

### RESTORATION:

Since 1977 the Court House has been part of a steady restoration process that is still ongoing. The building was damaged from overuse and deterioration was compounded by the "modernization program" in 1964 which incorporated electrical rehabilitation, dropped ceilings, and other modern changes. Decorative elements were lost or destroyed during that time. The challenge has been to restore the character and decorative element of the building while providing adaptive functional uses for court operations.

### INSCRIPTIONS:

"There is no evil that we cannot either face or fly from but the consciousness of duty disregarded"

"And the rule of the law is preferable to that of any individual"

*"This is a government of Laws, not Men"*

"Justice is the end of government. It is the end of Civil Society. It ever has been and ever will be pursued until it be obtained or until Liberty be lost in the pursuit."

"Obedience to Law is Liberty"

"No free man in any manner may be destroyed except by legal verdict of his equals or the law of the land."

- Translation of Latin Inscription of the Magna Carta.

**"The surest test of the civilization of a people, afforded by mechanical art, is to be found in their architecture; architecture which presents so noble a field for the display of the grand and the beautiful."**

- William Prescott 1796-1859



# THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY COURT HOUSE



© Green Street Studios

Prepared by

Anthony J. Russo, Presiding Judge

and

Laura J. Gallagher, Judge

Probate Court

Cuyahoga County, Ohio

The information contained in this pamphlet was gathered from various sources.

## HISTORY:

Erected in 1911 and opened on January 1, 1912, our Cuyahoga County Court House is the “crown jewel” of a collection of government buildings designed within a monumental setting. The collection includes: the Federal Building on Public Square, City Hall, the Public Auditorium and Music Hall, the Public Library, and the Board of Education Building. Today, the Court House remains one of the loveliest in the collection.

The architects were Lehman & Schmitt of Cleveland and the principal designer was Charles Morris. The building was designed with a motif of French Classical Revival. Elements of the building were intended to establish associations within the mythical and ritualistic aspirations of the societal era. The Milford pink granite and detailed moldings were chosen to demonstrate a sense of durability and permanence. The Court House is decorated with bronze and marble statuary of historic lawgivers and holds various historically significant painted murals. The Court House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

It has been said that our Court House has both meaning and value that is suggestive of intelligent human beings writing beautiful stories in stone for posterity. It is a mirror of ourselves that helps establish our identity, reflect our character and portray our priorities.

## INTERIOR:

The interior was designed by Charles Schweinfurth. Various murals trace the English/American legal system including: “The Signing of the Magna Carta”; “The Trial of Captain John Smith”; “A New England Town Meeting”; “The Conclave of Chief Pontiac & Rogers Rangers - Cleveland 1760”; and “The Constitutional Convention.”

Decorations throughout the building depict Native American influences. The ornately molded bronze doors at the entrance of the building feature a Chief’s headdress of feathers. Many bronze pedestals fashioned in the shape of turtles, believed to be the symbolism for wisdom derived from long life, encompass the grand stairways and banisters.



## STATUES:

The exterior of the Court House carries an array of statuary front and back, each with profound legal symbolism.

### Sources of Law

**Moses** (Moral Law)

**Justinian** (Civil Law)

**Alfred the Great** (Common Law)

**Pope Gregory IX** (Canon Law)

Significant People in English Law

**Stephen Langton** (Magna Carta)

**Simon deMontfort** (House of Com)

**Edward I** (Taxation)

**John Hampden** (Petition of Rights)

**Lord John Somers** (Bill of Rights)

**Lord Mansfield** (Commercial Law)

Significant People in American Law

**Thomas Jefferson** (Ind. Rights)

**Alexander Hamilton** (Fed. Rights)

**John Marshall** (Interpreter Fed Ct)

**Rufus Ranney** (Interpreter State Ct)

## TODAY:

The Court House is home to the County Probate and Domestic Relations Courts and the Eighth District Court of Appeals. The courtrooms themselves are stately and reflect great dignity. They boast beautiful wooden hand-carvings including cherubs, an eagle over the judge’s bench and a witness chair reminiscent of European castles and thrones. There is an aura of strength in each courtroom that commands an atmosphere of respect and awe.