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Remarks and Messages

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Letter to Alumni and Friends

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Illinois Wesleyan University

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To Alumni and Friends

May 2007

Dear Friends,

Several weeks ago the class of 2007 graduated at ceremonies on the Eckley Quadrangle, on one of the nicest spring days in recent memory. There were 518 graduates in the class who are now alumni of the University and may even be receiving this, their first Alumni e-Connection newsletter.

Our featured speaker and honorary degree recipient was alumna Demetria Kalodimos '81, who shared with the graduates how she went from a Music Education major to her career as a broadcast journalist and television news anchor in Nashville, Tennessee. The winner of more than 20 awards for excellence in journalism, investigative reporting, and documentary filmmaking, Demetria urged the graduates to question everything and not be afraid to change their plans or directions as they set out on their own life's journey in the days and weeks ahead. One line from her speech summed it up for me: "Trust your own curiosity, mind your own moral compass. And, in time, your purpose, your role, and your truth will be revealed."

I also enjoyed the remarks of Student Senate Teacher of the Year recipient and Political Science Associate Professor Greg Shaw. Greg's theme was one of giving back to others, which I must say I have found to be one of the hallmarks of our University community and alumni. As he told the graduates, "Generosity is, after all, contagious. By sharing what we have, we not only improve our own corner of the world, but we experience a payback many times over."

Finally, Board of Trustees President George Vinyard delivered welcoming remarks that made quite an impression on me and many others. While it would take too long to recount his remarks, which were centered on the writings of author Kurt Vonnegut, let me share with you a portion of his closing: "Finally... If Illinois Wesleyan has faithfully discharged its obligations to you as students, we trust that each of you, as a graduate, will continue to think of this community as your extended family and as your home."

While we'll miss having the class of 2007 on campus, I am looking forward to having them participate in the life of the University as alumni for many years to come.

All the best,

Dick Wilson