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Blagojevich Judge to Discuss 'The Breach of Public Trust'

Apr-10-2012

The federal judge who presided over both trials of Rod Blagojevich plans to present a talk on the campus of Eastern Illinois University.

However, U.S. District Judge James B. Zagel will probably refrain from talking specifics about the 2011 case that led to the former Illinois governor's 14-year incarceration in a Colorado federal prison. That case, under appeal, is still open.

Instead, Zagel, who has served as a U.S. district judge since 1987, will speak more generally on "The Breach of Public Trust." James Burns, a former top federal prosecutor from Chicago, will also be in attendance.

A question-and-answer session will follow Zagel's talk.

Admission to the presentation, scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. Thursday, April 19, in the Recital Hall of Eastern's Doudna Fine Arts Center, is free and open to the public.

Zagel, who received his law degree from Harvard University in the 1960s, began his career as an assistant state's attorney in Cook County. As such, he assisted in the prosecution of mass murderer Richard Speck.

He later served as assistant attorney general for the state of Illinois (1969-1977); executive director of the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission (1977-79); director of revenue, state of Illinois (1979); and director of the Illinois State Police (1980-1987).

In addition to a number of legal books, Zagel has had one novel, "Money to Burn," published (2002), and he has made cameo appearances in the movies "Music Box," with Jessica Lange, and "Homicide," starring Joe Mantegna.

This event is being co-sponsored by EIU's College of Sciences and the Public Policy Institute.