



U.S. Richard E. Neal, D-Springfield, received the 2022 National Education Service Award at the Community College National Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C. From left, Richard Rhodes, American Association of Community Colleges board chair and president, Neal, Christina Royal, president of Holyoke Community College, James Cooksey, board chair and trustee, and Jee Hang Lee, association president and CEO. (AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES PHOTO)

The Royal treatment

It was a great moment for Western Massachusetts earlier this month when U.S. Rep. **Richard E. Neal**, D-Springfield, received the 2022 National Education Service Award at the Community College National Legislative Summit.

Holyoke Community College president **Christina Royal** introduced Neal and presented the award to him on behalf of the Association of Community College Trustees and the American Association of Community Colleges, the summit organizers. The award honors a national leader who “has made extraordinary contributions to national public policies and resources that support education, training, and post-secondary learning.”

“As chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, Congressman Neal has worked tirelessly to fix the tax code in a way that would benefit community college students and sup-

port workforce training programs,” Royal said.

“The community college system in America plays a critical role in preparing individuals for the workforce,” said Neal, who also happens to be an HCC alum from 1970. “I have been a longtime supporter of our community colleges because they are successful. They provide technical career training, serve as a stepping stone, and welcome individuals looking to retrain or refresh their skillset.”

Royal said she was honored to have presented the award to Neal, saying, “He recognizes that investments in our community colleges support regional growth, job creation, and economic mobility for individuals and families. I know this was a proud moment for him as it also was for me and should be for all the communities in Massachusetts that he represents.”

Previous winners of the National Education Service Award include President **Barack Obama** in 2010.