The William L. Beatty Jurist In Residence allows students to supplement their traditional curriculum with the perspective and experience of the judiciary. Each year, a distinguished jurist is invited to spend two to three days at the School of Law speaking in a variety of classes related to his/her area of responsibility and meeting with students, faculty and staff in formal and informal settings.

This experience is made possible through a cy pres award granted to the Southern Illinois University School of Law in 2004 by U.S. District Court Judge for the Southern District of Illinois David R. Herndon (Class of 1977) in memory of his mentor, William L. Beatty.

William L. Beatty (1925–2001) was born in Mendota, Illinois. Beatty served in the Army from 1943 to 1946 and graduated from law school in 1950. As an attorney, he had a distinguished career in private practice from 1950 to 1968 when he was elected to the bench of the 3rd Circuit Court, Madison County, Illinois. He held that position until 1979, when he was nominated by President Jimmy Carter to the United States District Court, Southern District of Illinois. He assumed senior status in 1993, a position he held until his death at the age of 76.
Judge (Ret.) Annette A. Eckert will be in residence at the SIU School of Law, Feb. 11-13. She will give a public lecture, “Problem Solving Courts,” at 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12, in the courtroom of the Lesar Law Building.

In her lecture she will discuss her personal and professional experiences creating and presiding in problem-solving courts. She will also discuss the costs, both monetary and social, of mass incarceration and how problem solving courts, such as mental health, veterans, drug, domestic violence and teen courts, are helping to address these challenges.

Eckert retired from the 20th Judicial Circuit in Belleville, Illinois. Eckert started her career in the legal field as an assistant public defender in Chicago, then moved on to private practice in Belleville.

During her judgeship, Eckert presided over the Family Division from 1992 to 1995, and in 2002 she became the first female elected circuit judge in the 20th Judicial Circuit, where she presided in the Felony Trial Division and the St. Clair County Drug Court. She also chaired the Governor’s Task Force on Veterans Courts, which drafted legislation that became the Illinois Veterans Courts Treatment Act.

Eckert has taught at Loyola University School of Law and Southwestern Illinois College Police Academy. She teaches criminal justice and serves as a recruitment advisor at Lindenwood University-Belleville, and has taught continuing legal education and continuing judicial education courses.

Eckert received her bachelor’s degree from Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, and her juris doctorate from DePaul University College of Law in Chicago.

Eckert has received many awards and honors, including being awarded the “30 Years/30 Leaders – Violence Prevention Center of Southwest Illinois 30th Anniversary Award,” the “Chief Judge Richard A. Hudlin IV Memorial Award” and the “Voices Against Family Violence Award for 2003 for Improving the Lives of Victims of Family Violence.” Eckert also received the inaugural Hall of Fame Award from her alma mater, Belleville Township High School East.

Eckert’s work has been published in Illinois Juvenile Law and Practice and by the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education. She served as co-editor of the five-volume legal treatise “Illinois Family Law Practice.” Eckert also serves on the St. Clair County Juvenile Justice Council and recently developed the St. Clair County Teen Court and serves as its director. She is active in the Belleville Heritage Society and her church. She also serves on the St. Clair County Juvenile Justice Commission.