

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**JUNE 24, 2019**  
**CEO Terry L. Bruce Leadership**  
**Illinois Eastern Community Colleges**

Few men or women reach the position of CEO of a college district with the deep well of experience Terry L. Bruce brought to District 529 twenty-three years ago.

Under his leadership the District's four-college system has garnered state-wide recognition for affordable excellence in academic and vocational programs. That legacy is the result of Bruce's push for technological modernization, creative partnerships, and innovative programs.

Bruce retires June 30. Marilyn Holt was recently named as Interim CEO while the search process unfolds. In his recent final remarks to the IECC Board of Trustees, Bruce thanked the members for their "wise choices" and guidance. "I leave the District in good hands, couldn't be better."

Bruce and his wife, Charlotte, expressed their appreciation by making a "gift back to the district of \$20,000 to the four colleges." This is in addition to their \$46,000 gift to Olney Central College given in honor of Bruce's parents.

Bruce's career involved higher education long before he was named CEO. He worked closely with founding IECC Chancellor, Jim Spencer, serving as legal counsel for District 529, as they were developing the unique four-campus district.

"Terry and I started together as law school grads and State Senate staffers. He was elected to that body and quickly promoted to leadership," recalls U.S. Senator Dick Durbin. "Eventually he joined me in Washington as a member of the U.S. House from 1985 to 1993."

Whether in government or as CEO of District #529, Durbin noted that Terry Bruce "made education the centerpiece of his life's work. Countless people today are the beneficiaries of his talent and education."

Bruce, a native of Olney, graduated from the University of Illinois Law School in 1969. His early work with the Shumaker and Bruce law firm focused on labor arbitration, community college administration, budget development, and bond issuance.

In 1971 Bruce was elected to the Illinois Senate and served until 1985. He sponsored the funding legislation for all the community colleges in Illinois. Plus he was principal author of major community college legislation.

His political career shifted to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1985. There Bruce spent eight years drafting or authoring a wide range of legislation. He worked on telecommunications regulation, corporate and government coalitions, restructuring the tax system, and creating the first group insurance plan for state employees and retirees. Plus he redrafted the Illinois Community College Act and handled the appropriation for the 39 Illinois community colleges.

Bruce drafted the Illinois Library Act that integrated public, school, and college libraries into one system. He redrafted the Illinois Open Meetings Act and co-authored the Illinois Open

Records Act. He contributed to the 1985 farm bill, gained funding for the National Soybean Research Lab, proposed laws to improve health care, especially Home Health Care, Rural OutReach, and Alzheimer's care among other issues.

Bruce shifted his energies, commitment, and acumen to IECC in 1996. He prioritized improvements in technology to maintain the District's competitiveness. That included upgraded lines in all thirty-one buildings, a modern telecommunication network, new computers for every faculty and employee, and improved classrooms.

Under Bruce's prompt, IECC became the first multi-campus district to install the Campus Pipeline program. He initiated on-line courses for distance learning.

Bruce added dual-credit courses for both academic and vocational programs. He established an alliance with Franklin University so students could complete a Bachelor's degree through distance/on-line delivery.

Year by year Bruce addressed multiple educational needs including Welfare-to-Work, student retention, dislocated workers, Upward Bound, and Success Network.

IECC developed the most successful prison education program in Illinois.

In his twenty-three years as CEO, budgetary issues intensified until Illinois schools went without any state funds for three years during a recent protracted budget stalemate at the Illinois legislature. Bruce recently remarked to a WVC Channel 15 reporter that the situation was the most difficult he had faced.

Kyle Peach, faculty member from Wabash College, reflected on the stability Bruce's long tenure brought to the District. "There was always this comfort in knowing Mr. Bruce was there...steering the ship, expertly leading us through good times and in times the future looked bleak." He added that "it is safe to say everyone at IECC owes [him] a debt of gratitude."

Bruce's extended tenure at IECC and his service on the Illinois Community College Board has made him a mentor to other educational leaders.

Jonah Rice, President at Southeastern Illinois College recently called Bruce "the Godfather of Illinois Community College Presidents".

"One would think that when you cross a godfather with a lawyer you'd get an offer that you just can't understand," Rice noted humorously, "but not with Terry Bruce. He was just the opposite—because he cared about helping and mentoring new presidents and serving the system he really helped to shape and mold it into what we have today."

Dr. Andy Fisher, IECC Board Chairman, summarized the District's appreciation. "Terry Bruce has been an incredibly vital part of Illinois Eastern Community Colleges for quite some time. His vast experience, insights, and leadership have proven to be a profound asset to the district. He has steered our colleges through many challenging, as well as bright and shining moments. We wish him the absolute best in his retirement years."