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University Marketing and Communications, "04/02/2003 - Stars Of The Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats To Perform At EIU.pdf" (2003). 2003. 29.

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03-74

April 2, 2003

For Immediate Release:

STARS OF THE CHINESE GOLDEN DRAGON ACROBATS TO PERFORM AT EIU

CHARLESTON – For more than 25 years, Danny Chang and his troupe of acrobats have traveled throughout the world with their centuries-old feats of balancing, tumbling, juggling and contortion.

Later this week, some of the leading performers from this world-famous touring company will perform on the campus of Eastern Illinois University. Admission to the show, set to begin at 8 p.m. Friday, April 4, in McAfee Gymnasium, is \$5 for the general public and free for EIU students with Panther Card ID.

The Stars of the Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats remains one of the world's leading Chinese acrobatic troupes, specializing in traditional dance, spectacular costumes, and ancient and contemporary theatrical techniques.

For more than 2,200 years, flourishing as far back as the Han Dynasty, Chinese acrobats, dancers and magicians entertained the imperial courts. Soon they became the star attraction for ceremonial carnivals and theatres for the masses. Farm families who had little to do during the long winter months became acrobats, jugglers and magicians using whatever was available in their homes – ceramic jars, cups and saucers, plates on rods, tables, chairs, bottles, flags, buckets, bicycles and even their own bodies – to form human walls and pyramids. Elaborate, colorful costumes were made of silk and hand embroidered. Children began training as young as four and five years old.

The Chang family became one of the leading touring groups in China and Taiwan. Danny Chang, along with his brothers and cousins, continue the proud tradition. His father and uncles were given charge over the National Institute for Acrobatic Training in Taipei. Today they train more than 200 nationally auditioned young people ages 8 to 17 each year.