



Sankofa Lecture Series to Focus on Perspectives from East St. Louis

by Megan Wieser

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EDWARDSVILLE – By providing insight on their experiences living in East St. Louis, a group of panelists hope to skew negative misconceptions about the city through

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's last Sankofa Lecture and Dialogue Series presentation of the academic semester.

The series features robust conversations surrounding the history of slavery and its lasting legacies, and is organized through SIUE's Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center, specifically its membership of the international Universities Studying Slavery (USS) consortium.

East St. Louisans will present "Perspectives from East St. Louis" at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 22 via Zoom. Registration is available at https://siue.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fLVsy8xnRqOYRDm7Eyeq0w.

Participants include Tandra Taylor, instructor in the SIUE Department of History; Cindy Reed, PhD, assistant professor in the SIUE Department of English; Antwoinette Ayers, TRHT community partner from I Am East St. Louis, The Magazine; and Kamina Loveless, director of Gardens Devone Network Food.

"The significance of this topic is relevant to those who drive through East St. Louis in their daily routine and make it home safe every day, only to hear negative perspectives in the media that have been influenced by a community of people who have never lived in East St. Louis or sat down with the beautiful people from our city," shared Ayers. "This topic is about opening the lens of the negative construct to a more positive approach."

Panelists will discuss the city's limited economic and food resources, and the lasting impact of poverty that calls for change. According to Ayers, strategic planning, economic equity and community partnership are key to ensuring a change in the narrative surrounding the East St. Louis community for generations to come.

"Why can't East St. Louis be seen as the mecca of great educators, artisans, athletes, gifted children and grass-root businesses?" asked Ayers. "Let's open up the discussion that will alter the minds and thoughts of how people view our city by judgment and limited perspectives of a town they don't truly know."

Anyone who has driven through East St. Louis and wondered about the city is invited to join this discussion, and become part of the vessel working to change this narrative.

The Sankofa Lecture and Dialogue Series is one of the University's many anti-racism initiatives. For more information on the TRHT and its future programs and initiatives, visit siue.edu/provost/trht.

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 nearly 13,000.