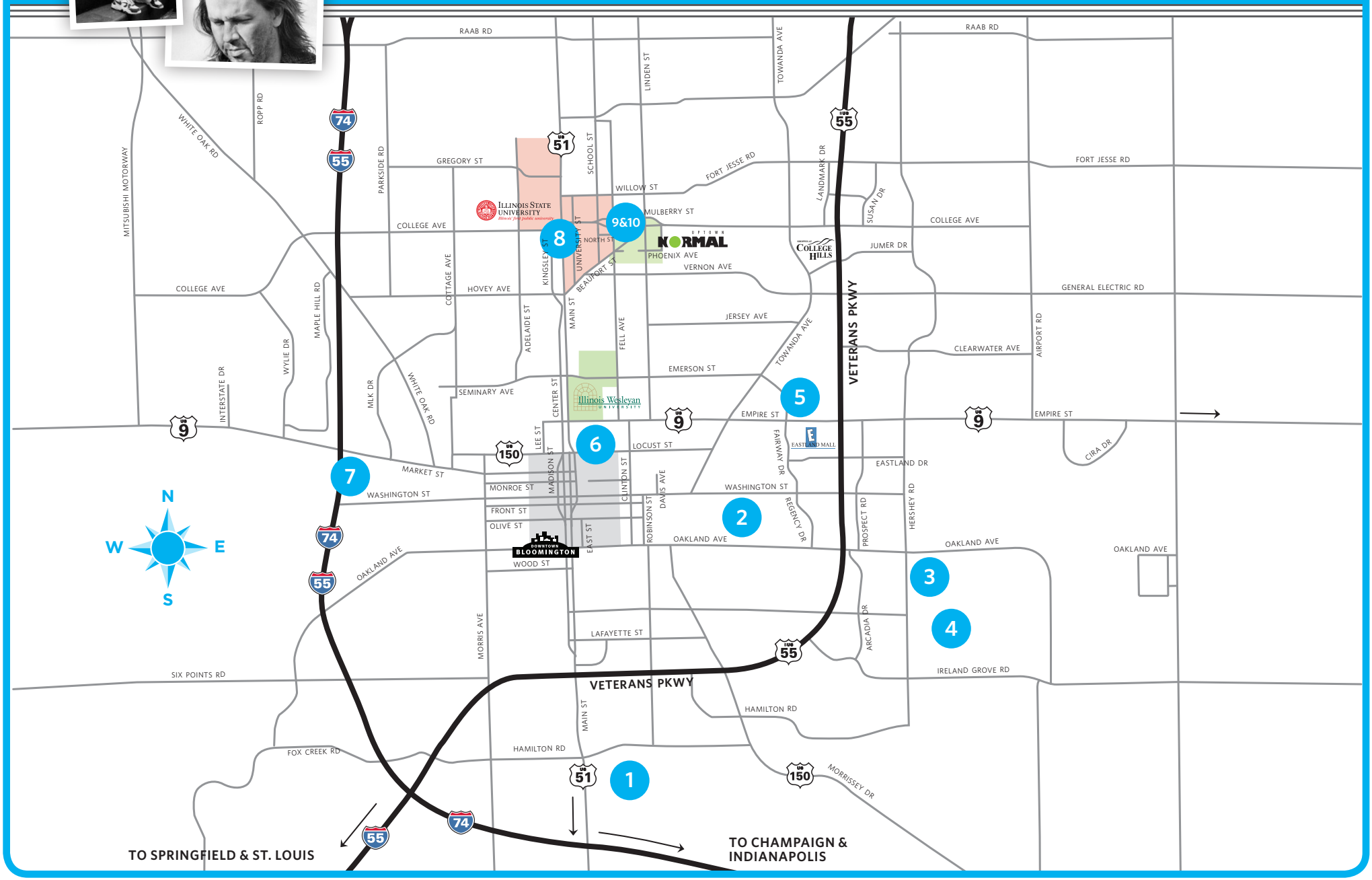
Bloomington–Normal Tour

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE



1. DAVID FOSTER WALLACE'S HOME
307 S. Woodrig Road, Bloomington

Location where DFW finished *Infinite Jest*, at the corner of Woodrig and Hobson Roads.

2. ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1920 E. Oakland Avenue, Bloomington

Site of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings that DFW attended.

3. DENNY'S
701 S. El Dorado Rd, Bloomington

The restaurant DFW acknowledges in *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*.

4. MONICAL'S PIZZA
718 S. Eldorado Road, Bloomington

Location where the first interview with David Lipsky is conducted; a version of this restaurant appears in the film *The End of the Tour*.

5. GARDEN OF PARADISE
1412 E. Empire Street, Bloomington

Location where DFW often ate and where he discussed a film version of *Infinite Jest* with director Gus Van Sant.

6. MCLEAN COUNTY ARTS CENTER
601 N. East Street, Bloomington

Location where DFW introduced the writer Ken Kalfus at a 1999 reading by Kalfus.

7. CRACKER BARREL
502 Brock Drive, Bloomington

A favorite restaurant of DFW; where Patrick Arden interviews him for *Book* magazine in 1999.

8. ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
A. FAIRCHILD HALL
508 Dry Grove Street, Normal

Location that housed office space for the former Unit for Contemporary Literature. A national center for the literary arts, the Unit was an umbrella organization for several independent literary presses and journals. It was a major reason DFW decided to join the ISU faculty. Part of David's faculty assignment was with Dalkey Archive Press, one of the presses in the Unit.

B. STEVENSON HALL 420C
300 S. School Street, Normal

Location of DFW's ISU office.

C. STEVENSON HALL 410
300 S. School Street, Normal

Classroom in which DFW taught many creative writing classes.

9. BABBITT'S BOOKS
119 E. Beaufort St, Normal

DFW's favorite book store, where he often met students and where he gave a reading with Richard Powers and Curtis White in 1996.

10. THE COFFEEHOUSE AND DELI
114 E. Beaufort St, Normal

Location where DFW often met with his students and where he attended a reading by Dave Eggers in 2000.

David Foster Wallace was an American author of novels, short stories and essays, as well as a professor of English and creative writing. **What most people don't realize is that there is a significant connection between Wallace and Bloomington-Normal**. As an English professor at *Illinois State University*, Wallace wrote the bulk of his famous 1996 novel, *Infinite Jest*, during his time here. His office was located in *Stevenson Hall*. When literary agents and Hollywood directors flew into town to meet with him, he insisted on meeting them at his favorite restaurants, which included *Cracker Barrel* and *Garden of Paradise*. *Babbitt's Books* in Uptown Normal was his favorite bookstore, and he often met with students at the *Coffeehouse and Deli*.

Esquire called it "a work of genius." *The New York Times* said that it was "the greatest novel to finish a century yet." At 1,079 pages, *Infinite Jest* is not a novel of few words. Before his death at age 46, Wallace wrote three novels, three collections of short stories and numerous essays. As *Infinite Jest* became a bestseller, Wallace appeared on the covers of *Details*, *Rolling Stone* and appeared twice on Charlie Rose.

How could a man so *internationally acclaimed* be so inconspicuous in his own town? Wallace wanted it that way. "He didn't want to be that guy, the person who is a big public figure," said Charlie Harris in an interview with *The Pantagraph*. Harris is a retired ISU English professor and the department head that hired Wallace in 1993.

Hundreds of people flock to *Bloomington-Normal* each year to catch a glimpse of the life that Wallace led during his time here. Illinois State University holds a David Foster Wallace Conference each year, complete with roundtable discussions and writing workshops.

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