The Honorable Robert R. Rigsby, ‘83, was named the 2018 Distinguished Alumnus of the Justice Studies Department at the annual Department Showcase. After receiving the award, he gave a rousing speech on the importance of service, law, and education. San José State University and the Administration of Justice Department (Justice Studies) were said to be instrumental in shaping his future success.

Judge Rigsby is a Bay Area native. He entered SJSU in the EOP Program. He earned his BS Criminal Justice Administration degree in 1983 with honors. He earned his law degree from UC Hastings.

Judge Rigsby served in the U.S. Army from 1981 to 2014. From 1987 to 1992, he served as a Judge Advocate, handling sensitive international legal issues. As an Army officer, he received numerous awards and honors for outstanding trial work and acts of heroism and valor. Judge Rigsby served as Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and Attorney General for the District of Columbia. Judge Rigsby was nominated by President George W. Bush to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court and was unanimously confirmed by the Senate on July 25, 2002. In June 2003, the Judge Advocate General of the Army appointed Judge Rigsby as a Military Judge. In 2009, he made history by becoming the first military judge in the Army to deploy on a full-time basis to an active theatre of war as the sole military judge in Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq. For his service, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

Judge Rigsby is still active in his alma mater, serving on the Alumni Board of Directors and returning often for service to the students. He is a member of multiple boards and service organizations, but has more passion for mentoring youth. In 2010, he started the Law & Government Explorers Program to mentor and enrich the lives of inner city youth. He is married to Anna Blackburne-Rigsby, an associate judge on the DC Court of Appeals.