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### Dean's Note

As the year draws to a close, we are excited to present you with this fall newsletter to keep you informed about the exciting initiatives at SIU School of Law. We have had a busy semester as we celebrate our 50th anniversary. We hope that you will all join us on March 23, 2024, for our [50th Anniversary Gala](#). Thank you for your continuous support. If you would like to become a sponsor of the 50th Anniversary or are interested in giving, please contact [Carly Holtkamp](#).

Dean and Professor of Law



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## Student Success and Engagement



### INDUCTION CEREMONY

In August, SIU LAW held the Induction Ceremony for the Class of 2026! This official welcome marks the beginning of their first year at SIU LAW and they have the pin to prove it. Per tradition, the 50th Class wrote their oath.

The ceremony was overseen by Justice David Overstreet, Chancellor Austin Lane, Erika Harold, Executive Director of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism, Kathleen Pine ('82), Commissioner, and Dean Camille Davidson.



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### INTERDISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONALISM DAY

On Friday, September 8th, the 26th Interdisciplinary Professionalism Day took place at the Lesar Law Building. This annual event brings first-year students from the SIU School of Law, the SIU School of Medicine, and the Physician Assistant Program together to approach a problem and analyze it together. Students were divided into interdisciplinary groups; each group had two facilitators, one from the legal profession and one from the medical profession. The 17 groups were combined into four groups by theme, and then each of the four groups presented their findings to the entire group.

The event was sponsored by Deaconess Health System, SIU Medicine, and SIU LAW.

The next day the schools met up for a friendly game of kick ball at Evergreen Park with the Law School coming out on top!





## SIU LAW HOMECOMING WEEKEND

SIU LAW hosted a tailgate and chili trivia event for Homecoming Weekend, both had great turnouts. SIU LAW Alumni hosted events for the Class of 1983 40th Reunion and an Alumni Barristers Scholarship Fundraiser.



## INTRAMURAL MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Moot Court held its Intramural Competition in September. Congratulations to the following participants:

Champion Team and American College of Legal Medicine Award winners: Jessica Visage & Kathryn Pettersen

Best Speaker: Caitlin Tippy

Second Place: Kaitlyn Coffey

Third Place: Jessica Visage

Best Brief: Jack Lakenburgs & Caitlin Tippy

Second Place: David Denning & Michael Lee

Semi-finalist Teams: Kaitlyn Coffey & Tim Hogan; Jack Lakenburgs & Caitlin Tippy  
Finalist Team: David Denning & Michael Lee

Thank you to the final round bench judges, Illinois Supreme Court Justice David Overstreet, Williamson County Circuit Court Judge Michelle Shafer ('94), and Professor Jennifer Spreng.

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## Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

# SIU SCHOOL OF LAW CELEBRATES LARGE, DIVERSE FIRST-YEAR CLASS AS IT MARKS 50 YEARS

By Pete Rosenberg



First-year SIU School of Law students Myla Croft, left, and Noah Herndon are part of the school's largest class in recent history. *(Photo by Russell Bailey)*

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As the Southern Illinois University School of Law enters its second half-century, it celebrates a sizeable, diverse class of first-year students, and its mission of serving the public good established with the first class in 1973 remains critical.

That pledge helped attract first-year law students Myla Croft and Noah Herndon to be part of the Class of 2026, which is among the largest in recent history.

"I am very passionate about public service, so attending a school of law that focuses on serving the public good was one of my top priorities," said Croft, who is from St. Louis. The 2022 Lincoln Academy of Illinois student laureate, University Honors Program student and McNair Scholar elected to stay in Southern Illinois to continue her education after she earned her degree in political science from SIU Carbondale in May.

“During my undergraduate years, I made many connections on campus, and over time, I fell in love with the community,” Croft said. “In addition, I wanted to obtain a good education, but I did not want to incur a lot of debt. I believe that the law school will help me reach my full potential and goals.”

Herndon, a St. Louis native who is from Aurora, Colorado, also chose the SIU School of Law for several reasons, including the ability to be closer to most of his family. His grandfather, retired federal judge David R. Herndon, is part of the law school’s second graduating class in 1977.

Herndon, who wants to work in family law, is particularly interested in SIU Law’s clinics focusing on domestic violence and juvenile justice.

“I want to pursue a law degree because I want to be able to help people who struggle with domestic violence,” said Herndon, who earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Regis University in Denver. “No one deserves to live in situations where they feel scared, trapped and hopeless. I want to be able to give the people trapped in these situations as best I can.”

Herndon said he’s honored to follow his grandfather’s path.

“I’ve looked up to him for as long as I can remember,” he said.

### **Bustling class**

**The law school features 110 first-year students, a 24% increase in first-year students from last year, is the most diverse class in more than a decade, and has attracted students from 19 states. The law school presently has 276 students.**

Initiatives including the Diversity Prelaw Summer Institute, which brings high-achieving juniors and seniors from colleges around the country to Carbondale to gain insight on their legal careers, have helped with the growth. The law school also has 3+3 programs with Governor’s State University and Tougaloo College, where students can earn a bachelor’s degree and law degree in six years, and a memorandum of understanding with Stillman College, a historically Black liberal arts college in Alabama.

“We have taken the step to introduce ourselves to students who have not known about us in the past,” Dean Camille Davidson said, noting the work of the law school’s admissions department, increased recruiting efforts and re-engaged alumni. “We know that our strength is when we can bring people to campus.”

Davidson added that SIU’s admissions department “is made up of hardworking individuals who believe in the mission of SIU School of Law. Nothing happens by accident. It is only when we pay attention to issues that we are able to improve.”

She also noted the importance of recruitment, visits to feeder schools and the work of student ambassadors who travel to schools to also meet potential students. Davidson also travels. She is speaking this week at the 10th annual National HBCU Pre-Law Summit and Law Expo in Washington, D.C., and the law school will have a recruiting table there.

### **Prelaw Summer Institute pivotal**

Croft said she enjoyed “being a Saluki” as an undergrad. She participated in the inaugural Diversity Prelaw Summer Institute in May 2022. It gave her an opportunity “to network with other students, attorneys, law faculty and learn more about the legal field.” Receiving a \$20,000 scholarship for completing the program was also a “significant factor” in Croft’s decision.



"I highly recommend the program to any student who is interested in learning more about law," Croft said.

She wants to concentrate on immigration law and criminal law due to her desire "to represent those from underserved communities and be a voice for the voiceless."

### Starting 'a journey'

Herndon and Croft each mentioned the trials that all first-year law students face. But they each said the faculty and staff are helpful and friendly, and want students to succeed.

"Law school is a journey," she said. "I have found that it is a marathon and not a sprint. My first week of law school was like drinking out of a firehose. Now, I have a better understanding on how to navigate it. My classes are challenging, but manageable and enlightening. SIU School of Law is a small, close-knit community. I am looking forward to more new experiences, more networking and making the best out of my three years of law school."

Herndon agreed, explaining he's loved his experience so far.

"All of the professors are great at engaging with the class and making the course material fascinating to learn about. Getting cold-called can be a bit scary at first, but that fear goes away quickly," he said. Herndon added his grandfather Judge Herndon, "offered a lot of great advice on all aspects of what to expect." That included asking lots of questions in class to help make the material easier to understand.

"One of the first things he told me was that it would be difficult to find free time, but to make sure not to overwork myself. At the end of the day, you have to take care of your health in order to continue your studies," Herndon said. "The most important advice he gave me was not to try and look at the cases as black and white, but as shades of gray; it's OK not to always agree with the opinion of the court in the cases I read."

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## FORMER WATERGATE PROSECUTOR, MSNBC ANALYST DISCUSSED PIONEERING CAREER FOR SIU LAW'S LESAR LECTURE

By Pete Rosenberg



Former Watergate prosecutor Jill Wine-Banks discussed her pioneering career and the barriers

that women are still facing when the author, businesswoman, and MSNBC legal analyst presented at the Hiram H. Lesar Distinguished Lecture on October 4th.

Wine-Banks' presentation was titled, "Breaking Barriers for Equality, But Still Dancing Backwards in High Heels: How Women's Success Benefits All." This was the 26th lecture in the series established to honor founding Dean Hiram H. Lesar.

A graduate of the Columbia University School of Law, Wine-Banks began her career as the first woman to serve as an organized crime prosecutor with the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. At just 30 years old, Wine-Banks' trial capabilities and win record resulted in her selection as the only woman among three assistant Watergate special prosecutors in the obstruction of justice trial against President Richard Nixon's top aides. Wine-Banks was a major player in the Watergate tapes hearing, where she cross-examined Rose Mary Woods, Nixon's secretary, about the 18½ minute gap in a key White House recording.

"Most discrimination today is more subtle, so it's harder to fight and easier to ignore, but the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission now exists, women support each other more and the numbers are too large to ignore now," she said. "When I started, few women were in any profession. Only 4% of all lawyers were women, and almost none of those were litigators, so I had to make up the rules."

Wine-Banks' career after the Watergate case included private practice in Washington, D.C., and then being named general counsel of the U.S. Army by then President Jimmy Carter. After returning to private practice as a partner at Jenner and Block, Wine-Banks was appointed Illinois' first solicitor general and later the state's first female deputy attorney general, where she argued cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and Illinois Supreme Court. Wine-Banks was the first woman appointed executive vice president and chief operating officer of the American Bar Association and had a corporate career with Motorola and Maytag.

Wine-Banks, author of the 2020 book "The Watergate Girl: My Fight for Truth and Justice Against a Criminal President," said she hopes those who attended the lecture saw "where we were, where we are, where we have to be and be motivated and inspired to help us get there. Both in terms of the ERA and speaking up to get what you want and deserve."



Pictured: Dean Camille Davidson and Reverend Wheeler Parker, Jr.

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## ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY SYMPOSIUM

In October, Dean Camille Davidson was the Opening Keynote Speaker at the Illinois Higher Education Equity Symposium, speaking on Affirming Action and Equity.

The symposium's aim is to provide a platform for participants to engage in meaningful discussions and share their experiences on how to promote equity in higher education. The event provided opportunities for participants to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by underrepresented groups in higher education and implement strategies to reduce harm and dismantle inequitable structures.

SIU defines equity as “act right, make right, and do right.”

One of the goals of equity at SIU and in higher education is to eliminate disparities in educational outcomes among diverse groups of students. This includes reducing the institutional achievement gap, increasing access to higher education by providing financial aid and support services and creating a welcoming environment for underrepresented students. It is important to continue to address inequities in higher education to ensure that all students have access to a quality education.

Evoking the 2023 Symposium theme, “Reclaiming Our Stories: Reimagining Student Success,” Reverend Wheeler Parker, Jr. provided the mid-day keynote address on day one. Reverend Parker, the last living eyewitness to Emmett Till’s kidnapping, recalled, reclaimed, and restored the horror that happened to his cousin, Emmett, 67 years ago and history that needs to be remembered.



## NATIONAL HBCU PRE-LAW SUMMIT & LAW EXPO

Dean Camille Davidson traveled to Washington D.C. in September to represent SIU LAW at the National HBCU Pre-Law Summit & Law Expo. She spoke to future law students and tabled in the expo hall.

**Branding and Partnerships**

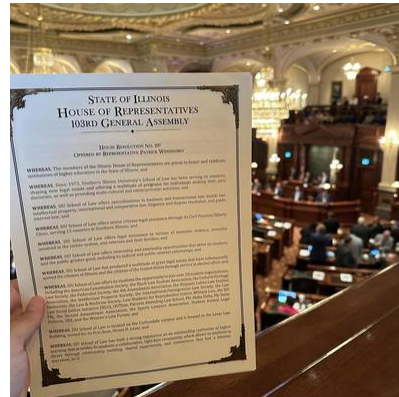




## SHARI RHODE MAKES DONATION, NAMES COURTROOM

Shari Rhode ('76), a member of the inaugural class at SIU Law, has generously contributed to the school by naming the courtroom the "Rhode Covington Courtroom".

Rhode was also named Woman of the Year at the second annual Saluki Women's Weekend hosted by the SIU Foundation and the Women's Leadership Council.



## HOUSE RESOLUTION - SPRINGFIELD, IL

During the Saluki Takeover SIU LAW, Dean Camille Davidson and law school staff went to the Illinois State Capitol to hear the reading of a House Resolution sponsored by Rep. Patrick Windhorst ('00) to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Law School.

Pictured with the Resolution (L-R): Matt Kupec, Rep. David Friess, Rep. Paul Jacobs, Senator Dale Fowler, State Senator Jil Tracy ('79), Dean Davidson, and Rep. Patrick Windhorst ('00).



## **SIU LAW HEALTH LAW MOOT COURT EXAMINES IVF, BANKRUPTCY DISPUTE**

By Pete Rosenbery

Law school students from around the country competed in November when the Southern Illinois University School of Law hosted the National Health Law Moot Court competition to argue a fictitious case before the U.S. Supreme Court on two distinct and complex issues of surreptitious in vitro fertilization and bankruptcy.

Twenty-six teams from 18 law schools participated in the 32nd Health Law Moot Court competition —the only mock U.S. Supreme Court competition dedicated to the always evolving and expanding topic of health law.

As the host, the SIU School of Law moot court team was not a competitor. Many alumni, faculty and friends of the law school will participated as early-round judges.

The final round judges were Judge Judy Cates, Illinois Fifth District Court of Appeals; Chief Judge Laura Grandy, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Illinois; Dr. Eli N. Avila, president of the American College of Legal Medicine and distinguished visiting professor of public health, New York Medical College, Valhalla, New York, and Camille Davidson, dean, SIU School of Law.

Sponsors are the SIU School of Law, the American College of Legal Medicine (ACLM) and the American Health Law Association (AHLA).

This year's field included defending and nine-time health law moot court champions South Texas College of Law Houston. Other participating law schools are Chicago-Kent College of Law; Loyola University Chicago School of Law; Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law; Saint Louis University School of Law; Seton Hall University School of Law; Suffolk University School of Law; Texas A&M University School of Law; Texas Tech University School of Law; The George Washington University School of Law;



University of California College of Law, San Francisco, formerly the Hastings College of Law; University of Houston Law Center; University of Minnesota Law School; University of Mississippi School of Law; University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law; University of New Mexico School of Law; University of Oklahoma College of Law, and the University of Tulsa College of Law.

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## ILLINOIS RURAL HEALTH SUMMIT

For more than 20 years, the Southern Illinois University School of Law and SIU Medicine have hosted a joint symposium to discuss issues of health equity. The topic for the 2023 Illinois Rural Health Summit was Exploring Gender Health Equity through Policy. Southern Illinois University Carbondale JD/MD student Justine Newman and Dean Camille Davidson represented the School of Law.

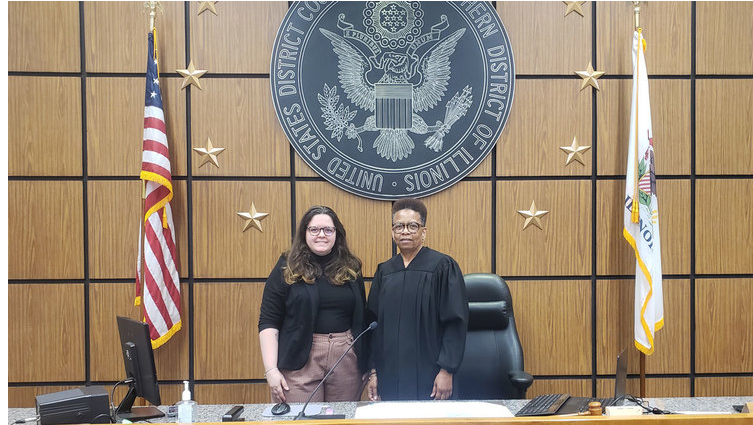
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## MARION CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PANEL



In November, Dean Camille Davidson hosted a panel at the Marion, IL Chamber of Commerce. The topic was New Laws that Impact Businesses and Employers. Panel members were SIU LAW Director of Career Services Casey Parker ('03) and owner/attorney at the Legal Advocacy Headquarters, Martin Parsons ('15), who is also an adjunct professor at SIU LAW.



Pictured: Rachel C. Burke and U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois Judge Staci M. Yandle.

## **SIU LAW STUDENT FOCUSES ON PASSION FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN METRO EAST PROGRAM**

By Pete Rosenbury

Working with the federal public defender's office for the Southern District of Illinois is the perfect fit for third-year Southern Illinois University Carbondale School of Law student Rachel C. Burke.

The law school's Metro East Criminal Justice Experiential Learning Program is giving Burke the opportunity to focus on issues she is most passionate about.

"I was excited to get a chance to actually work in the federal criminal justice system, especially as a defense attorney. I am also really excited to get exposed to the problem-solving courts. I'm a big supporter of restorative justice," said Burke, who works out of the Federal Public Defender's office in Benton, Illinois, this semester. Burke will also do her academic honors capstone project on restorative justice.

"I have always gravitated toward criminal law, and getting to interact with defendants, families of the defendants, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers and judges has really given me a lot of perspective on both the legal field and people in general," said Burke, who grew up "all over" the Chicago suburbs and was living in the Cook County village of Justice during high school.

"The attorneys here are incredibly kind and very smart. They are really good teachers, and they have given me some really good opportunities to contribute and feedback on my performance that has been positive and also really helpful in shaping me into the kind of attorney I want to be."

As the SIU School of Law celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2023 with its long-held emphasis on experiential education, it remains the only public law school within about

two hours of Belleville and the Metro East and 40 minutes from the federal courthouse in Benton. The program was announced in August 2022 and is being offered during the fall semester.

Shelly Page, associate professor and experiential education program director, said the emphasis on “learning through practical experience and reflection has become an integral part of legal education,” though its history can be traced back to the 19th and early 20th centuries when “legal education began to evolve from a purely theoretical doctrinal approach to a more practical and skills-based approach.”

In addition to her work Monday through Thursday in Benton, Burke has visited specialty courts in Edwardsville, Belleville and East St. Louis. Those include veterans and service members treatment court, domestic violence court, mental health court, teen court and drug court. She balances that with a sports law class that meets two nights a week.

“Overall, though, I think these sacrifices right now are worth it to get the experience that I am getting,” Burke said.

Under Supreme Court Rule 711, Burke is able to make court appearances on the record. In her work at the Federal Public Defender's office, she is able to draft objections to presentence reports along with several sentencing memos and contribute to an “ongoing research project regarding new Supreme Court precedents.”

Burke added the experience also carries tangible benefits she will use as an attorney, including being comfortable in a courtroom or talking to attorneys and knowing that she can contribute to the legal profession.

“The most confidence-building experience is when another real-life attorney asks me for my input,” she said. “I feel so much more comfortable actually talking to professionals in the field, and I feel like I truly belong here. It’s nice to kind of solidify in your head that you are doing the right thing career-wise because a law degree is a significant investment, and it’s nice to know that it will be worth it in the end.”

Burke graduated from Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois, with a double major in political science and legal studies and a minor in Spanish. She received a full-ride scholarship to attend law school. The law school’s professors “really care about the students and their development as professionals in the field.”

The internship exposes students to all facets of criminal law, she said. She gained insight into the federal prison system and defendants’ rights, and met both public defenders and prosecutors who “no doubt would have a lot to teach.” The court system is not all punitive, she said.

“It is really nice to see the good side, the rehabilitative side of the criminal justice system,” Burke said. “Specialty courts like these are not available everywhere yet, and being a part of this externship course has given me a firsthand sight of these programs, which has sparked all kinds of ideas in my head for how I want to contribute to society in the future.”

Burke wants to continue to work in public service because it’s her “true calling.” She has applied for a fellowship with a Chicago nonprofit organization, where one of the focuses is researching “legal and policy strategies for police reform and community-based

alternatives to incarceration, which is exactly what I'm doing now in this internship." She also plans to apply for state public defender positions in central and Southern Illinois and the Metro East.

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## Research & Innovation



### UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE 7TH CIRCUIT AT SIU LAW

SIU LAW was honored to host the United States Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit on November 1st. Presiding judges were (L-R) Judge Amy J. St. Eve, Chief Judge Diane S. Sykes, and Judge John Lee. Six cases were argued in the School of Law Auditorium in front of law students, professors, and distinguished guests.

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### CAREER SERVICES JUDGES PANEL

U.S. Magistrate Judge Reona Daly ('94), Presiding Circuit Court Judge Christy Solverson ('90), and Associate Judge Douglas Gruenke ('02) answered questions from students about their career paths and what it is like to be a judge.





## CAREER SERVICES AGRICULTURAL LAW PANEL

The panel was made up of Matt Lurkins ('05), Vice President of Grain and Strategic Relationships at GROWMARK, Inc., Lauren Lurkins ('06), founder of environmental consulting firm Lurkins Strategies, LLC., and Craig Sondergroth, President/CEO, of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Lauren Lurkins ('06) was also awarded the Emerging Leader Award at the second annual Saluki Women's Weekend hosted by the SIU Foundation and the Women's Leadership Council.

## Legal Lounge *Afternoon Conversations* =



## Professor Dale Aschemann

Professor Dale Aschemann ('98) reflected on his recent experience at the U.S. Supreme Court with his cases on the False Claims Act during the first session of Legal Lounge: Afternoon Conversations.



## Professor Chris Behan & Professor Valerie Behan

Professors Chris Behan and Valery Behan's reflected on their trip to Africa to teach in a training course in the Naivasha Maximum Security Prison in Naivasha, Kenya.



## Professor Zvi Rosen

Prof. Zvi S. Rosen has worked for all three branches of the federal government and has been a lawyer on Wall Street; for this conversation, he reflected on some of his experiences.

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Sustainability





## TRAINING FOR ONLINE LEARNING

All law school faculty participated in a full-day retreat to learn the best online and hybrid learning practices. This enables our faculty to prepare our students to enter a diverse and technologically advanced work environment. The training was conducted by SIU Center for Teach Excellence and Extended Campus.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### SAVE THE DATE

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**SCHOOL OF LAW**

*Gala*

*Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence*

**March 23, 2024**

Hangar One Event Center  
Southern Illinois Airport, Murphysboro, IL





**CLICK HERE**  
for Alumni  
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Nominations

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**SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF LAW**

**ADMISSIONS  
CEREMONY TO THE  
BAR OF THE  
U.S. SUPREME  
COURT**

**Ceremony  
Thurs., June 20, 2024**

**Deadline to apply is  
March 15, 2024**

**Spaces are limited, please email Michele at  
tville@siu.edu or call 619/453-8761 with questions.**



## Admission to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar

**Ceremony Date: Thursday, June 20, 2024**

Spaces are limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. If you would like to participate in this event, please contact Michele Tourville at 618-453-8761 or [tville@siu.edu](mailto:tville@siu.edu) with any questions.

Total cost is \$250

- \$50 payable to SIU School of Law for processing and mailing fees. Please post-date payment for date of ceremony.
- \$200 payable to the Supreme Court of the United States for admission fee, post-dated for the date of the ceremony. This will be submitted with your application.

**SCOTUS Admission Application and information can be found here:** <https://www.supremecourt.gov/bar/barapplication.pdf>

- If no QR code is present at the bottom of page one (1), please contact Michele Tourville at the above email address for the updated application.
- Please answer all parts of Question 12 on page one (1).

Please note that your signature is required in two places on page two (2):

#### CERTIFICATION AND OATH OF ADMISSION

- We have sponsors, or you may obtain your own.
- All application materials and payments must be received no later than March 15, 2024, in the School of Law Dean's Office, ATTN Michele Tourville.
- An original Certificate of Good Standing from the highest court of the state in which you have been admitted to practice for at least three years should be included in your application materials.
- You are responsible for your own travel and lodging arrangements. A group dinner will be planned the evening prior to the ceremony; details to soon follow.
- Per the Court, you are allowed to bring one guest into the courtroom to observe, however, children under six (6) years of age may not be permitted in the courtroom.

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