Commencement Plaza Named in Honor of Kemp Family

The Glenn ’22 and Rozanne Parker Kemp ’27 Commencement Plaza will be the site each spring for the Illinois Wesleyan graduation ceremony. The plaza has been named in appreciation for a gift from the estate of the Kemps, which was made by their family to the University’s Transforming Lives fundraising campaign.

“The Kemp family and the Kemp Foundation have been loyal and generous supporters of Illinois Wesleyan for many years,” said President Dick Wilson. “We had the formal dedication of the plaza in April to coincide with awarding the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence, and the Class of 2013 was the first to receive their diplomas on the plaza.”

Parker Kemp, an emeritus trustee of Illinois Wesleyan and past president of the Lexington Bank, his children and their families decided that because his parents met at Wesleyan and were such loyal alumni, that a gift from their estate to name the new Commencement Plaza would be a fitting tribute to their memory and the love they shared for Illinois Wesleyan. Parker’s children include René Shaffer, Chris Kemp, Shannon Kemp, Toni Jenkins and Nick Kemp.

In addition to Glenn and Rozanne, and Parker’s service on the University’s Board of Trustees, all of Rozanne’s five siblings are Illinois Wesleyan alumni, granddaughter Toni Jenkins attended the University and her daughter Mackenzie Jenkins is a member of the Class of 2016.

Betty Ritchie-Birrer ’47 Establishes Three Endowed Funds and Supports State Farm Hall

Raised on the family farm in Maroa, Ill., Betty Stoutenborough had no idea how much of an impact Illinois Wesleyan would have on her life nor how big an impact she would have on the University, more than 70 years later.

“I recall my mother saying to me that first Thanksgiving home from college, that I was becoming just the lady she had hoped I would become,” said Betty recently, noting that it was her mother’s approval that first formed the bond she feels with Wesleyan.

Strengthening that bond was Betty’s marriage of nearly 50 years to classmate Charles Ritchie ’47, the friendships she formed with her Alpha Gamma Delta (AGD) sorority sisters, cousin Bill Stoutenborough ’46 who would marry one of her AGD sisters and seeing grandson Jonathan Musch graduate with the Class of 2000.

Today, Betty lives with her husband Ivan Birrer in Springfield, Ill. They share a love for travel and learning. Ivan, who is a retired Army Colonel with a Ph.D. in psychology from Clark University, served as the director of the graduate program in psychology at the U.S. Army’s Command and General Staff College in Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.

Betty has recently established three endowed funds and made a major gift to the new State Farm Hall classroom building in support of the University she loves and to help meet the needs of future generations of students:

• The Betty Ritchie-Birrer ’47 and Ivan Birrer, Ph.D. Endowed Professorship Fund, which has named Political Science Professor William Munro as its first recipient, supports the kind of teaching that endeared Betty to Wesleyan and was a hallmark of Ivan’s career.

• The Betty Ritchie-Birrer ’47 Endowed Scholarship Fund will enable students who might not have the means to attend Wesleyan to do so, and

• The Betty Ritchie-Birrer ’47 Endowed Study Abroad Fund will allow more students to study and travel abroad, which is something that is important to Betty and Ivan.
**Forrest Frank Student Research Fund Matching Challenge Announced**

An anonymous donor has pledged a $25,000 matching gift to begin building the Forrest Frank Student Research Fund, which has a $100,000 goal. This new endowment fund honors the late chemistry professor who was well known for engaging students in research. The donor will match all gifts to the endowment up to the match amount.

“Undergraduate research provides real-world critical thinking and problem-solving experience for our chemistry majors,” said Rebecca Roesner, department chair. “It was a hallmark of Professor Frank’s career and has become a cornerstone of our program. We hope to strengthen this tradition by expanding summer research opportunities with the assistance of this endowment.”

Long before the CSI television series, Professor Frank began teaching a forensic science course—Crime and Chemistry—that he developed with the Illinois State Police Laboratory in 1985. Professor Frank also spent a sabbatical working with Scotland Yard’s Serious Crime Unit focusing on new fingerprint detection and reproduction methods. He was honored as Student Senate Professor of the Year and was a National Science Foundation funded scholar, who co-authored two chemistry textbooks.

Those interested in helping to meet the challenge, can give online at [www.iwu.edu/giving](http://www.iwu.edu/giving) or send a check to the Advancement Office, designating their gift go to the Forrest Frank Student Research Fund.

**Inaugural Eckley Lecture in Economics**

MIT economist and best-selling author Daron Acemoglu was the inaugural speaker at the annual Robert S. Eckley Lecture in Economics in March. Acemoglu is a co-author of Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty, a New York Times best seller in 2012 that economist William Easterly, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, calls “...an eloquent and powerful statement of the long-run success of democratic capitalism at a time when it is under attack.”

“For the inaugural Eckley Lecture, we have enjoyed the support of the President’s Office to bring internationally known Daron Acemoglu, who studies one of the most difficult questions in the discipline of economics: why some nations prosper and some don’t,” said Diego Mendez-Carbajo, chair and associate professor of economics.

This annual lecture series was made possible by a gift from former President Robert S. Eckley and his family shortly before his death in 2012. Mrs. Nell Eckley and her children attended the lecture, which took place at the Hansen Student Center and was open to the public.

On the evening before the Eckley lecture, the University hosted a panel of Abraham Lincoln scholars who discussed President Eckley’s fifth and final book—Lincoln’s Forgotten Friend, Leonard Swett—which was completed with the assistance of his children and published after his death in 2012.

**State Farm Invests In Scholarship Program**

The investment that State Farm has made in the State Farm Scholars program is more important today than at anytime in recent history, given the very challenging economic times students and families are facing. This is one reason why the University and State Farm scholarship recipients invited the company to a special recognition luncheon in February.

Each year, the State Farm Companies Foundation recognizes 25 students from each class with a scholarship that provides important financial assistance. Over a five-year period, more than 200 Illinois Wesleyan students have been awarded these scholarships. This program is one of the many ways State Farm lends its support to the educational and professional development of Illinois Wesleyan students.

“I know of no other liberal arts college in the United States that has a corporate scholarship program with the same range and level of commitment that we enjoy through the State Farm Scholars Program,” noted President Dick Wilson.

The ties between State Farm and Illinois Wesleyan can be traced back more than 80 years. Today there are more than 300 Wesleyan alumni at State Farm, including a number of top executives. In addition to the State Farm Scholars program, the Company provides internships and supports many other important projects like the Action Research Center program that focuses on community engagement and the recently completed State Farm Hall classroom building, which will be dedicated this fall.
Mark Israel ’91 Establishes Endowed Summer Research Fund in Economics

Recalling how important his undergraduate research experience was when he was a student, Mark Israel ’91 has established an Endowed Summer Research Fund in Economics.

“One of the very best parts of my Wesleyan experience was the chance to get my first taste of real, topical economic research, working in close collaboration with multiple members of the economics faculty, including Mike Seeborg, Bob Leekley, and Margaret Chapman,” said Mark in talking about the endowment he has established. “Through this gift, I’m giving one student per year a chance to realize a similar experience, which just seems like the right way to pay something back for all that those experiences did for me.”

Following graduation from Wesleyan, Mark went to the University of Wisconsin at Madison with the intention of earning a Ph.D., but upon receiving his master’s degree he decided to get some “real-world experience” accepting a position at State Farm conducting economic research into urban markets.

Three years later, he decided to return to graduate school for his Ph.D. and enrolled at Stanford. He stayed at Stanford for five years before coming back to Illinois and taking a position at Northwestern University’s Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

In 2006, Mark joined Compass Lexecon, one of the world’s leading economic consulting firms, in its Chicago office. Three years later, he and wife Melissa Best ’94 and their children moved to the firm’s Washington, D.C. offices, where Mark now serves as an executive vice president specializing in antitrust, damages, econometrics and industrial organization economics.

University Honors Shirk Family and Foundation

At a special dinner in conjunction with the May meeting of the Illinois Wesleyan Board of Trustees, the University paid tribute to the Shirk family and the Shirk Foundation for their generous support of the Shirk Center and Athletic Complex.

Athletic Director Dennie Bridges shared the story of how the friendship between Russ Shirk and coach Jack Horenberger led to the creation of the Shirk Center and the Shirk Foundation Endowment nearly 20 years ago. He also noted how the endowment that Russ and Jim Shirk created is so unique and important to keeping the Shirk Center looking like new for its campus and community users. This endowment has also contributed to numerous enhancements of the athletic campus, including the purchase of the land for Horenberger Field.

“I cannot tell you how many times someone comes up to me on campus or in Bloomington-Normal and begins the conversation by mentioning that they are delighted to be able to attend events at ‘The Shirk’ or work out there at 6:00 a.m. As president, this is a great way for a conversation to begin,” noted President Dick Wilson, prior to presenting Jim Shirk with a special glass platter, created by Professor of Art Kevin Strandberg, as a token of the University’s appreciation for all that the Shirk family has done over the years.

The theme of the evening was “The Shirk Center…Building Community.” To bring the community building that goes on at the Shirk Center and Athletic Complex to life, a special video and booklet were created for the program.

Alumni Challenge Makes Fiji Giving Circle Big Success

In March, three Fiji brothers—Mike Bragg ’05, John Paul Hills ’05 and Tim Irvin ’06—formed the “Mighty Proud: Phi Gamma Delta” Giving Circle with the goal of providing as many active brothers as possible with $2,500 annual scholarships.

“We set our sights high from the beginning, knowing that Fiji alumni would rise to the challenge,” said John Paul.

When two anonymous brothers came forward with a matching gift challenge, things began to really take off. The challenge offered to match any gift of $100 or more, up to a total of $2,000, and to add $1,000 more if this total was met by the end of May. Mike, John Paul and Tim not only gained support from their generation of Fijis, but they attracted brothers like Jerry Philpott ’59 and Jack Rhind ’59, both of whom fund their own scholarships, but have happily joined the Mighty Proud Giving Circle.

“Meeting the challenge motivates us even more,” said Mike, talking about the success of the Giving Circle. “Now, we want to raise even more money to help as many brothers as we can.”

To learn more about forming a Giving Circle or contribute to the Mighty Proud fund, contact Van Miller in the Advancement Office at vmiller@iwu.edu or (309) 556-3127.
Scholarship Support, Campaign Focus in Final Year

The most important Transforming Lives priority in the final year of the campaign will be increasing student scholarship support. Given the increasing size of the “gap” that exists between what families can afford to pay and what Wesleyan can provide in financial assistance, building our endowed and annual student scholarship funds is our most critical need as an institution. In what has become an increasingly competitive and cost conscience market, the amount of financial aid we can provide to talented and deserving students has a direct impact on providing those students with a life-changing Illinois Wesleyan education. Your support of student scholarships can make a real difference.

2014 Goal — $125 Million
June 2013 total $114.2 Million

How can you get involved?
Co-chairs Steve Wannemacher ’73 and Jean Baird ’80 invite you to join the Transforming Lives campaign.

Find out how by contacting the Advancement Office
Call: (309) 556-3091 or (800) 689-9743
Email: advancement@iwu.edu
Go online: www.iwu.edu/campaign/