



SIUE alumna named among St. Louis Biz Journal's 'Most Influential Women'

June 28 2017 3:07 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville alumna Cheryl Norton has been named among the *St. Louis Business Journal's* 2017 Most Influential Business Women, in recognition of her exceptional business leadership and community impact.

Norton is president of Missouri American Water, which provides high quality and reliable water and/or wastewater services to approximately 1.5 million people. Her responsibilities include creating a business strategy and corresponding budgets to ensure high levels of service, maintaining and investing in her company's systems, development and safety of employees, and compliance with all local, state and federal laws and regulations.

"I was truly honored and humbled to be recognized," Norton said. "I find the many aspects of my job to be both challenging and rewarding. I love being able to work on several things at one time and utilize my problem-solving skills on a daily basis. One of my favorite accomplishments, no matter what job I'm doing, is seeing people achieve more than they believed they could. People are amazing and can do great things. Sometimes you just have to show them that."

Norton earned a bachelor's in biological sciences in 1987 and a master's in environmental studies in 1994, both from SIUE. According to Norton, her two academic programs, and notably, her service as a resident assistant on campus, fostered her future success.

"I grew up in a small Missouri town and felt at home at SIUE," she said. "My undergraduate work prepared me for my first job, doing microbiology research for American Water in Belleville. I worked part-time for American Water while completing my bachelor's, and then transitioned to full-time upon graduation. The environmental studies graduate program was the next logical stop for me, because it built on my bachelor's and offered the flexibility I needed."

The influential businesswoman says she loves a challenge. It's what keeps her work new and interesting.

"I have been fortunate throughout my career to work with great people, and been given opportunities to learn and grow," Norton said. "I enjoy learning about and giving back to the communities in which I work and live. It seems there is never enough time to participate in everything that interests me, so I try to choose where I can make the most impact."

To aspiring leaders, her advice is to remember that people are always watching.

“Make sure to be accountable for your mistakes and treat people with respect,” she emphasized. “It’s okay to be yourself, but be open to feedback — even when it’s hard to hear. Transparency will generate more goodwill than you could ever imagine. Knowledge really isn’t power. Share it, and see how much your team can accomplish!”

Norton, and the 2017 class of Most Influential Business Women, will be featured in the Aug. 11 issue of the *St. Louis Business Journal*.

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. 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 14,000.