

# Wells recalled as heart, soul of IU

By GRACE SCHNEIDER  
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BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Former Indiana University President Herman B Wells was remembered yesterday for bringing forth the best in people — and in the institution he transformed.

"Adlai Stevenson wrote that 'Every age needs men who will redeem the time by living with a vision of things that are to be,'" the Rev. Philip Amerson told mourners at Wells' funeral. "Herman redeemed the time by helping us discover a vision of who we can be. His dreams were so large, they shaped us and the culture around us."

Nearly 700 people — members of Wells' family of relatives, students, past and present faculty, trustees and friends — attended a one-hour service at Bloomington's First United Methodist Church.

Wells, who died Saturday at age 97, had worshiped there for years, about four blocks from campus.

"He was one of my heroes," said Merritt Lawlis, 81, a retired English professor.

The service was broadcast live on local TV, and included on the university's Internet Web site.

Yesterday morning, as the sunlight edged through the clouds, people lined up in front of the church more than an hour in advance.

In the front pews were Gov. Frank O'Bannon and his wife, Judy; former Gov. Otis Bowen; the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, former president of Notre Dame University; and former IU President John Ryan.

Wells' casket was flanked by two modest floral arrangements.



Indiana University's Herman B Wells was buried yesterday in Bloomington.

Amerson quickly broke the solemn mood of the service by announcing that Wells had left explicit instructions for his funeral.

Wells wanted no eulogy, but he wrote that the service should start promptly at 11 a.m., and be "a brief Methodist version of an Episcopal service," Amerson said.

Six current members of Wells' fraternity, Sigma Nu, were pallbearers.

Wells, a Jamestown native, graduated from IU in 1924 and joined the faculty as dean of the business school in 1935. Two years later, at age 35, he became acting president. He was appointed the university's 12th president one year later, a position he kept until 1962 when he was named chancellor. Wells retained that title until his death.

Wells is credited with making IU an internationally recognized center for research and scholarship that attracted top talent, and for nurturing his faculty.

Amerson noted that Wells supported civil rights when the country was barely waking to integration. He was a staunch advocate for equal opportunity and academic freedom.

Hesburgh, 82, became friends with Wells through an association of college presidents.

Hesburgh said he was surprised to learn Sunday of Wells' death, then to arrive at his office Monday and find a letter from Wells in his mail.

Hesburgh recently had sent Wells a newspaper column he'd written about him, and Wells wrote back to thank him.

Lawlis, who came to IU in 1951 from Harvard, said Wells knew the first name of every faculty member, and "he particularly knew the first names of everybody in the state legislature."

Helga Keller, whose husband is an IU professor, said Wells was the heart and soul of the university.

"We'll never have anybody like him again," she said.

Wells, who never married, was buried next to his parents yesterday during a private ceremony.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.