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## Building named for beloved judge

DAVE WHALEY, The Telegraph

October 19, 2002

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The Telegraph/JOHN BADMAN The family of the late William L. Beatty, who was the U.S. district judge based at the Alton federal building from 1979 to 1991, laughs at remarks made by one of Beatty's colleagues during Friday's ceremonies to rename the feder

**ALTON** – As proof that the system sometimes does work, the federal building on Belle Street was renamed Friday as the William L. Beatty Federal Building.

About 300 people attended a 90-minute ceremony on a breezy afternoon, during which a plaque was unveiled to be displayed near the building's entrance. Speakers at the ceremony included U.S. Sen. Peter Fitzgerald, R-Ill., and U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello, D-Belleville. Beatty was a U.S. District Court judge for Southern Illinois for 22 years until his death in 2001.

"Federal judges are the only ones who have a lifetime appointment," Fitzgerald said. "For that reason, they sometimes get carried away and can become arrogant. In the case of Judge Beatty, everyone who was in his courtroom was

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likely to come away with the feeling that they got a fair shake. His upbringing gave him a strong inner compass to exercise his awesome responsibility."

Beatty was born in Mendota and grew up in East St. Louis. After serving with the Army in World War II, he earned his law degree at Saint Louis University in 1950 and entered private practice in Granite City. He was Granite City attorney and an assistant state's attorney for Madison County before being elected a circuit judge.

President Carter appointed him to the U.S. District Court in October 1979. He served in the Alton federal building until the court moved to East St. Louis in 1991. Beatty became a senior judge in 1992 and remained in that capacity until his death at age 75.

"I can't pretend to have taken his place," said U.S. District Judge David Herndon, who was Beatty's successor. "He was my predecessor, my mentor and my idol. I now sit in the William L. Beatty Memorial Courtroom, and his picture hangs in that room. I can't stray too far from the Beatty standard, because he just keeps staring at me."

Alton police and U.S. marshals were a strong presence at Friday's ceremony, which made official legislation that passed in Congress a year ago. Costello introduced the legislation in the U.S. House. It was subsequently approved by the Senate and signed into law by President Bush on May 17.

"My wife is a lawyer and tried two cases before Judge Beatty," said Chief Judge G. Patrick Murphy of the U.S. District Court. "She thinks that was the apex of her career. She learned and became better for it. She says, 'Why can't you be more like Judge Beatty?' Well, he's in heaven, and I'm still a close case. With grace, everything is possible."

Harry Armstrong, an Edwardsville attorney and a longtime acquaintance of Beatty's, said he was in Boston recently when his tour guide proudly pointed out the Tip O'Neill Federal Building.

"I thought to myself that I knew a man whom a federal building would be named after," Armstrong said. "There are a lot of Bill Beattys all across the country who make a difference in their area. Naming this building after him shows me that our system really does work sometimes."

Beatty's widow, Dorothy Jeanne Beatty, and their four children

were on hand for the ceremony, and she helped unveil the plaque at the end. The plaque cites the "respect, deference and kindness" that Beatty gave to all who came before his bench. A portrait of the judge, contributed by his family, hangs in the second-floor lobby near the courtroom where he presided and where the U.S. Bankruptcy Court now conducts hearings.

The federal building was built in 1972. Current occupants are a regional office of the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, a field office of the Social Security Administration, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, the Labor Department's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training and the U.S. General Services Administration.

Local attorney John Stobbs served as master of ceremonies Friday. Other speakers included J. David Hood of the General Services Administration, Costello, attorney J. William Lucco and attorney Christopher Cueto. The Celebrations Choir from Alton High School performed, as well as vocalist Annie McGraw, a deputy clerk with the U.S. District Court.

Alton Mayor Don Sandidge proclaimed Friday as Judge William L. Beatty Day in Alton. A similar proclamation also was made for Granite City.

[dwhaley56@hotmail.com](mailto:dwhaley56@hotmail.com)

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