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"Super-Executive," IWU Computer Guru Entertains as Rock Musician

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"Super-Executive" **IWU Computer Guru Entertains as Rock Musician**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--By day, he's an office executive diligently typing at his computer. By night, he's changed clothes to "rescue" his loyal fans.

Though he may seem like "Superman," Illinois Wesleyan University's Director of Information Technology does not possess muscular superpowers--only musical ones.

When he's not working on campus communication systems, IWU administrator Fred Miller transforms himself into famed singer and keyboard musician "Red" Miller. "Red," a connoisseur of jazz and blues rock music, has produced three albums, including the recent release, *Long Time*.

"It's been busy," Miller says of his schedule. "But it's all been worth it. When you get up on stage and people are dancing around, that's the best part. It's all about having fun."

Miller began his career as a music major at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

"I got into music for the same reason most males go into music--I wanted to meet girls," Miller jokes.

However, Miller's career as a music student was cut short when he left school and traveled to Los Angeles to pursue a full-time music career. There, Miller was introduced to the profession's hardships.

"I told myself that I didn't need to finish school, but I really didn't know as much as I thought I did," Miller explains. "I needed more musical background to be prepared for that adventure."

And adventure it was, despite the absence of a professional breakthrough. Miller played solo gigs and accompanied local bands, meeting such talent as the J. Geiles Band and Little Feat.

In California, Miller formed his own band, Tombstone, which played the California circuit for three years before disbanding.

"Lowell George, the leader of Little Feat, took an interest in Tombstone and agreed to produce us," Miller says. "Unfortunately, before we could start, Lowell died while on tour. After that tragedy, I moved back east."

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Back in Boston, Miller enrolled in Boston College as a business student and independently produced his first album, *Out of the Blue*.

It was during his studies at Boston that Miller discovered a knack for computers.

"Boston College required that you take logical thinking, calculus, or computer science to satisfy general education requirements," Miller explains. "I got into computers trying to avoid calculus."

"Back when I took the course, my dad had a business and I helped put his computer system together. Back then there were no display screens--you typed into the computer, and it typed back its response on a printed sheet."

After graduating, Miller worked in the computer trade and eventually became vice-president of information technology at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. He also began pursuing a master's degree in business administration with night classes at Boston College and continued playing music with his next album, *New Red*.

While at Berklee, Miller developed his musical skills by taking a class each semester from the school which Rolling Stone Magazine referred to as "Cyberfunk U."

"Berklee is known for its jazz, so I picked up a lot of my jazz techniques while I was there," Miller says.

Berklee also gave Miller the chance to chill with famous musicians, including Sting, Bonnie Raitt, and Paul Simon.

In 1996, Miller left Berklee for his position as director of information technology at Illinois Wesleyan University, where he recently completed his latest CD-rom, *Long Time*.

"This latest CD started out from messing around on the computer and playing around with computer music in music halls," Miller says. "Because a lot of this CD was done on the computer, the music is more electronic than what I've done in the past."

A friend of Miller's from Berklee helped produce the album, which Miller composed in his free time and sells on the Internet.

"It's not selling like crazy," Miller admits, "but it also doesn't help that I haven't toured to support it. I record music because it's what I like to do and hear, and I hope other people will like it. I wish it could be commercial

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music, but even if it's not, it's still fun for me."

In his computer work, Miller has begun teaching an IWU computer science course in which students create their own web sites.

Miller has also established an Internet site for IWU, as well as continuing to develop campus communications.

"Historically, a 150 year-old institution like Illinois Wesleyan has word-of-mouth and paper-based communication," Miller comments. "We're trying to develop electronic communication to give students better tools for education, since they can then get more details and know more about campus opportunities."

Miller's other computer services, which include maintaining web sites for himself and Little Feat, leave him little time for music. However, Miller is hoping that his three-and-a-half year old twins, who can "bang on the piano very well," might someday carry on their father's talent.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$25 million science building opened in the fall of 1995. The \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts--a facility housing 60 faculty offices, six classrooms, and other facilities for social science, humanities, business and economics, and interdisciplinary studies' faculty--opened in August, 1997, as well as a new \$6.8 million residence hall. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 159 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition.