



NEWS RELEASE

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Lisabeth Luther to receive USI President's Medal

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Ms. Lisabeth A. Luther, a University of Southern Indiana senior who has maintained a 4.0 grade point average while completing studies in a double major of political science and sociology at USI and being a mother to her teenage son Jeremy, has been selected as the winner of the President's Medal to be awarded at the 1996 Commencement ceremony at 7 p.m. Saturday, May 4, in Roberts Stadium.

Indiana Governor Evan Bayh will be the Commencement speaker. He and Evansville/Vanderburgh historian Kenneth P. McCutchan will be the recipients of honorary doctoral degrees, while 1,020 USI students will be eligible to receive master's, bachelor's, and associate degrees.

Governor Bayh will be honored for his service to the people and State of Indiana. He followed his father, former three-term U.S. Senator Birch Bayh, into Hoosier politics in 1986, when he was elected secretary of state. Two years later, he was elected Indiana's 46th governor and is now completing his second and final term, leading an administration that put priority on sound fiscal management, economic growth, and education.

Mr. McCutchan will be honored for lifelong service to the community and to the University. He has written five books on local history, sparked by the many years he lived on the historic family homesite in northern Vanderburgh County acquired by his great-grandfather as a land grant in 1835. He also was a disc jockey and did special programs and the news for WIKY for 26 years, after having been the first on-air voice when the station signed on in 1947. Mr. McCutchan has collected the works of Indiana artists, giving a portion of the collection to USI last year, and has collected the works of Indiana writers, giving half of that collection to Historic New Harmony.

The President's Medal is USI's highest award recognizing accomplishments of a graduating senior. The Student Academic Affairs Committee also select three runner-up
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finalists -- Mr. William A. Centifano of Hebron, Indiana, a Dean's List English major and cross country runner who plans to teach English; Mr. Brian W. Chattin of Freelandville, Indiana, a Dean's List communications major who will pursue a master's in sports administration; and Ms. Teresa France-Smith of Boonville, Indiana, (a 1976 graduate of Wood Memorial High School), a physically challenged Dean's List Social Work major -- citing them for meritorious achievement both in the classroom and in their communities.

Ms. Luther is a nontraditional-age student who came to southern Indiana from Colorado a few years ago. She also has attended classes at Ivy Tech and the University of Evansville. Prior to enrolling at USI, she entered the electrical specialist apprenticeship program at ALCOA, where she became active in the union and, as a newcomer, won unprecedented election to the union executive board. A divorcee, she remains on friendly terms with her ex-husband and his new wife, an experience that has led her to embark on a career in divorce mediation. She expects to enroll in a 40-hour mediator certification course this summer and later, to earn a law degree. She plans to use her legal education to enhance the validity of mediated agreements.

Tucked away among letters of recommendation from USI professors and former ALCOA supervisors is a letter from 16-year-old Jeremy, who believes his mother "will do an astounding job" in her chosen field of mediation. Having cited the times she stayed up all night sewing a costume for him, or studying so she could later be with him, he declared, "...she has put so much work into her college education that I don't want her to come away with just her degree, I think she deserves a special award."

Ms. Luther is a co-founder of Amnesty International at USI, currently serving as vice president and acting secretary. She is an upper division senator with the Student Government Association and active in several SGA special projects. She has organized study groups in economics, statistics, and chemistry classes, and is a volunteer tutor and notetaker for physically challenged students. Ms. Luther is a member of Golden Key, Pinnacle, Pi Sigma Alpha (secretary and acting treasurer), the Society for Human Resource Management, the student chapter of the Evansville Personnel Club, secretary of the Political Science Organization and Collegiate Democrat Organization, and a member of the Sociology Club, New Horizons, Black Student Union, and International Students Club. In the community, she is a Boy Scout merit badge counselor, and volunteer in the AFL-CIO Christmas party for Evansville State Hospital patients.