

## Minor Myers, Jr.

Minor Myers, Jr., 17th president of Illinois Wesleyan University, student of political philosophy, and passionate advocate for the liberal arts, passed away on July 22, 2003 in Bloomington, Illinois. He was 60 years old.

Myers was born in Akron, Ohio, in 1942. In 1964 he earned a bachelor's degree from Carleton College in Minnesota. Undertaking graduate studies first at Duke University and then at Princeton University, he completed a master's degree at Princeton in 1967. The following year he took a faculty position at Connecticut College. He completed his Ph.D. in politics and political philosophy at Princeton in 1972. His dissertation, titled "British Laws of Nature, 1640–1785," was an early example of Myers' life-long fascination with Anglo-American philosophy, history, and law.

Rising through the ranks to become department chair at Connecticut College, Myers taught mainly political theory. His interests were wide, including American and European history and the arts. He was, according to Bill Frasure, professor of government and former colleague to Myers at Connecticut College, "fascinated with just about everything. He had a fast and wide-ranging mind." Easily among the most popular teachers at the college, waiting lists regularly developed to enroll in his classes. He was funny, articulate, and a good lecturer. He had, according to Frasure, a huge following. His innovative ideas regarding curriculum were a tremendous boon to that institution. Myers' dedication to inter-disciplinary work led him to insist on non-political scientists helping with searches for new faculty, a practice that has since become standard at many institutions.

During the 1981–1982 year Myers spent a sabbatical in residence at Brown University. Upon his return to Connecticut College he assumed the post of administrative assistant to the president and dean of the faculty. In 1984 Myers was appointed the provost and dean of the faculty at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York. There he earned a reputation as a strong supporter of both the curriculum and of academic research among the faculty. Hobart College Dean and former colleague Clarence Butler said of Myers, "he was truly a Renaissance man. I've

never met someone who knew so much about so much."

In 1989, Myers was named president of Illinois Wesleyan University. During his 14-year tenure there he oversaw significant growth in the size of the faculty, a notable rise in the selectivity of its student admission process, and a building campaign amounting to some \$115 million in renovations and new construction, including a new library, a new center for natural sciences, a new physical education facility, and a new student center. Academically, Illinois Wesleyan flourished under Myers. The university was granted a Phi Beta Kappa chapter in 2000. Semester-long study abroad programs in London and Madrid were established, and exchange programs were created with Pembroke College of Oxford University and Obirin and Keio universities in Tokyo. Numerous new majors and minors were also added to the curriculum.

Myers constantly reminded Illinois Wesleyan's students that the goal of their education was not simply to find a job but to find and follow their fascinations. Myers lived this out by way or example, authoring or co-authoring eight books and numerous articles, playing the harpsichord, and collecting coins. His original musical play, "The College Inn Revisited," was performed by the Chicago Historical Society in 1994. It focused on the 1920's jazz movement in Chicago and the role that city played as a launching ground for Broadway theatre in New York. His particular fascination with the 18th century led to his expertise in furniture, musical instruments, publishing, and higher education during the American colonial period.

Myers' books included *Liberty without Anarchy: A History of the Society of the Cincinnati* (1983), *The Insignia of the Society of the Cincinnati* (1998), and *A Documentary History of American Interiors from the Colonial Era to 1915* (1980). The 1983 work stands as a thoroughgoing chronicle of the Society of the Cincinnati, whose members are descendants of American Continental Army or Navy officers. Myers was the first scholar granted complete access to the Society's documentary archive. From 1986 until 1988 he served as the Society's secretary general. He also produced various journal articles on topics including the history of crime and punishment, the history of an Episcopal church congregation in Connecticut, and

several articles on numismatics, one of several hobbies he pursued earnestly. He also co-authored *The Princeton Graduate School: A History* in 1996.

Myers helped guide several educational organizations and institutions, serving on the boards of directors of the Foundation for Independent Higher Education, the Associated Colleges of Illinois, the Institute for the International Education of Students, and the Lyman Allyn Museum at Connecticut College.

Illinois Wesleyan Provost and Dean of the Faculty Janet McNew noted of Myers that "he was the very model of a liberally educated person whose interests ranged far and wide, and who cherished learning as an end in itself."

Craig Hart, president of the Illinois Wesleyan Board of Trustees said of Myers, "His enthusiasm was infectious. He was a joy to be around."

Ed Rust, Illinois Wesleyan alumnus and Chairman and CEO of State Farm Insurance Companies, noted on Myers' passing that "many of Illinois Wesleyan's remarkable achievements over the past decade and more can be directly attributed to Minor's enthusiasm and his pride in the institution and its students. It was contagious."

Myers is survived by his wife, Ellen, and their two sons, Minor III, and Joffre.

Greg M. Shaw  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

## Sir Bernard Williams

Professor Sir Bernard Williams, born September 21, 1929, died June 10, 2003 in Rome on holiday. The *London Times* reported that Sir Williams will be remembered as the most brilliant and most important moral philosopher of his time. After several prestigious academic appointments in England and America he split his time between Berkeley and All Souls College, Oxford. He wanted, "to live a whole life well." Often difficult to assess the extent to which others capture what they aspire to, Williams always seemed complete. An expert pilot serving in the RAF, accomplished composer, lover of sports and fast cars; Williams enjoyed himself. Those who knew him will remember his keen wit, sarcastic grin, deadpan humor, hearty laugh, and magnetic storytelling. As for his reputation for combativeness, he was relentless but not (as far as I know) mean spirited. A tutorial could spiral