1997:** IWU boasts a record enrollment of 1,995 students. The freshman class is comprised of 560 domestic students from 16 states and includes 37 high school valedictorians, 22 National Merit scholars, 10 international students, and 56 minority students.

**Spring 1998:** More than 250 students participate in National Volunteer

Weekend by pitching in at various local organizations. In the 1990s, Habitat for Humanity becomes an especially popular public-service project for students.

**August 1998:** Illinois Wesleyan launches its annual Fall Festival, designed to ease new students' transition into college life and familiarize them with the campus community and its values.



**Oct. 10, 1998:** A historic fund-raising challenge is announced at Homecoming. B. Charles Ames '50 and his wife, Joyce Eichhorn Ames '49 (both shown left), pledge to match all gifts to the Alumni Annual Fund, if IWU alumni contribute at least \$1 million annually for the next three years. The Ames family will also match gifts — up to \$9 million — earmarked for IWU's proposed new library. At a groundbreaking ceremony for the new library held the following autumn, Myers praises the visionary drive of both the Ames family and the many alumni who contributed to the project.

**Fall 1999:** Tom Hansen '82 (left, with mascot Tommy Titan) announces a major gift to transform the old Memorial Gymnasium into a vibrant new student center, featuring a two-story bookstore, café, grille, information center, and offices for student government and other organizations. Named after its benefactor, the Hansen Student Center opens its doors in January 2002.

**2000-01:** A special Homecoming kicks off a celebration of Illinois Wesleyan's Sesquicentennial. Grand parties and campus visits from esteemed guests are part of the yearlong festivities. Capping the year is publication of *Illinois Wesleyan University: Continuity & Change, 1850–2000*, a 242-page book covering 150 years of campus history written by President Myers and Carl Teichman '80, executive assistant to the president.

**March 24, 2000:** Illinois Wesleyan's Student-Managed Portfolio crosses the \$1-million mark for the first time. The fund, launched with help from alumni and trustees to give business students real-life stock experience, contributes 4.75 percent of its principal each year to student scholarships.

**Feb. 21, 2001:** IWU's Phi Beta Kappa charter is officially launched. Phi Beta Kappa is the nation's oldest and most prestigious undergraduate honors organization.

**May 2001:** Illinois Wesleyan's Alumni Association is revamped to provide more outlets for alumni involvement and interest nationwide.

**January 9, 2002:** The Ames Library, finished at a cost of \$23 million, is officially opened. The five-story structure furnishes 103,000 square feet of space — 66,000 feet more than the old Sheean Library. A blend of traditional elements and modern technology, The Ames Library houses 400,000 volumes and over 100 computer-equipped work stations.

**February 12, 2003:** In his last notable public appearance before undergoing treatment for lung cancer, President Myers convenes the annual Founder's Day convocation. In his speech, Myers quotes the inscription on the University's Founder's Gate, repeated in The Ames Library rotunda (right): "From this center, mighty pulsations will flow" He says of those historic words, "It is a hope, and it's a prediction of what this University might become. And today, as in the past, our task is to return to those words and discern what those mighty pulsations are, and where they still might lead us."

