



Supreme Court of Illinois

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SUPREME COURT TO FORMALLY REDEDICATE BUILDING OCTOBER 7

In 1938, Walter T. Gunn was sworn in as the 70th Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. A self-described "ordinary country lawyer by profession", the Danville attorney continued to serve on the Court until his retirement in 1951. Justice Gunn also served as Chief Justice from 1940-1941, the second from Vermilion County to do so.

Nearly 76 years later, Champaign resident and internationally renowned vocalist Nathan Gunn will perform in the same building that his great-grandfather once heard oral arguments. He and his wife Julie Jordan Gunn are special guest performers at the Court's rededication ceremony of the restored Supreme Court Building on Tuesday, October 7 at 6 p.m.

"I am thrilled to have the great-grandson of Danville's last Chief Justice perform for the first time in the same building that Justice Gunn heard cases of that time," Vermilion County's own current Chief Justice Rita B. Garman said. "It will be a memorable moment for the Gunn family and for the Court."

Supreme Court Justice Anne M. Burke, who serves with Chief Justice Garman as liaison to the Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission, remarked about the Gunn family and their relationship with the Court.

"What an honor and tribute to the legacy of Justice Walter Gunn to have his descendents present in celebrating the rededication of the Supreme Court Building," Justice Burke said. "His children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren have continued to serve notably in the legal community.

"Nathan Gunn, a notable vocalist in his own right, will be performing on the same court bench that his great-grandfather sat."

The special guest performances will immediately follow the unveiling of the dedication plaque. The plaque commemorating the Supreme Court Building's restoration will be permanently affixed next to the original dedication plaque commemorating the opening of the Building in 1908.

MORE

Supreme Court Building Rededication Ceremony Add One

Chief Justice Garman will welcome the members of the judicial, legal, and legislative community to open the October 7 program. Other speakers will include former Governor James R. Thompson, who serves as chairman of the Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission, and Richard D. Felice, president of the Illinois State Bar Association.

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Nathan Gunn has performed in internationally renowned opera houses throughout the world such as the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Royal Opera House, Paris Opera, just to name a few. Also a distinguished concert performer, Mr. Gunn has appeared with numerous symphonic orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mr. Gunn has performed with the New York Philharmonic *Camelot* and *Carousel* (both broadcast on PBS), *Show Boat* at Carnegie Hall, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. He was a special guest artist in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's annual *Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square*.

The recipient of the first annual Beverly Sills Artist Award, Mr. Gunn was awarded the Pittsburgh Opera Renaissance Award. He is an alumnus of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artists Program, and was a winner of the 1994 Metropolitan Opera National Council Competition.

Mr. Gunn graduated from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana where he is currently a professor of voice. He was recently named General Director of the Lyric Theater @ Illinois.

Julie Jordan Gunn, his wife, is a pianist, music director, vocal coach, and song arranger. She currently works as an associate professor of Accompanying at the University of Illinois School of Music. She has appeared on many prestigious recital series, some of them including the Carnegie Hall Pure Voice Series, Lincoln Center Great Performers, Boston's Jordan Hall, University of Chicago Presents, and the Ravinia Festival.

Ms. Gunn works with singers, pianists, chamber musicians and songwriters as the Director of Lyric Theatre Studies. She also serves as the assistant director for Development and Public Engagement at the School of Music. She works as an advocate for state and local arts organizations in the development of projects ranging from constructing arts buildings to mentoring inner-city high-school students who show interest in the arts.

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The Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission was created by the Legislature in 2007 to assist and advise the Illinois Supreme Court in collecting and preserving documents, artifacts and the rich history relating to the Illinois judiciary, as well as performing an educational function. The Commission also seeks to accomplish much of its work in partnership with historical and cultural institutions; bar associations, universities, law schools, and federal, state, and local agencies.

MORE

Supreme Court Building Rededication Ceremony Add Two

Nine members make up the governing body. The Supreme Court, the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate President each appoint two members; and the Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts serves as *ex officio*. Chaired by Governor Thompson, members of the Historic Preservation Commission are: Hon. Kirk W. Dillard, Kim B. Fox, Michael F. McClain, Pauline Montgomery, Joseph A. Power, Jr., William J. Quinlan, Jane Hayes Rader, and Michael J. Tardy.

Over the past few years, the Commission partnered with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, a division of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, and presented several cultural and educational events, including a dramatization of the commitment trial of Mary Todd Lincoln; discussions on court protection of individual liberties and the use of habeas corpus in Guantanamo Bay cases and Mormon prophet Joseph Smith court cases; and a re-enactment of the trial of Mary Surratt, the first woman executed by the federal government, charged with conspiracy to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln.

The Commission also served in an advisory capacity to the rehabilitation of the Supreme Court Building. The Building had been closed since June 2013 when major work began on the historic building for the first time in nearly a century. Constructed in 1906, the building is eligible for inclusion on the National Historic Register.

The year-long restoration project included restoration and preservation of the public spaces, courtrooms, library, and support spaces. Offices, storage and work areas were updated for improved efficiencies in the digital and electronic age.

Major mechanical, heating, cooling, plumbing, and ventilation systems were replaced with installations to provide consistent humidification levels for the long-term maintenance of the historic elements within the building. Technology enhancements included three new High Definition cameras permanently installed in the Supreme Court Courtroom and connected to a commercial grade production video switcher. The new video recording system will allow the Court's oral arguments and courtroom events to be recorded in a standard HD format and usable via download by the commercial media. As well as viewed by the public.

While the building was undergoing its restoration, the Supreme Court met in Chicago during its regular terms. Funding for the project was approved by the Legislature in Public Act 96-0035 in 2009 and totaled \$15.9 million. The Building opened back to the public on August 27.

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(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, director of communications to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323 or Dawn Frison Cook, senior communications specialist to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.0870)