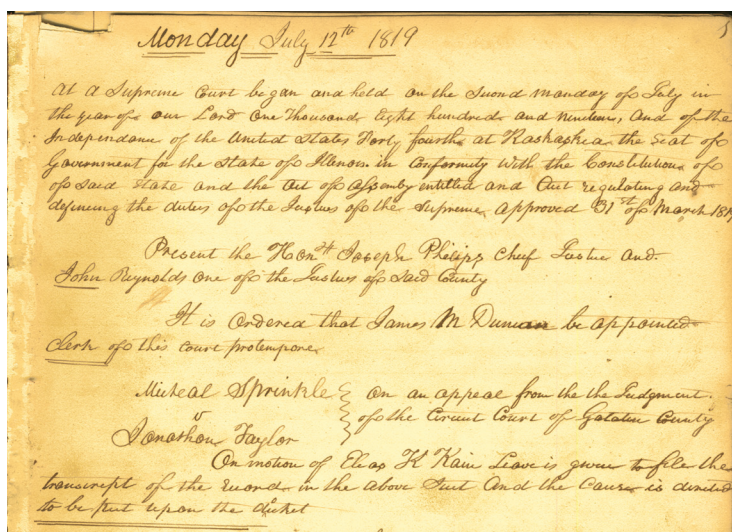




**ILLINOIS SUPREME
COURT BUILDING**

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT BUILDING

HISTORY OF THE SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS

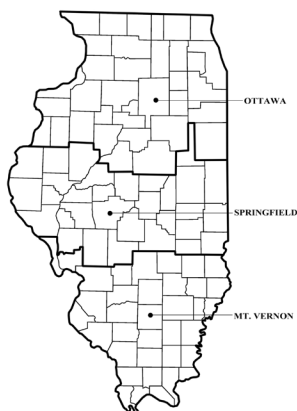


The Illinois Supreme Court first met in July 1819.

The first Constitution of the State of Illinois in 1818 provided for the establishment of a Supreme Court of Illinois. The Court, consisting of four men, met for its first term in July 1819 in the capital of Kaskaskia, Illinois, hearing a few cases that had been carried over from the territorial period. The first Constitution gave significant power to the legislative branch, including the appointment of Supreme Court justices. The result was politically active justices, many of whom did not remain on the bench long in order to move to the next political position. In 1840, after a Supreme Court deci-

sion favored the Whig Party, the Democratic-controlled legislature increased the number of justices from four to nine and appointed five Democrat justices. The justices periodically traveled the circuit, holding circuit court in the counties during the spring and fall and presiding over the Supreme Court in the winter. While the Supreme Court was in its infancy and not yet regarded as a co-equal branch of government, several important cases regarding slavery reached the high court, in which it consistently ruled slavery illegal but enforced contractual obligations of indentured servants.

In 1848, the second Illinois Constitution took effect and removed the judicial appointive power from the legislature. The Constitution stipulated that the Court have three justices, one popularly elected



for a nine-year term in each of three grand divisions. Each grand division represented approximately one-third of the state, and justices held terms of Court in Ottawa, Springfield, and Mt. Vernon. The Court, with a lower turnover rate than under the first constitution, began to establish itself as an important component of state government. Qualified lawyers and judges, rather than political opportunists, filled the bench, resulting in

precedent-setting decisions on railroads, contracts, and economic development.

In 1870, the third Illinois Constitution increased the number of justices from three to seven but maintained the system of traveling among the three grand divisions. The judiciary remained elective with nine-year terms for Supreme Court justices, who represented seven geographic districts. The Constitution also provided for the creation of intermediate appellate courts, which the General Assembly

established in 1877. The caseload of the Supreme Court remained heavy, and travels to three distant locations in Illinois became a burden to the Court. In 1897, the legislature consolidated the Court to meet only in Springfield, but the courtroom facilities in the Illinois Statehouse was not adequate for the transaction of cases nor for accommodating seven justices from various regions of the state.

The Illinois General Assembly passed an act in 1905 to construct a building “for the use of the Department of Justice of the State of Illinois.” The building would house the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, and the then Third District Appellate Court. The building was completed in 1908, giving the Supreme Court a permanent home in the state’s capital.

In 1964, the constitutional article concerning the judicial system was completely overhauled. The Supreme Court remained at seven members and remained popularly elected. Justices would serve ten-year terms and could run for retention after every ten years. The representative districts were reduced from seven to five, with three justices elected from Cook County and the other four from geographic districts in the state. The judicial article was adopted nearly in its entirety when citizens of Illinois approved the fourth Illinois Constitution in 1970.

Currently, the Court retains the same geographical configuration from the Judicial Article of 1964. The Court sits five times each year for two-week terms. The justices are busy throughout the year, however, as they examine petitions, briefs, and other documents pertaining to cases. On average, there are about 3,000 cases filed each year with the Supreme Court, and the justices choose approximately 100 in which to hear oral arguments.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT BUILDING



Illinois Supreme Court Building under construction.

On February 4, 1908, the dedication of the Illinois Supreme Court Building took place almost two years after its initial groundbreaking in the fall of 1906. The idea for the building came in the form of Senate Bill No. 469, known as the “Supreme Court Building Act,” which was introduced by Senator Corbus P. Gardner on April 13, 1905. The legislature passed the bill in a month, paving the way for formal plans to begin construction of one of Illinois’ most beautiful and important buildings. Architect William Carbys Zimmerman modeled the Illinois Supreme Court Building after the U.S. Treasury Building in Washington D.C. and the Pantheon in Rome. These Ancient Greek and Roman designs served as the foundations for America’s neoclassic style of architecture.

Two of the artists that painted murals for the building were trained in the neoclassicism style. Neoclassicism is a form of art that was largely popular during the Age of Enlightenment when reason was the focal point for building and maintaining a civilized society. The Illinois Supreme Court Building is an architectural display of reason and justice in our state. The two artists, Albert Krehbiel and Edgar Spier Cameron, both were educated in France at the Academie Julian where they had the unique privilege to learn from teachers, one of whom was famed instructor Jean-Paul Laurens, who had been trained in the French Academic Style. These masters of classical art demonstrated their skills when they created their murals for the Illinois Supreme Court Building. The works of art by Krehbiel can be seen in the Supreme Court and Appellate Court rooms; interestingly the lighting fixtures in the room, that are used to display Krehbiel's work, were made in Paris, France, the same place he trained to create his masterpieces. The works by Cameron can be seen in the Law Library. Additional features, such as the sculptures at the entrance way, were done by Charles Mulligan and add to the sense of classical symbolism that the "Temple of Justice" was meant to portray.

When the Illinois Supreme Court Building was dedicated in 1908, it was recognized that preserving and administering justice was a principal focus of the construction. During the dedicatory proceedings on February 4, 1908, James H. Matheny, of the Springfield bar and president of the Illinois State Bar Association noted that "the 'gladsome light of jurisprudence' may shine herein as warm and bright as does the sunlight in this beautiful temple; that the system of justice here dispensed may be as pure and true as the classic lines of its architecture; that the fidelity of the bar may ever be as firm as its columns and its arches; for these things fondly do we hope and to them we pledge ourselves anew."

Chief Justice John Hand noted that “it is entirely fitting that the court of last resort should be permanently located in a building which comports with the dignity and character of the court and the splendid history and commercial supremacy of the State.” Benson Wood, of the Effingham bar, concluded the dedicatory proceedings by congratulating “the people of the State, not only upon the completion and occupancy of this building, but also that its care and control has been vested, by law, in the Supreme Court. In custody of such safe and honorable hands may it permanently remain a monument of inspiration to citizens who would honor our constitution and conscientiously obey the laws of the land. May it never be a sheltering place for anarchy, nor may any who would take the law in his own hands to redress real or fancied wrongs find in the Department of Justice either countenance, approval, or justification. May it long stand, in mute condemnation of those who seek license rather than liberty, of the violence of the mob, or every species of force not permissible, and not authorized by law.”

Despite numerous changes, upgrades, and office moves, the Building has always remained open. In 2013, the Building closed for the first time in its history to complete a major restoration of the Building to its 1908 grandeur. The pink marble throughout the Building was cleaned; the doors, hardware, and woodwork were refurbished; original light fixtures were refurbished; and layers of paint were removed to return the Building to its original colors. The murals were cleaned to remove dirt, soot, and smoke. In addition, a new HVAC system replaced antiquated systems that could not provide proper temperature and humidity levels. Other major mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems were replaced to provide a safe environment for the staff and the records and books stored in the Building.

When the Building officially reopened, Chief Justice Rita B. Garman acknowledged the important role of the structure: “This building has always been one that the people of Illinois can be

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT BUILDING



very proud of; not only for its beauty and for its tradition, but for the important work that is done here and we are really looking forward to continuing that tradition well into the future.”

Chief Justice Garman’s statement relates well to the original intention of the legislators, architects, and artists who helped mold the Building into a structure for preserving justice. The itinerate Court of the nineteenth century never had an official home. It was not until 1908 that there was a permanent structure in the state for the Supreme Court of Illinois to promote, protect and preserve justice in Illinois.

SUPREME COURT BUILDING ARTWORK



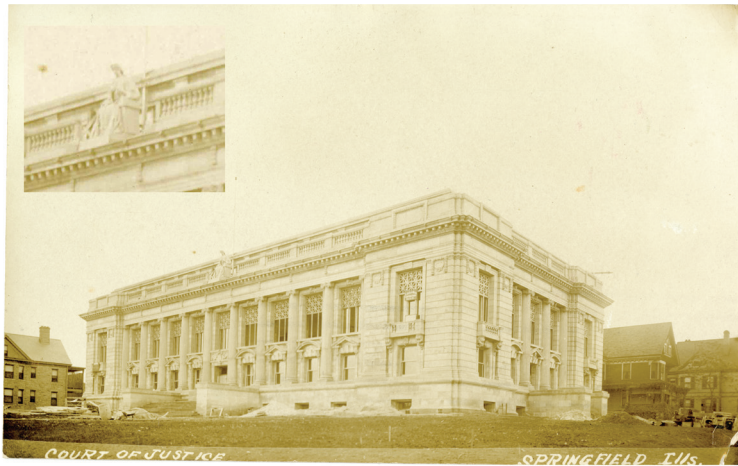
In addition to being a working building, the Supreme Court Building can be considered a legal art museum, with world-class architecture, paintings, and sculptures.

⊠ **W. Carby Zimmerman (1859 - 1932)** was born in Wisconsin. He received his architectural education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Arriving in Chicago, he apprenticed at Burnham and Root from 1880 to 1883, and ten years later, designed the International Dress and Costume Company Building at the World's Columbian Exposition. Zimmerman was the Illinois state architect from 1905 to 1914, then formed his own firm in 1914. He designed the Illinois Supreme Court Building in the neoclassical style with a balanced façade, ionic columns, and alternating window pediments. In addition to many private and public buildings, Zimmerman was the architect for Lincoln Hall and the Armory at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus.

⊠ **Charles J. Mulligan (1866 - 1916)** was born in Ireland. At the age of 15, he and his family moved to suburban Chicago where Mulligan worked in a marble factory and studied art at night. Lorado Taft discovered his clay models and invited him to study at the Art Institute of Chicago. Mulligan also went to Paris, France to study at the L'Ecole des Beaux Arts under Alexandre Falguiere. After returning to Chicago, Mulligan became naturalized in 1888. He sculpted statues of Lincoln, Grant, and Governor Richard Yates for the Illinois Memorial at the Vicksburg battlefield site; several statues of Abraham Lincoln, and Miner and Child at Humboldt Park in Chicago. Mulligan's original design for Supreme Court statuary was called the "Three Sisters," which would have resided on the roof of the Building. Mulligan completed Justice, the first "sister," before the Building

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT BUILDING

opened, but the weight of the statue must have been a concern, and the Commission scrapped both the idea and the Justice statue.



The unfinished Supreme Court Building with Mulligan's large statue on the roof.

Justice and Power. (*left/east side of the Supreme Court Building main entrance*). The figure seated in front is Justice holding scales in her left hand. The scales hang loosely on either side of the figure by her legs. Behind Justice is Power. She is resting her right arm on the back of the chair, which is a modified seal of the State of Illinois. She is also holding an oversize sword with her left hand. The sword is commonly a symbol of power.





Law and Knowledge. (*right/west side of the Supreme Court Building main entrance*). The figure seated in front is Law, who holds a scroll draped across her lap. The figure behind her is Knowledge. She rests her hand on a book and holds the same scroll with her right hand. She is also accompanied by a stack of books with an owl on the top. This reinforces the representation of Knowledge.

☒ **Albert H. Krehbiel (1873 - 1945)** was born in Iowa. At a very young age, Krehbiel expressed a desire to pursue drawing and painting. In 1898, he enrolled at The Art Institute of Chicago for five



Albert Krehbiel working on Supreme Court's ceiling mural.

years as a student.

In 1903, Krehbiel moved to Paris for three years to study at the Academie Julian, under muralist and neoclassicist Jean-Paul Laurens. Krehbiel won four gold medals at the Academie Julian as well as several other prizes

and honors. In 1907, after completing the Juvenile Court murals in Chicago, Krehbiel entered the competition to design the murals for the Supreme and Appellate Courtrooms. The Jury of Awards was unanimous in granting the commission to Krehbiel. Zimmerman, the architect of the Supreme Court Building, considered the work done by Krehbiel to be “an example of the best mural painting ever executed in the West.” Krehbiel was accomplished painter with many impressionist works completed while also an instructor at the Art Institute.

SUPREME COURT

Attributes of Law (east wall above the Supreme Court bench):

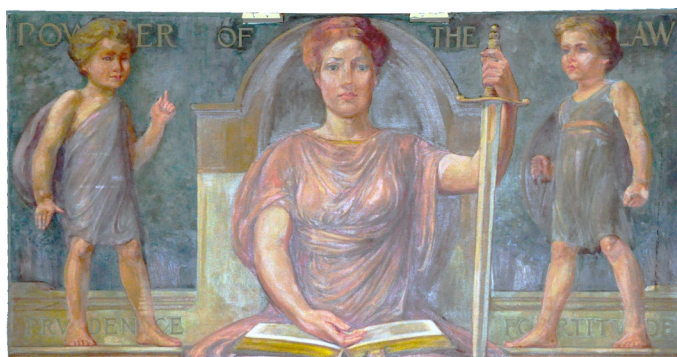


Wisdom of the Law. The seated woman points at tablets held by two cherubs who represent the attributes of learning and experience. The cherub on the left looks downward with an expression of uncertainty that can only be remedied through learning. The cherub on the right looks onward with an expression of confidence that can only come from years of experience.

Justice of the Law. The seated woman holds the scales of justice in her left hand while resting her right hand on an orb. The four cherubs that surround her represent the attributes of faith and inspiration to the left and patience and courage to the right. On the left of Justice, Faith is featured



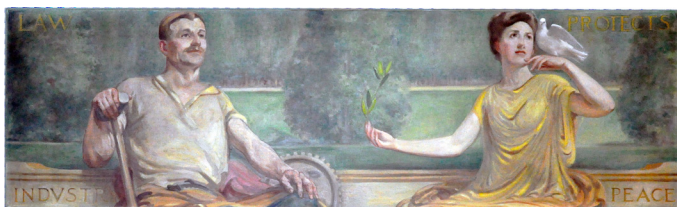
with outstretched arms looking to the heavens above, while Inspiration stands rigidly facing Justice with a finger pointing to the sky suggesting an epiphany that has come to the cherub. On the right of Justice, Patience stands in a relaxed position facing Justice with hands neatly folded in front, while Courage's head turns toward Justice with his arms flexed. The scales of justice cannot be properly measured without faith and inspiration and patience and courage.



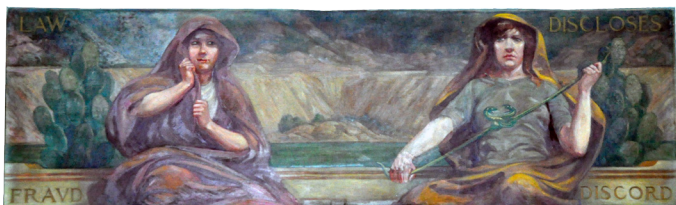
Power of the Law. The seated woman has a book of law in her lap with her right hand lying on top. In her left hand she grips a sword, symbolizing power. The positioning of her hands on the two objects suggests the connection between law and power. The two cherubs represent the attributes Prudence and Fortitude. The cherub on the left represents Prudence, which is the ability to exercise sound judgment. The cherub on the right holds a shield in its right hand with a clenched fist, each action suggesting the Fortitude of law.

Function of the Law (south wall in Supreme Court)

Law Promotes Truth and Purity. The first mural, on the far left, portrays two figures that represent two qualities of humanity that are promoted by law: Truth and Purity. Truth is represented by a woman holding a mirror in her left hand and an orb in her right. Both objects suggest that truth is revealed by law. Purity is represented by a woman dressed in white, holding white flowers in her right hand. The color white is often connected to the quality of purity.



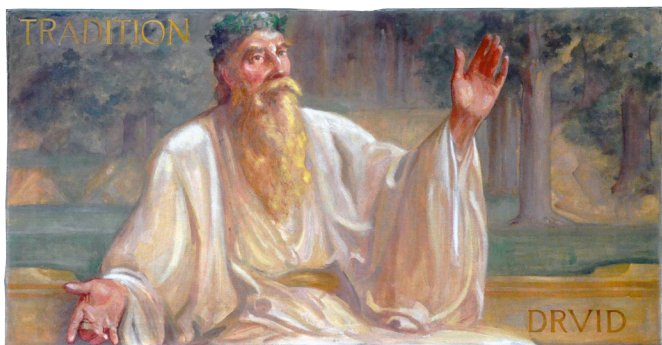
Law Protects Industry and Peace. The second mural portrays two figures that represent two qualities of humanity that are protected by law: Industry and Peace. Industry is represented by a man wearing a workman's apron, gripping a sledge hammer in his right hand, and sitting next to a metal gear. Peace is represented by a woman who gazes lovingly at a dove that she holds in her left hand while offering an olive branch to Industry with her right hand. While law protects Peace, Peace will allow Industry to prosper.



Law Discloses Fraud and Discord. The third mural, above the clock, portrays two figures that represent two qualities of humanity that are disclosed by law: Fraud and Discord. Fraud is represented by a woman who slyly covers her face under a cloak while shifting her eyes as if she is about to perpetrate a fraud on a victim. Discord is represented by a woman, also hiding her head under a cloak, tightly gripping the tails of two snakes that appear to have become knotted together in anger.



Law Destroys Violence and Anarchy. The fourth mural portrays two figures that represent two qualities of humanity that are destroyed by law: Violence and Anarchy. Violence is represented by a man in a brown cloak. In his right hand he grips a knife that is hidden behind his back as if he were sneaking up on a victim. Anarchy is represented by a man gripping a torch in his left hand, while at the same time he draws back to throw a large stone with his right hand. Both figures have a look of anger and hatred.

Continuity of Law (west wall in Supreme Court)

Tradition. The mural on the far left features an aged druid with a long beard. The druid represents the age-old tradition and practice of law. Druids were thought to be the guardians of unwritten ancient law and empowered to execute judgment.



Precedent, Justice, and Record. The center mural features three women, each representing one of these three qualities of law. Precedent is seated on the left. She holds a burning oil lamp, representing knowledge, in her right hand. Justice is seated in the center, but she is not holding scales, as Justice is typically portrayed. Instead, Justice is holding burning torches, representing enlightenment. Record is seated on the right. She is featured with a pen in her right hand and a record book on her left, recording proceedings for posterity.



Written Law. The mural on the right mural features Edward the First, also known as Edward the Lawgiver. Edward took great interest in the workings of his government and undertook a number of reforms. During his reign, the first of a series of codes of law were issued. In his right hand is a written document, representing the codes of law that were issued.

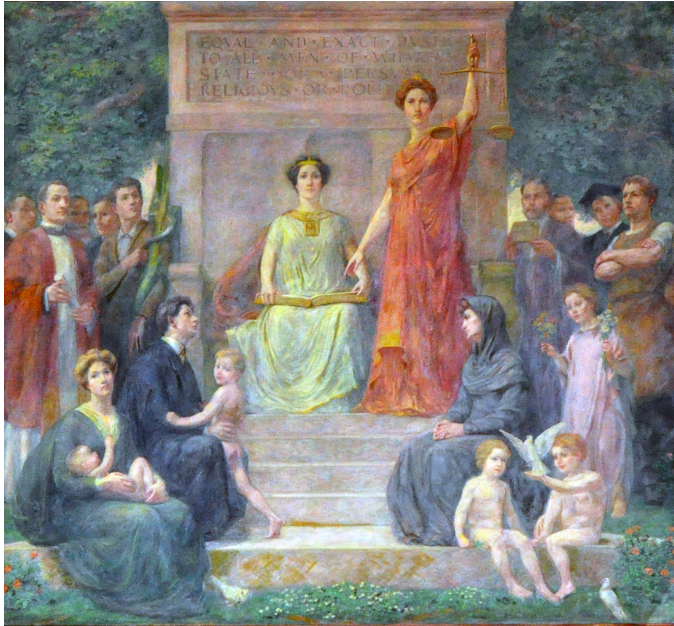
Supremacy of the Law. The large ceiling mural symbolizes the principles of law that serve to harmonize the universe. Good and evil are presented in the center, surrounded by



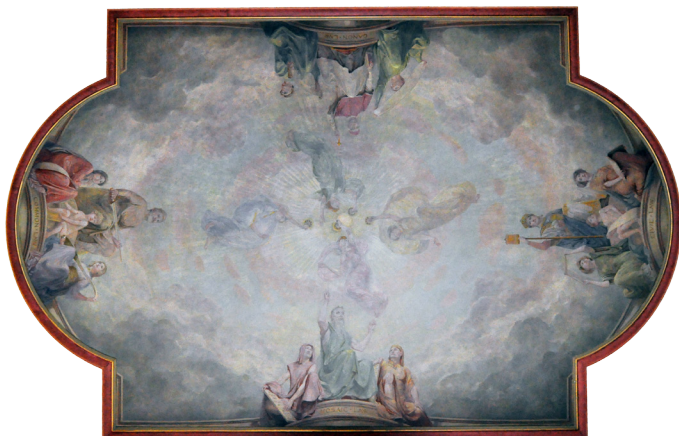
storm clouds. A circle of four laws is displayed surrounding the center: First, Law of Love is represented by a mother and child; Second, Law of Self-Preservation is represented by a figure who

is warding off impending danger; Third, Law of Life and Death is represented by Death pursuing Life; and Fourth, Law of Evolution is represented by two figures rising out of darkness toward light.

APPELLATE COURT



Law and Equity. The large wall mural displays a seated female figure representing Law with a standing female figure holding scales representing Justice. Above them is an inscription from Thomas Jefferson: “Equal and exact justice to all men of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political.” Two groups of men stand at each side representing the church and agriculture on the left side and wealth, education, and industry on the right side. Sitting on the steps below Law and Justice are a young family with two small children on one side and a widow and orphans on the other side. Krehbiel’s original design called for an African-American man to be represented among the people. The Building Commission, however, decided against his inclusion.



Light of the Law. The large ceiling mural displays the light of the law in the center, around which a cluster of graceful figures offering torches to the four groups of figures arranged along the border. Each group symbolizes a tenet of American jurisprudence: First, Common Law represented by Alfred the Great; Second, Canon Law represented by Pope Gregory IX; Third, Civil Law represented by Justinian, and Fourth, Mosaic Law represented by Moses.

✠ **Edgar Spier Cameron** (1862 - 1944) was born in Ottawa, Illinois. He studied at the Chicago Academy of Design and later at the Academie Julian and L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. After returning to Chicago, Cameron began a career in mural and interior decoration.



Edgar Cameron working in his studio.

He was an art critic for the *Chicago Tribune* from 1890 to 1900. Cameron was known as a “Corridor” artist who painted a series

of historical Chicago scenes, and his work as a muralist included a number of early Chicago theaters. Cameron's paintings covered subjects from the Midwest and Europe, landscape and urban in character, and portraits of prominent persons of the day. Cameron was one of the founders of the Municipal Art League of Chicago.

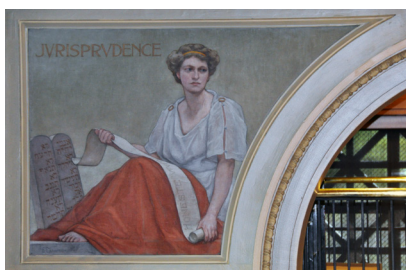
Precedent (*North Wall*): Precedent is represented by a woman with her back turned away. She appears to be looking away from ancient ruins while her left hand reaches out to-



wards the ruins. She is looking away from the past and looking on toward the future, but learning from the past can influence the future.

Justice (*North Wall*):

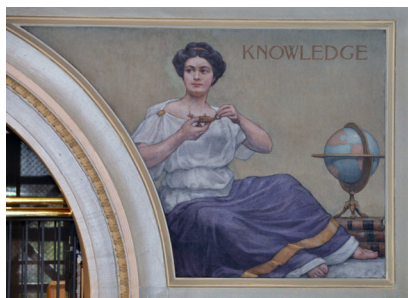
Justice is represented by a woman holding a scale in her left hand. Positioned near her is a sword, which is commonly represented as power. This mural represents the connection between justice and power.



Jurisprudence (*South Wall*):

The theory and philosophy of law is represented by a woman seated with a scroll of law on her lap. Positioned near

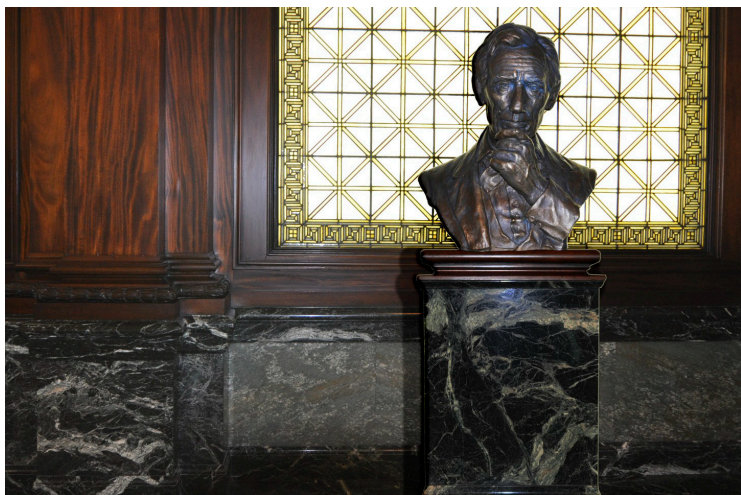
her are two stone tablets that can be interpreted as the Ten Commandments. Jurisprudence is the study of all laws and philosophies that govern mankind.



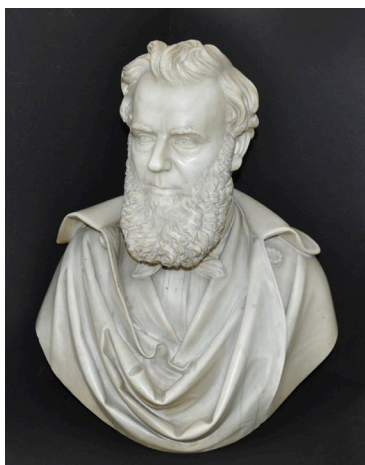
Knowledge (*South Wall*): Knowledge is represented by a woman holding a burning lamp. Positioned near her left foot is a globe standing on a stack of law books.

Abraham Lincoln

The bust of Abraham Lincoln sits on the second floor near the entrance of the Library. The title “Prairie Lawyer: Master of Us All” comes from the Vachel Lindsay poem, “Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight.” The bust captures the thoughtful Abraham Lincoln in 1859, the year before he is elected the sixteenth president. Even though Lincoln never argued a case in this Building, he had a large practice before the Illinois Supreme Court during his



twenty-five-year legal career in which he and his partners handled more than 400 cases. The Illinois State Bar Association commissioned renowned sculptor John McClarey of Decatur, Illinois to create a likeness of Abraham Lincoln to illustrate his legal career. The bust was unveiled in 2009, the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. McClarey was a long-time high school teacher who later became a sculptor. His sculptures can be found at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, the Old State Capitol in Vandalia, Illinois, at several courthouse squares in central Illinois, and in Russia, Japan, and Cuba.



John D. Caton

On the main staircase landing is a bust of John Dean Caton. Caton served on the Illinois Supreme Court from 1842 to 1864 and saw the rise of the importance of the Illinois judiciary as it resolved issues relating to expanding industrialization in a largely agrarian state. Randolph Rogers, an American-born sculptor, created the bust.

Rogers was born in New York in 1825 and moved to Rome, Italy in 1851. Rogers completed the bust circa 1867, and the Caton family donated it to the Illinois Supreme Court in the 1930s. Rogers was most famous for *Nydia: the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii* and for the Columbus Doors at the U.S. Capitol. Rogers died in 1892.

Justice Portraits

In the Attorney's Room, the predominant feature is the portraits on the walls. After the dedication of the Building in 1908, Justice James Cartwright and Justice Orrin Carter were charged with the task of obtaining portraits of every justice that had served on the Illinois Supreme Court. They hired J. Ellsworth Gross, a Chicago photographer, to create the portraits from daguerreotypes, cabinet cards, and other forms of photography. In some examples, Gross airbrushed portraits of elderly former justices to make them appear closer to the age during which they served as a justice. Justices Cartwright and Carter did not include William Foster, who resigned before serving on the Court and David Woodson, who served for one month and heard no cases. They were unable to find only one portrait: the first Chief Justice, Joseph Philips, who served on the court from 1818 to 1822.

Chief Justice Portraits

Along the second floor hallway hang the oil portraits of Illinois's ten most recent Chief Justices. The paintings were done by James Ingwersen, formerly of Chicago, who has been painting for decades. Chief Justices in Illinois are selected by their colleagues on the Supreme Court bench in a rotational pattern. Chiefs serve for three years as the administrative head of the judicial branch. Ingwersen is best known for painting portraits, having done Oscar Mayer and Bruce MacLeish, founder of Carson, Pirie, Scott, but he enjoys landscapes and still lifes as well.

Illustrations courtesy of

*Matt Burns, pp. cover, 2, 7; Illinois State Archives, p. 1; Archives of American Art, p. 18;
James Dobrovolny, p. 9; Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, p. 4;
Krehbiel Family, p. 10*

