

# East St. Louis Higher Education Campus Renamed to Honor Urban Renewal Advocate and Late Representative

by Megan Wieser  
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**EAST ST. LOUIS**— The educational campus serving East St. Louis for more than 20 years is being renamed in tribute to one of the area's longest-serving advocates. The East St. Louis Higher Education Campus (ESLHEC) will now be known as the Wyvetter H. Younger Higher Education Campus in honor of the East St. Louis native and longtime state representative who, for years, worked to better the lives of the people of St. Clair County.

The ESLHEC first opened in January 1999, on the former campus of Metropolitan Community College. The campus is owned by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and co-managed by ICCB and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE).

On April 23, 2021, the Illinois House of Representatives adopted [House Resolution 50](#) (HR 50), sponsored by Representative Greenwood, asking the General Assembly to change the name of the East St. Louis Higher Education Campus to the Wyvetter H. Younge Higher Education Campus.

“I filed HR 50 to honor and recognize the Honorable Wyvetter Younge and the impact that she made on the community of East St. Louis,” said State Representative LaToya Greenwood. “It was because of her advocacy that we have the Higher Education Campus in East St. Louis and I felt it was overdue that the campus be named in her honor.”

“I had the privilege of working with Wyvetter for a number of years, and I have met few people who cared so deeply for the residents they served,” State Representative Jay Hoffman said. “Her passion and dedication to the people she represented was unmatched, and I think it’s wonderful that this campus is being renamed in honor of her. Connecting her name with an institution that creates opportunity for people in her community is a perfect way to remember her.”

“The renaming of the East St Louis Higher Education Campus to the Wyvetter H. Younge Higher Education Campus, is a befitting way to pay homage and reverence to a woman who gave her all to uplift the citizens and institutions of her beloved city of East St. Louis,” said State Senator Christopher Belt.

Younge was one of the longest serving state representatives, first elected in 1975, spending the bulk of her career working on issues for vulnerable populations, including substance abuse prevention, services for the homeless, and economic development in East St. Louis until her death in 2008.

“The East St. Louis Higher Education Campus was important to my mother. She considered it a great asset for the community. Our family is honored to have the campus bear her name,” said Margaret Hewitt, daughter of the late Representative Younge.

[Since 1999](#), through community college partnerships, the ICCB’s East St. Louis Community College Center (ESLCC) has provided East St. Louis area residents with access to college course offerings, workforce training, and adult education. A variety of programs including the Workforce Equity Program, Adult Education Program, Highway Construction Careers and Trades Program, and Welding and HVAC programs are

offered at the ESLCC. The ICCB is committed to enhancing the programs offered through ESLCC and has plans to expand course offering in areas such as Health Care programs, Computer Programming as well as dual credit opportunities. The community college services provided are essential in meeting the needs of the students as well as the local and regional workforce.

[“Connecting this campus to Wyvetter Younge’s name and her legacy in the metro-east and East St. Louis makes perfect sense.](#) She spent a lifetime trying to improve people’s lives, which is the mission of this higher education campus—to better people’s lives through education,” said ICCB Executive Director Brian Durham.

Located on the Wyvetter H. Younge Higher Education Campus, SIUE’s East St. Louis Center (ESLC) provides dynamic programming for all ages, fostering personal development, increasing access to educational opportunities and making social mobility possible for entire families. The ESLC offers a variety of services that contribute to the health and vitality of the historic and resilient community through healthcare clinics, workforce development programming, and more.

“SIUE realizes human potential, amplifies access to education for all individuals with a focus on equity, and makes outsized contributions to not only the region, but also the state and nation,” said SIUE Chancellor James T. Minor, PhD. “The SIUE East St. Louis Center is a critical contributor to that promise and purpose. Our service to the historic and resilient community of East St. Louis and surrounding communities is important. We are honored to provide educational programming at the Wyvetter H. Younge Higher Education Campus. Our East St. Louis Center educational programs and community outreach initiatives align with the late representative’s action-oriented mission to better people’s lives, and we are proud to honor her legacy in this way.”

In the coming months, signs throughout the campus will be formally changed to reflect the new name, and a new digital message board will be added.

## **About the Illinois Community College Board**

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state coordinating organization for the Illinois Community College System - the third largest in the country and the leading public workforce development trainer in the state. The ICCB has statutory responsibility for administering state and federal grants to community college districts and adult education providers and managing high school equivalency testing for Illinois. Illinois community colleges serve over 600,000 residents each year in credit, noncredit, and continuing education courses. Illinois is home to 48 colleges in 39 community college districts which provide high quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities to the entire state.

## About Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high-quality education that powerfully transforms the lives of all individuals who seek something greater. A premier metropolitan university, SIUE is creating social and economic mobility for individuals while also powering the workforce of the future. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.