



# U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

## ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

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## CASS GILBERT

CFA Service: 1910–1916

Despite his achievement as a classical architect, Cass Gilbert, FAIA, had little formal training in architecture. He began his education in 1876 as an apprentice in the architectural office of Abraham Radcliffe in St. Paul, Minnesota. By 1878, he had left St. Paul for a two-year program in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology but stayed only a year, leaving to work as a surveyor and to travel in Europe. In the early 1880s he worked for several years in New York as an assistant to Stanford White, a partner in the firm of McKim, Mead & White. Gilbert returned to St. Paul and by 1885 formed a practice with James Knox Taylor; the firm completed numerous projects in the Midwest, including residences, train stations, commercial buildings, and schools. The partnership lasted until 1891 when Gilbert opened his own firm. He first gained national attention for his design of the Minnesota State Capitol in 1895. By the end of the century, Gilbert had returned to New York City to design the U.S. Custom House. His fame grew with his distinctive early skyscraper, the Woolworth Building, completed in 1913, the tallest building in the world at the time. Gilbert's many buildings include the New York Life Insurance Company, the Brooklyn Army Terminal, and the Federal Courthouse in New York City; the West Virginia State Capitol; the St. Louis Public Library; and the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis. His work in Washington, D.C., contributes to the city's monumental Beaux-Arts image, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce building, the U.S. Treasury Annex, the First Division Memorial, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Gilbert's many affiliations included service on the National Jury of Fine Arts for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893; president of the American Institute of Architects, 1908–09; founder and president of the Architectural League of New York; and president of the National Academy of Design. He was president of the National Institute of Arts and Letters and was elected a member of the Academy of Arts and Letters; he was also an honorary member of the Royal Institute of British Architects Canada and a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor.

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