



# CASS GILBERT SOCIETY

*Organized to preserve the work of Minnesota's most important architect.*

## CASS GILBERT SOCIETY TO CELEBRATE THE 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. SUPREME COURT BUILDING WITH A TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Members of the Cass Gilbert Society will travel to Washington, D.C., November 18-20, 2010, to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court Building and to explore the work and role of Cass Gilbert and his associates in Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Maryland.

While Gilbert did not execute a large number of buildings in Washington, D.C., his influence in the nation's capital was very important, from his advocacy as president of the American Institute of Architects in support of the McMillan Plan, key to the relationship of the Capitol, White House, and the Mall in the twentieth century, to the design of the U.S. Supreme Court, the culminating work of his career.

The tour will be centered in Washington on Thursday, November 18, with a visit to the Library of Congress and the Cass Gilbert Collection there, and a special tour of the Supreme Court, a viewing of the anniversary exhibition (see following story) with curator Catherine Fitts, and discussion to follow. On Friday, November 19, the group will view the U.S. Treasury Annex, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the First Division Memorial in Presidential Park by the Old Executive Office Building. They will hear from Bill Bushong of the White House Historical Association about the McMillan Plan, with planned visits to the White House, redone in the early twentieth century by Gilbert's mentors, McKim, Mead and White, and/or the U.S. Capitol, prototype of many domed state capitols.

On Saturday, November 20, the group will travel to Baltimore by train. Cass Gilbert Society member and Gilbert scholar, Barbara Christen, has arranged for us to visit the Winans House, a major work by McKim, Mead and White, whose construction was supervised by Gilbert. The tour will also include a visit to the Peabody Institute and its spectacular library and several other sites of interest.

Tour members are expected to make their own travel and hotel arrangements and pay for their own meals and transportation costs. Any additional costs will be determined as the program is finalized. Please contact Carolyn Nayematsu at [nayemu001@umn.edu](mailto:nayemu001@umn.edu) or Wendy Weimer at 651-646-2012 or [wewei001@gmail.com](mailto:wewei001@gmail.com) for more information.



*U.S. Supreme Court Photo: Carol Highsmith*

## SPECIAL EXHIBITION TO MARK THE 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. SUPREME COURT BUILDING

The U.S. Supreme Court, under the direction of curator Catherine Fitts, has organized an exhibition on the history of the court and the history and architecture of the building to celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Marjorie Pearson, Mary Beth Betts, and Barbara Christen were asked to provide comments on the exhibition content.

The introductory text panel reads: “In the early 1790s, among the first tasks of the new federal government was to construct buildings to house its three branches in the future capital city of Washington. Work on the President’s House for the Chief Executive and the United States Capitol for the Congress began quickly, but a building for the Judiciary to house the Supreme Court was postponed. Instead, when the Court moved to Washington in 1801 it borrowed space within the Capitol, a ‘temporary’ measure that would last for the next 134 years. Finally, in October 1935, the Supreme Court Building, a structure that reflected the Court’s fundamental role in the national government, became a reality.”

Chief Justice William Howard Taft was the chief advocate for the new building. He began working informally with Gilbert on a court design in 1926 even before Congress authorized the funding. Gilbert was named as architect in 1929 and work began in 1930, shortly after Taft’s death on March 8. Charles Evans Hughes succeeded Taft as Chief Justice and presided over the opening of the court term in its new building in 1935.

The exhibition will open in October in conjunction with the beginning of the court term and remain in place for about a year.



*Debra Hirsh, Catherine Fitts, Jim Hirsh, and Erin Huckle meet at the Supreme Court to discuss the upcoming exhibit.  
Photo: Jim Hirsh*

## CASS GILBERT SOCIETY THE RECIPIENT OF A MINNESOTA LEGACY AMENDMENT GRANT



This activity is made possible in part by the Minnesota Legacy Amendment's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

In January 2010, the Cass Gilbert Society was awarded a Minnesota Legacy Amendment Grant through the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund to further improve and upgrade the Society’s website and to expand the number of display panels in the Society’s *Celebrating 150 Years of Cass Gilbert* exhibit. The website will now display 80 featured works, double the number previously offered, and will also feature a searchable database. The website content has been prepared by Sonja Mason and Marjorie Pearson, with website design and database development by Andy Mickel and Jim Miner of Factor of 4. Sonja Mason also designed the display panels, which have added another 20 buildings to the exhibit. The expanded exhibit is planned to be shown at the Minnesota AIA conference in November.

## WATERBURY CITY HALL RENOVATION IS COMPLETED

Ingrid Manning, CEO of the Connecticut Community Trust, has announced that the long-awaited renovation of Waterbury City Hall is due to be completed on December 1. When the Cass Gilbert Society visited Waterbury in 2007, the building was vacant and plans were underway for renovation. A re-dedication ceremony will be held on January 1, 2011. The Mattatuck Museum is planning an exhibit and related programming on Cass Gilbert and Waterbury City Hall.



*Waterbury City Hall before renovation.  
Photo: Jerry Dougherty*

## MEET THE CASS GILBERT SOCIETY BOARD

**Carolyn Nayematsu** has been treasurer of the Cass Gilbert Society since the beginning of the year, following her husband Vincent Platt in the office. Carolyn has a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Social Policy from the University of Minnesota, where she also worked for a number of years. Vince is retired attorney who worked at West Publishing. They enjoy travel and are hoping to visit every capitol in the USA; so far they've seen 18 of them! Carolyn enjoys knitting, does yoga, and takes power walks. Vincent loves gardening, raising koi fish, and sampling a variety of restaurant cuisine. They live on the Summit Avenue in the historic district in a house designed by Louis Lockwood and built in 1906.

Architect **Ted Lentz** joined the board at the beginning of the year. Ted worked with the community-based teams that created St. Paul's "Historic Hill" National Historic District in the mid 1970s and the City of St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission and wrote or co-authored three books on preservation and community efforts in the neighborhoods that border Summit Avenue. Ted has spoken throughout the Twin Cities area on the restoration efforts in the area and continues to lead tours and speak on neighborhoods, buildings, and the role of Summit Avenue in the Twin Cities. He holds a Masters Degree in Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and a B.A. from Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, where he lived and studied in most of the Cass Gilbert-designed buildings on the Oberlin Campus. After 40 years of practice, primarily working in the hospital and healthcare fields, he retired in 2008, primarily to expand his time with non-profit community-based organizations like the Cass Gilbert Society. He and his wife Ona have lived at 692 Summit Avenue since 1974.

CASS GILBERT SOCIETY, INC.  
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Place  
Stamp  
Here

#### Our Mission

To preserve our cultural heritage through advancing scholarship in and appreciation of Cass Gilbert's influence on American architecture.

The Cass Gilbert Society, Inc., is a non-profit tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Marjorie Pearson and Katherine Solomonson gave a joint presentation on Cass Gilbert at the annual Society of Architectural Historians conference on April 23, 2010, in Chicago, as part of a session on *Midwest Architecture Outside of Chicago*. An expanded version of their talk, **Cass Gilbert: Architect of Intersecting Worlds**, will be presented to the Society at the University Club, 420 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, on Tuesday, November 9, 2010.

