

THE DECREE

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May 19, 2023

NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27804

Bishop Profile: President's Cup Winner Allison Wichrowski

NC Wesleyan senior Allison Wichrowski, an exemplar of self-discipline, hard work and academic excellence, was named the recipient of the 2023 President's Cup during Wesleyan's May 6 commencement ceremony at the Rocky Mount Event Center.

A native of Chatsworth, New Jersey, she finished her college career with a grade point average of 3.99 while majoring in psychology and criminal justice.

Wichrowski has been busy while enrolled at Wesleyan. Since freshman year, she has worked 20-25 hours per week as a shift supervisor/pharmacy technician at the CVS on Benvenue Road. She was a setter on the volleyball team and earned Student Athlete of the Year in 2021-22. A member of the honors program, she served as a peer tutor in psychology for the Student Success Center. Among other activities and recognitions, she was a member of WAAL (Wesleyan Academy of Athletic Leadership) and a community leader at the Wesleyan Villas.

Students and faculty alike praised Wichrowski's efforts over the past four years. Dr. Lee Templeton taught Wichrowski in English and humanities during her first year. "Allison's an intelligent and hard-working student who was always willing to challenge herself," he wrote in an email. "Even when the course was difficult, she found ways to connect with the material and produce impressive work."

Professors Bill Yankosky and Fred Sanborn, director and assistant director of the Taylor-Crocker Honors Program, cited not just Wichrowski's exceptional academic work but her organizational skills and self-discipline, noting her ability to balance school with a job and participation in sports and a number of extracurricular activities. Dr. Yankosky, a mathematics professor, recalled the project Wichrowski completed in his honors class on cryptology. Noting that it focused on the author Edgar Allan Poe, he called her paper and oral report outstanding. "She exemplifies what it means to be a student-athlete and active member of the Wesleyan community," he said.

Mary Alice Butler, a volleyball teammate and a fellow member of the honors program, took many classes together with Wichrowski. She described her as "always engaged" in class and said that she enjoyed their class discussions, remembering, in particular, a class on Icelandic sagas. She related that the two often studied together. "She was always open to helping others. I would often turn to her with questions, and she would help without hesitation," Butler said, adding "I'm very thankful for my friendship with Allie."

The Decree interviewed Wichrowski, a first-generation college student, at the end of the semester for the following profile.

Q: Describe the area where you were raised in central New Jersey.

A: We lived on a five-acre farm, and we owned several horses,



Allison Wichrowski Photo courtesy of A. Wichrowski

chickens, dogs and many, many cats. My younger sister and I both competed in different riding events.

Q: You also mentioned that you're a first-generation college student. How did that affect you?

A: I am a first-generation college student, and it came with its own unique challenges. Neither of my parents could offer application or loan advice, and many bigger schools rated me less capable than other candidates. Many high school (Eastern Regional High School) classmates were surprised to see I was going to college, let alone playing a sport.

Q: What other colleges did you consider? And what was it that appealed to you most about NC Wesleyan?

A: I considered several other schools as I was recruited to play volleyball. Bloomfield College (in New Jersey), Tennessee Wesleyan University, Mount Mary University (Wisconsin), University of Redlands (California), and others were all contenders. After interviewing with the professors here, meeting the administration, and finalizing financial aid, Wesleyan became the best choice for me.

Q: Can you elaborate on your visit? What most impressed you?

A: Meeting Taylor Stone and Wayne Sears had a positive impact on both me and my father. My father felt comfortable with Mr. Sears and how open he was about his security policies. Ms. Stone made me feel very welcome and a part of the Wesleyan family before I even finished applying to the school. She was eager to answer all my questions, even small ones. Coach Vicky (Gentile) made my experience feel unique by bringing me--and only a few other recruits--to play with the team. Other visits would involve 10 or more recruits, and it felt like an obligatory invite rather than the programs expressing genuine interest.

Q: What was it like going to school in the South?

A: My parents weren't able to see me play much, but sometimes watched the live stream. Both my parents came to Senior Day; that meant a lot, as my dad hadn't seen me play since my senior year of high school. I've had to miss several holidays and birthdays back home, but I knew my parents were always supportive of my decision to come this far and I've built my own "family" while I've been at Wesleyan. I would say the biggest adjustment from living in the North is the pace of life. The South moves much slower and with less urgency. It was hard to get used to that.

Q: What led you to study psychology and criminal justice?

A: I've always enjoyed helping people, which led me to psychology. After finishing my psychology

courses, I developed an interest in criminal behavior and the connection to psychology, so I added a criminal justice major. I also minored in visual arts; I enjoy pottery and have experience with wheel-throwing mugs, bowls, and plates.

Q: Tell us about your favorite class.

A: I had two classes that I enjoyed very much. My first is abnormal psychology with Dr. (Kim) Martin. This appealed to everything I love about psychology, from observation to diagnosis and treatment plans. My other favorite was my geology class with Mr. (Bruce) Harvey. He teaches with so much passion and truly cares for his students; he even makes students who don't enjoy science feel confident.

Q: And what was the hardest class?

A: It was my first honors class during freshman year. I think I've studied every angle of "Beowulf" with Dr. Templeton. This class took most of my time as I'm not the fastest reader, and I had limited skills regarding interpreting themes in the text. Dr. Templeton helped me grow as a writer and even if the class was difficult, I can't thank him enough for my development.

Q: What was the biggest challenge you had to overcome in working toward your degree?

A: I've been a busy student for most of my time here. During my sophomore year, my grandmother passed away, which hit both my sister and me hard because we lived with our grandparents. Volleyball took up a lot of my time and I began working at CVS in the spring of my freshman year--20-25 hours per week. With all of these responsibilities, time management was the biggest challenge.

Q: You're an excellent student. Describe your study habits? And what advice would you offer to Wesleyan first-year students?

A: I'm a visual person and learn best by working with the material hands-on. I find it hard to listen to lectures and audiobooks. I like to create my own practice tests (shout out to Quizlet!) and use Kahoot learning games. My advice is to identify your learning style and design your tools based on that. I also recommend peer tutors as a resource to help with the learning process.

Q: Describe your honors project.

A: It was titled "Psychology and Societal Factors in Serial Killers." I explored the history of serial killers and then selected several examples to perform a case-study analysis. I examined a list of specified factors and typologies and analyzed how each serial killer did or did not fit into each case study. For my project I studied Edmund Kemmer, Arthur Shawcross and Ted Bundy. I looked at genetics, head trauma, and family environment.

Q: Can you elaborate on what you mean by typologies.

A: Typologies refer to the type of killer. For example, organized killers plan their crimes in grave detail in advance and usually dispose of the body without leaving much, if any, evidence. By contrast, unorganized killers may kill spontaneously and not fully develop a plan for the murder.

Q: Who's your "favorite" serial killer? And what TV shows do you recommend for readers who share your interest?

A: Richard Ramirez has always

been fascinating to me, mostly due to his childhood experiences; the Netflix documentary, "The Night Stalker," is about him. I also enjoyed the documentary about John Wayne Gacy and "The Killer Nurse," which is about Charles Cullen.

Q: What would you say was your happiest moment while you were at Wesleyan?

A: I would have to say the last day of junior year; it was my birthday. As a child, I never had birthday parties and it was nice to have friends with me to play games and dance all night. We had all finished finals that day and could finally breathe some fresh air. We ate dinner at El Tapatio and we laughed at one of our friends for ordering chicken tenders at a Mexican restaurant. Then we went back to the house to play a board game that friends and I invented. It involved various activi-

ties, one on each square (cartwheels, truth or dare, sharpie tattoos, and shirt swapping, etc.). Watching the guys try to do cartwheels was a comedic experience.

Q: What's your best memory as a member of the volleyball team?

A: Last year's Scotland trip was an amazing experience for the teammates who chose to go. I spent most of my time with Mary Cat Davis and MAB (Mary Alice Butler) and had a very good time touring a different country. One of the funniest experiences occurred one night during dinner at a local pub. As the waiter took our orders, we all asked for the baked macaroni and cheese because we didn't recognize the other items on the menu. The waiter looked at us and jokingly made a reference to us being Americans and we all busted out laughing.

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WRAL morning anchor Renee Chou, pictured with President Evan Duff, delivered the commencement address during Wesleyan's graduation ceremony May 6 at Rocky Mount Event Center. Here is a breakdown of the 2023 graduates: 47 students earned an MBA; 20, a master's in criminal justice; and 11, a bachelor's in nursing (BSN). There were 339 who received B.A. or B.S. degrees from the traditional day and APS programs. Graduates came from six continents and 17 foreign countries.

C. Lewis photo

Baseball Team Sweeps Peace, Takes First Title since 2009

Zach Lyon drove in three runs and the Bishops took advantage of their opponent's sloppy defense Saturday afternoon to win their second straight game over Raleigh's William Peace University and claim their first USA South title since 2009.

Winning their 15th game in a row, the Bishops improved their overall record to 35-8. The team placed first in the regular-season standings with 18-3 mark. Peace, led by former Wesleyan coach Charlie Long, finished in a three-way tie for second with Methodist and Greensboro at 13-8.

With the victory, Wesleyan qualifies for the NCAA Division III regional playoffs. It now awaits word on its first-round opponent.

Saturday's 8-4 win followed a 9-2 drubbing of Peace Friday night in the opener, under the lights at Bauer Field. Leading 2-1 after five innings, Wesleyan exploded for seven runs in the sixth, seventh and eighth innings to secure the win. Five Wesleyan batters had RBI hits, as Peace committed four errors in the field, producing a total of five unearned runs.

Wesleyan's Payne Stolsworth, the conference Pitcher of the Year, extended his winning streak to 11 wins without a loss. He yielded

five hits and a run in the first three innings, but then limited the Pacers to one hit and an unearned run over the next five. Relief pitcher Cullen Davis worked the ninth, striking out two batters in a non-save situation. "Payne just locked into what he's been doing all year...getting the job done," Coach Greg Clifton said.

On Saturday afternoon Wesleyan was stymied through the first four innings by Pacer starter Jack McIntosh.

"We didn't do a great job with adjustments early. He kept us off balance with a lot of off-speed pitches just like the last time he faced us," Clifton said, referring to McIntosh's 3-2 win, a four-hitter, on April 10 in Raleigh (The Pacers took the three-game series, 2-1).

The Bishops broke through in the fifth. Trying to spark a rally, Drifton Padgett dropped a bunt down the third base line for a single. Jean LaGreca attempted a sacrifice bunt to the pitcher's mound, but McIntosh botched it for an error, putting runners on first and second. After a sacrifice by Luke Chung, the Bishops tallied their first run as Lyon singled to left, LaGreca holding at third. The next batter, Tyson Bass, lofted a fly to left field.

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