

PROFESSOR CONCANNON RECEIVES JUSTICE AWARD

In front of a packed courtroom filled with friends, family, colleagues, and former students, Professor James M. Concannon received the Justice Award from the Kansas Supreme Court during a special session on Friday, Dec. 14, 2012. The award — the Court’s highest — is given to recognize persons or organizations that have contributed significantly to the improvement of justice in Kansas. **Linda Elrod, ’72**, Washburn University School of Law Richard S. Righter Distinguished Professor of Law, and **David Heinemann, ’73**, a Topeka attorney who served as a legislator from Garden City for 27 years, presented Concannon to the Court. Both shared their professional and personal stories of Concannon and his positive impact on his many students, colleagues, family, and friends.



*Jim
Concannon*

“I have never wanted to attend my own funeral, and now it really seems that no purpose would be served,” Concannon joked in response to their comments.

The Court recognized Concannon for his career-long service to the legal community and, in particular, the courts. Among his principal activities for the improvement of justice in Kansas, Concannon has been a member of the Pattern Instructions for Kansas Civil and Criminal Committees since 2001 and the Judicial Council’s Civil Code Advisory Committee since 2008. That committee, among other activities, restyled and revised the first three articles of the Kansas Code of Civil Procedure and revised time computation standards throughout the Kansas Statutes Annotated.

Concannon was a member of the Supreme Court Rules Advisory Committee, from 2010 to 2012, when the Supreme Court adopted sweeping changes to the rules attorneys follow in court cases. A long-time advocate of keeping courts out of politics, Concannon has served on the Kansas Commission on Judicial Performance since 2006. He has represented Kansas on the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws since 1998.

Concannon served as dean of Washburn University School of Law from 1988 to 2001, and has since served as a Distinguished Professor of

Law. In 2013, he was named the Senator Robert J. Dole Distinguished Professor of Law. Before serving as dean, he had been a member of the law school faculty since 1973. Concannon has authored numerous chapters and legal treatises. His detailed history of Washburn Law from its founding in 1903 to 2003, entitled, *“The Ideal Place...for the Establishment of a Great Law School”: History of Washburn Law School 1903-2003*, was published in June 2012 by the Washburn University School of Law Alumni Association.

Recipients of the Justice Award receive an engraved plaque and a \$500 stipend. In addition, a permanent plaque listing the names of recipients is on public display in the Judicial Center just outside the courtroom. The stipends have been awarded from earnings on a \$10,000 check the Court received in 1987, when its program to reduce delay in the courts was recognized by the Foundation for the Improvement of Justice, a national organization founded by the late James W. Chapman, of Atlanta. Kansas was the first state to establish specific time standards for disposing of cases for each of five major case categories. Numerous statements have followed up such time standards and guidelines.

Any Kansan or Kansas organization, except members of the Supreme Court and their personal staff and the members of the Justice Awards Nominating Committee, is eligible for the award. Washburn Law alumni Justice Award past recipients include **Robert A. Cobean, ’35**; **Jack R. Euler, ’53**; **Gerald L. Goodell, ’58**; **Judge Jerry L. Mershon, ’61**; **Paul E. Wilson, ’40**; and **Arno Windscheffel, ’34**. Other recipients of the award include: Kenneth Bronson, Rev. Wardell A. Chambers, Lewis L. Ferguson, Marion County Extended Learning, Justice David Prager, and Judge Herbert W. Walton.

