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CPA Advisor Sylvia Ewing Honored for Contributions

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Being heard is a human experience that changes lives. For Sylvia Ewing, facilitating exchanges that give voice to those silenced has led not only to a successful career in media and nonprofit advocacy but also to winning the 2020 Public Humanities Award.

“I believe a great conversation can move the world to action for good,” said Ewing, a member of the [Board of Advisors](#) for the [Center for Performing Arts](#) at [Governors State University](#). “Together, we can create a world that is just and good. The humanities can save humanity.”

In May, Ewing received the award in an online ceremony, where she shared the honor with her co-recipient and daughter, Eve Ewing, a sociologist, author, artist and assistant professor at the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. The award is granted by Illinois Humanities in recognition of individuals and

organizations who have made significant contributions to the public understanding of the role the humanities play in transforming lives and strengthening communities.

Sylvia Ewing is well known to the Chicago community as a teacher, public television host and award-winning journalist. At Elevate Energy, she is director of strategic communications, marketing, and outreach. “I’ve always been in love with stories, and I believe that the right conversations change the world. It informs my work today on energy efficiency and climate justice,” she said.

Ewing was named to the CPA Advisory Board in 2019. “At this stage in my life, it is a perfect partnership that allows me to share what I learned at places like Steppenwolf Theatre and as a producer covering the arts for public radio,” she said. “It’s an honor and a privilege to be able to have an impact on what the students and the community can gain from the CPA.”

Ewing applauds the theater’s role in drawing patrons of all ages.

“One thing that has always been particularly important to me is intergenerational conversation,” she said. “We can’t move forward if we don’t have younger people and older people working together equally and with respect. That’s one of the reasons I like the CPA. I’ve never done a production where your whole family can’t come.”

She also is glad to be part of a university community that offers a liberal arts education. “The humanities offer a solution and a creative connection that touches on so many aspects of our lives,” Ewing said. “A grounding in the humanities makes us better able to contribute to others and to understand the world around us through the lens of culture.

As a South Suburban resident, she said, “it’s important to me to be able to contribute to the arts in my backyard. At the CPA, everyone involved wants to bring world-class people to the community and connect the audience with the school and each other.”