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03-15

January 17, 2003

For Immediate Release:

JUDGE/PRO-FOOTBALL STANDOUT ALAN PAGE TO SPEAK AT EIU

CHARLESTON – Judge Alan C. Page, Minnesota's first African-American Supreme Court Justice and a former pro-football standout, will present the keynote luncheon address – "Challenges and Opportunities for the 21st Century Community" – during this year's Opening Doors conference, sponsored by Eastern Illinois University's Office of Civil Rights.

Page, who will speak at noon Thursday, Jan. 30, in the University Ballroom, located in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union, will discuss access to education, race and the building of individual character.

Luncheon reservations may be made by phoning (217) 581-5020 by Monday, Jan. 27. Seating also will be available for those who wish to attend the speech, but not the luncheon.

Community members are encouraged to attend.

There will be an opportunity for members of the audience to pose questions at the end of Page's address. In addition, the judge will participate in a more informal discussion of issues and take further questions at 1 p.m., also in the University Ballroom.

Page, known for his staunch defense as a member of the famed "Purple People Eaters," the Minnesota Vikings' fierce defensive unit of the 1970's, retired from the game in 1981. He went to work for a Minnesota law firm before being appointed special assistant attorney general in Minnesota and, in 1987, was named assistant attorney general. Six years later, he became an associate justice on the Minnesota Supreme Court.

In addition to lecturing on a wide range of legal and judicial issues, Page remains a strong proponent for the creation of educational opportunities and mentoring for underprivileged children. An ardent defender of equal education for all children, Page has established a foundation to provide college tuition for underprivileged students and has co-sponsored a national essay-writing contest to promote literacy.

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The recipient of numerous athletics and humanitarian awards, Page likes to think of football as a past chapter in his life. "If I could choose a way to be remembered, it wouldn't be my association with football," he said. "Football is the past – a good past, but I'd want to be remembered with children – my children and other children."

As part of the conference, there also will be a 10 a.m. interactive workshop on the prevention of sexual harassment. Individuals interested in participating should phone (217) 581-5020 for details.

In addition, a discussion on "Meaningful Assessment of Campus Climate: Challenges and Opportunities" will take place at 4 p.m. in the Sullivan Room of the University Union. Cynthia Nichols, Office of Civil Rights, and Caridad Brito, psychology, will describe the ongoing research of student survey data.