



CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

INFORMATION SHEET

The Supreme Court Building: America's Temple of Justice



The Supreme Court of the United States celebrates the 75th anniversary of the construction of the Supreme Court Building with an exhibition commemorating its history and sculptural program. For the first 145 years of the Supreme Court's existence, the head of the third branch of government lacked a permanent home of its own. Since the completion of the building in 1935, it has become a symbol of Justice in America.

Through the use of period photographs and objects relating to the early history of the Supreme Court, visitors will learn about the Court's "temporary" homes in various government buildings, the increasing need for the Court to have a home of its own, and Chief Justice William Howard Taft's role in the construction of the building.

In addition, the exhibition explores the evolution of architect Cass Gilbert's design, as well as the sculptural and symbolic treatment used throughout the building's architecture. Several original plaster models aid in the discussion of the symbolism of this iconic building.

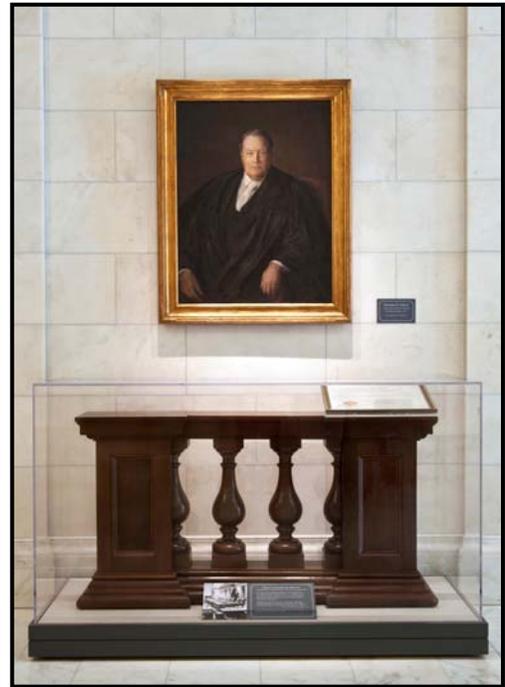


Court and Country in Transition: The Edward D. White Court

A century ago, America was a Nation moving from a localized, agricultural society to a more urban, industrialized world power. Confronted with a wide range of legal issues emerging from this modernizing culture, new regulatory laws were passed which often expanded the powers of the Federal Government. In turn, the Supreme Court, under the leadership of Chief Justice Edward D. White, was called upon to review the application and constitutionality of these laws.

The period from 1910 to 1921 was also a time of change among the members of the Court. Nine seats on the Bench turned over during this decade, with President William H. Taft appointing five Justices in one year. Included in this was his unprecedented appointment of a sitting Associate Justice, Edward Douglass White, to the position of Chief Justice. The exhibition focuses on the work of White and his colleagues and explores issues such as antitrust laws, labor rights, and civil liberties during World War I. Several cases raised unprecedented legal issues so the result of the Court's labors not only had immediate impacts for the Nation, but often established precedents that would influence the work of future Courts.

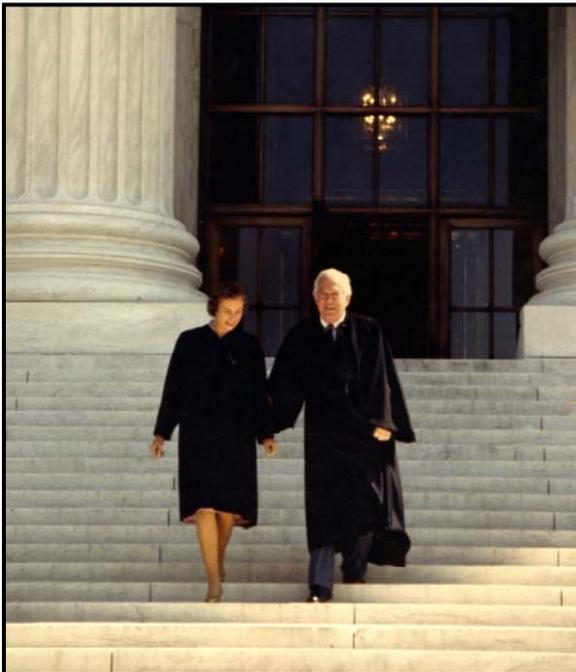
To highlight the work of the Court during this period, several objects are featured including: an oil portrait of Chief Justice White by Albert Rosenthal along with a segment of the original Bench from when the Court met in the U.S. Capitol and White's Commission (above). Also exhibited are Chief Justice White's Bench chair (below) and a replica of a Justice's Bench Desk.



Sandra Day O'Connor, First Woman on the Supreme Court

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Ronald Reagan, and served from 1981 until 2006. Beginning with her childhood growing up on her family's ranch, the exhibition recalls her life before joining the Supreme Court, her service and accomplishments on the Court, and her continuing legacy off the Court.

Following her retirement from the Court on January 31, 2006, Justice O'Connor has continued her judicial service by hearing cases in the United States Courts of Appeals. In recognition of her lifetime accomplishments, President Barack Obama awarded Justice O'Connor with the Nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, on August 12, 2009. This medal, along with portraits, sculpture and personal items such as her Bench chair and judicial robe, help illuminate her story.



Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (left) and Chief Justice Warren E. Burger walking down the front steps of the Supreme Court Building on the day of her Investiture - September 25, 1981.

*Acquisitions from the Family of
Justice Wiley B. Rutledge*



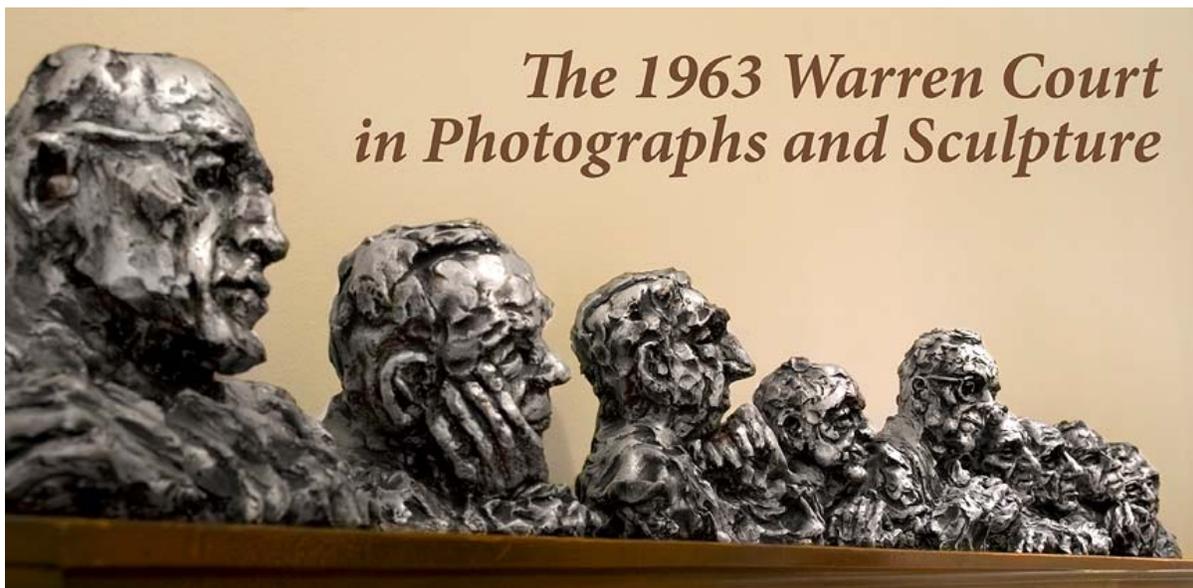
Acquisitions from the Family of Justice Wiley B. Rutledge

Wiley B. Rutledge was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1943 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and served until his death in 1949. He was a compassionate humanitarian and is remembered as a teacher, and a judge, who cared deeply about the people behind the law.

The family of Justice Rutledge donated 1,260 items to the Collection of the Supreme Court, including photographs, correspondence, and cherished personal memorabilia kept by the Justice. This exhibit highlights items from the donation with which the Justice's life is sketched.

The 1963 Warren Court in Photographs and Sculpture

As public figures, Supreme Court Justices are frequently depicted by artists and illustrators. In this exhibition the works of two such artists, photographer Yousuf Karsh and sculptor Phillip Ratner, are highlighted to portray members of the Warren Court in the early months of the Court's 1963 Term.



Office of the Curator • Supreme Court of the United States

All photographs from the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States unless otherwise noted.