In keeping with its classically inspired Beaux-Arts architectural style, the Supreme Court Building has many decorative elements in its design. Often overlooked are the exterior medallions and the reliefs that adorn the frieze in the Great Hall. The John Donnelly Company designed them under the direction of the architect of the building, Cass Gilbert.

There are eight portrait medallions located at the exterior corners of the building. On the North Façade are Julian and Gaius, Roman jurists (below).

On the East Façade are Demosthenes and Cicero, early advocates.

On the South Façade Plato and Aristotle, Greek philosophers.

On the West Façade, facing the U.S. Capitol, are Hammurabi and Moses, early lawgivers.
The decoration on the frieze of the Great Hall, approximately 40 feet above the floor, is a series of reliefs placed on the metopes between the triglyphs, as seen below.

Cass Gilbert’s office identified the subjects of the reliefs and their symbolism (listed below in sequence). The thunderbolts appear twelve times, with the other reliefs repeating eight times.

1. Thunderbolts
   Power

2. Minerva
   Goddess of Wisdom

3. Armor Suit
   Trophy of Victory

4. Lion’s Head & Swords
   Guardianship

5. Shield, Sword & Helmet
   Trophies of Victory

6. Scales & Lamp
   Justice and Wisdom

7. Book & Torches
   Education and Knowledge

8. Moses
   Lawgiver and Seer

9. Juno
   Genius of Womanhood and Guardian of Female Sex

10. Zeus
    Father of Gods and Men; God of Heavens and Fertility

11. Mercury
    Herald and Messenger of the Gods

12. Solon
    Athenian Lawgiver and One of Seven Sages of Greece

13. Solomon
    Wisdom and Magnificence

14. Eagle
    Bird of Freedom; Superiority and Swiftness

15. Owl
    Wisdom and Meditation