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*(Note to journalists: Patty Cisneros can be reached for journalist interviews at (217) 333-4606 or (262) 203-1292 (cell) or pcisnero@uiuc.edu. Publication-quality photographs of last year's Ultimate Basketball Challenge are available at [www.uillinois.edu/our/images/ubc/](http://www.uillinois.edu/our/images/ubc/))*

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**Ultimate Basketball Challenge pits wheelchair, varsity cagers in scrimmage**  
*President White, UI coaches Weber and Law to compete in free throw contest*

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — The Ultimate Basketball Challenge's centerpiece is a scrimmage between members of the University of Illinois' men's and women's wheelchair basketball teams and Illinois' men's and women's varsity teams.

The annual event tips off at Huff Hall at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15.

Tickets are available for \$5 each at the door and at the Assembly Hall ticket office. There is a group rate of \$3 each for 10 tickets or more. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and parking is available free at Huff Hall after 5 p.m.

Patricia Cisneros, head coach of the U of I's women's wheelchair basketball team, said the event benefits two worthy causes and is fun for the whole family.

"Proceeds from the ticket receipts go to the Coaches Versus Cancer charity," Cisneros said. "Our goal is to give the public an opportunity to see our great wheelchair basketball teams compete. Once people see them, they'll become fans of these wonderful athletes.

"The Ultimate Basketball Challenge is also a fun night for the whole family."

President B. Joseph White, men's Coach Bruce Weber and women's Coach Jolette Law will square off in a celebrity free throw shoot out. It keeping with the spirit of the event, the local heroes will shoot from wheelchairs.

The Illini band, the Illini cheerleaders and the Orange Krush will be on hand to contribute sound and color to the festive atmosphere.

Cisneros said the four teams — the two Illinois varsity teams and two wheelchair teams — will be split up for a wheelchair basketball scrimmage.

"This is the fourth year we've held the event," Cisneros said. "It's fun, but make no mistake, these are high-level athletes. It'll be competitive."

The U of I was the first university to offer wheelchair basketball as a collegiate sport. The U of I organized the first National Wheelchair Basketball Association and held the first national wheelchair basketball tournament on campus in 1949 under the tutelage of Professor Timothy Nugent.

Nugent led the U of I to become the first university to provide a support system for students with disabilities and established what is now the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services.

Both men's and women's U of I wheelchair basketball teams have won national championships, and U of I players and coaches have been members of gold-medal winning U.S. Paralympic teams.

The U of I was the first university to introduce wheelchair curb cuts and architectural accessibility standards, which later became national standards.

In 1977, the U of I became the first university to award varsity letters to wheelchair athletes, and, in 1980, became the first university to select a wheelchair athlete as its Athlete of the Year.

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The University of Illinois is a world leader in research and discovery, the largest educational institution in the state with almost 70,000 students, 24,000 faculty and staff, and campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield. The U of I awards more than 18,500 undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees annually.