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Riehle '97 Honored with Distinguished Nursing Alumni Award

Oct. 3, 2023

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Matt Riehle '97 is the 2023 recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award for Excellence in Nursing from Illinois Wesleyan University's School of Nursing and Health Sciences.

He will be honored during an [academic excellence reception](#) at 3:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 6 in Hansen Student

Center.

Riehle was the first football player to graduate with a degree in nursing from Illinois Wesleyan. Now he is filling the shoes of fellow IWU graduate Barb Nathan '80 as the CEO of Westminster Village, a non-profit continuing care retirement community (CCRC), otherwise known as a LifePlan community, in Bloomington.

Riehle and his professors expected his career to take a different path.

"When I graduated there was actually competition for nursing jobs, so I wasn't sure what I was going to do," Riehle said. "My instructors thought I should go into critical care and cardiology," based on the aptitudes he showed in his coursework.

But the competitive market led him to his first job at Westminster Village as a floor nurse in gerontology.

"I became really connected to senior living and helping people as they age, even though I had very limited experience before," Riehle said.

His experience has since expanded into an entire career dedicated to senior care, which quickly advanced into a role as an administrator at the McLean County Nursing Home and a return to Westminster Village, where he now oversees a community of 450 residents and 300 staff members.

"Barb Nathan called me to have lunch one day about 12 years ago, and she asked me to come back to Westminster," Riehle remembered. "This month will be 10 years since I came back."

Reflecting on his career, "It's allowed me to expand the things that I took with me from Illinois Wesleyan," Riehle said. "And it allows me to have a daily impact on residents' lives and to shepherd in the next generation of local senior care leaders."

Riehle especially stresses the need for nurses and administrators experienced in senior care as our communities anticipate the aging of the Baby Boomer generation.

"Matt is recognized as a leader in the field, locally across the state of Illinois, at the national level," said Amber Kujath '97, Riehle's classmate as an IWU nursing student and now the director of the IWU School of Nursing and Health Sciences.



Distinguished Alumni Award for Excellence in Nursing winner Matt Riehle '97

By Chris Francis '12