

SEGUE: Inspiration is key for St. Louis Mayor Krewson

Amanda Cooper For the Intelligencer

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EDWARDSVILLE — On this week's episode of Segue, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's weekly radio program exploring the lives and work of the people on campus and beyond, Chancellor Randy Pembroke interviews the City of St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson.

This episode of Segue airs at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Feb. 16. Listeners can tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or siue.edu/wsie.

In 2017, Krewson won a historic election, as she became the first woman to serve as mayor of St. Louis. Since then, she has focused on public safety, reducing the number of vacant buildings, cleaning up St. Louis neighborhoods, and increasing economic and workforce development throughout the region. Previously, she served as the 28th Ward alderwoman, served as the CFO for

an international design firm, and worked for Deloitte, a multinational professional services network, as an audit manager.

"What inspired you to pursue public service?" inquires Pembroke.

"I was increasingly active in my neighborhood and the neighborhood association," says Krewson. "When the opening came up to run for alderman, I thought 'I can do that.' I knew a lot of folks in my area, and I thought it would be an interesting opportunity to bring some focus to our neighborhood."

"Were there any particular issues that inspired you to be more active on behalf of your constituents?" asks Pembroke.

"I was first elected to the Board of Aldermen in 1997, and at that time, we looked at a lot of possibilities for development in the Central West End and Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhoods," answers Krewson. "I was interested in making the neighborhoods better, and it was an opportunity to serve the people in the area where I lived."

"When you think about the accomplishments in that position, are there certain things you feel good about?" asks Pembroke.

“I was the sponsor of the smoking ban in St. Louis,” responds Krewson. “Today, that seems like ancient history, but it was highly controversial at the time and met with a lot of opposition. I’m proud of promoting the smoking ban to make cleaner air for everyone in our restaurants, bars and workplaces.”

During her time as alderwoman, Krewson unapologetically took on other tough and controversial issues, such as fighting for common sense gun regulation and passing the city’s Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. She is also known for her initiatives to make neighborhoods more accessible for walkers and bike riders, and working alongside Forest Park Forever to renovate the park.

“Can you contrast what it is to be mayor versus an alderperson?” asks Pembroke.

“Much like being a part of Congress or a state legislature, an alderperson is part of a legislative body and has to decide on how to vote on issues throughout the city,” says Krewson. “As the mayor, I have executive level responsibility over a lot of departments. I’m responsible for implementing all legislation that gets passed and delivering service to the entire city.”

“One of the things I talk about when students and parents visit campus is the wonderful situation we have at SIUE,” mentions Pembroke. “Edwardsville is a wonderful town, and we’re about 25 minutes from downtown St. Louis. I try to remind people that being so close to a major metropolitan city creates many incredible opportunities.”

“Many students grasp these opportunities by gaining professional experience while completing internships throughout St. Louis,” Pembroke adds. As well as providing job opportunities, the city is a major educational and cultural site with destinations such as the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Fabulous Fox Theatre, the Missouri Botanical Garden and more.

“Edwardsville is a beautiful community,” adds Krewson. “The ability to educate so many young people here is an asset for our entire region. There’s such a variety of experiences students receive when coming to a school like SIUE.”

“Is there anything you might say to a person that might be thinking about a career in public service?” asks Pembroke.

“It’s a great honor to serve your neighbors and constituents,” says Krewson. “I encourage everyone to build their skill-set. Everyone needs to get good at whatever it is they do and perform public service. If you begin that way, that’s how you truly learn how to be a good public servant.”

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