

VISITOR'S GUIDE  
*to the*  
BIRCH BAYH FEDERAL BUILDING  
*and*  
UNITED STATES COURT HOUSE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA



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John Massey Rhind, "Agriculture," Fine Arts Collection,  
U.S. General Services Administration, Photo: Shawn Spence





Photo: David Sundberg

## WELCOME

Welcome to the Birch Bayh Federal Building and United States Court House, which has been home to the court and other federal agencies for over one hundred years. Adorned with marble and mosaics, statues and friezes, and exquisitely detailed paintings, this imposing structure has provided a fitting background for the many important legal decisions handed down by the judges and juries in the district. Joined by our colleagues at the General Services Administration, which owns and manages the building, the court is proud to share a bit of its history and tradition with you. We hope that you enjoy your visit!



*Court House, 1921.*  
Photo: Bass Photo Co. Collection,  
Indiana Historical Society, Neg. 74355-F



## THE HISTORY *of the* COURT HOUSE

Because federal court business in Indiana was infrequent during the first half of the nineteenth century, the first district judges conducted their proceedings in the Indiana Supreme Court's courtroom. In 1860, Indiana's first United States Court House and Post Office was erected at the southeast corner of Market and Pennsylvania Streets in downtown Indianapolis. This four-story stone building housed all federal agencies, serving Indiana's citizens until it was outgrown in the late nineteenth century. Plans were then made for the present United States Court House, which was one of 35 federal buildings constructed under the Tarsney Act of 1893.

The current Court House, which opened in September 1905, is an excellent example of the Beaux Arts-style architecture made popular in the United States by the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. John Hall Rankin and Thomas Kellogg, noted Philadelphia architects, secured the design contract, and the Treasury Department accepted New York-based John Peirce Company's low construction bid of \$1,300,000 (the final cost, however, reached nearly \$2,000,000).

Begun in 1902 and completed in 1905, the new United States Court House and Post Office was massive, accommodating 925 employees. The U-shaped structure rose four stories and housed the federal courts, executive branch offices, and the main post office. The building's architectural style inspired designs for other buildings in Indianapolis, including City Hall (1910), the Central Library (1917), and the Indiana War Memorial (dedicated in 1927).

Originally half its current size, the Court House was expanded in 1938, with the east and west wings of the building extended and connected by a new north corridor. After the expansion, the building filled the entire block, rose to five stories on the north side, and incorporated two portals at the northeast and northwest corners to allow access for postal vehicles.

### *Lost in Time*

On March 25, 1903, following a festive parade, a time capsule was placed inside the cornerstone of the new federal building. The large copper box contained photographs, newspaper clippings, and assorted documents. In the 1930s, the original cornerstone was demolished during the construction to expand the building. The time capsule was removed before the demolition, given to the postmaster for safekeeping, and supposedly reburied in a limestone block placed at the new northeast corner of the building. When staff attempted to locate the time capsule in advance of the building's Centennial Celebration in 2003, the block the capsule had allegedly been placed in was empty. Despite thorough searching, the time capsule's whereabouts remain a mystery.





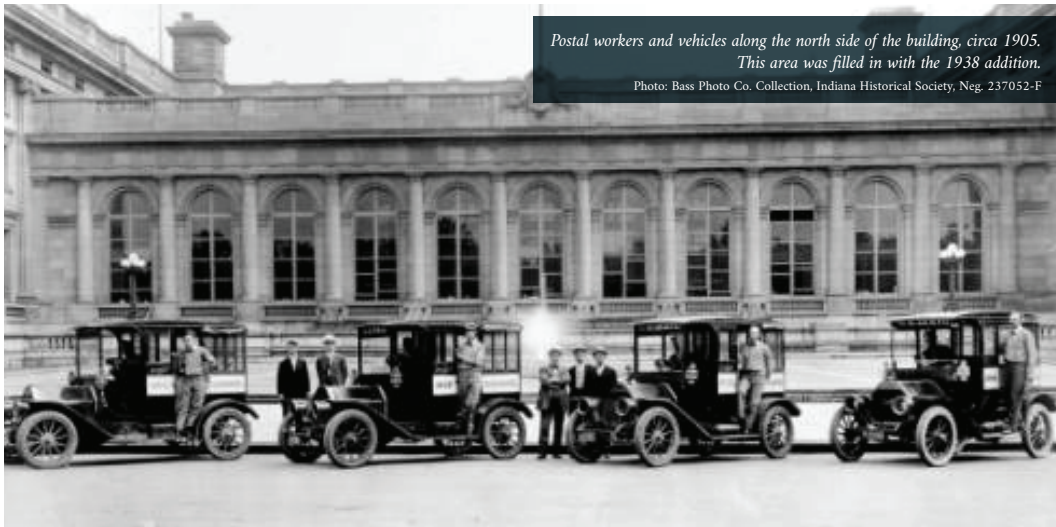
Top left: Exterior construction progression, circa 1902-1904; Top right: Work progresses on building's interior, circa 1904-1905; Bottom left: Architects John Hall Rankin and Thomas M. Kellogg pose for a photo, 1903; Bottom right: Court House, circa 1933.

# POST OFFICE

## and EXPANSION

Inside the Court House, each federal agency had its own space. The Post Office's sorting and customer service facilities occupied the first floor. The second story housed two monumental courtrooms, judges' chambers, the Court Clerk's Office, the United States Marshals Service, the United States Attorney's Office, and the court library. The upper stories accommodated various other federal offices, and the fourth floor included dormitories and club rooms for railroad postal workers required to lay over in the city. The basement had additional postal space and storage rooms.

During the first half of the twentieth century, especially after the Great Depression, new federal programs increased the number of agencies and employees occupying the building. By the early 1970s, construction of the Minton-Capehart Federal Building and a new central postal processing facility relieved the crowded conditions in the Court House. The United States General Services Administration, the federal government's landlord, then remodeled vacant offices and restored many of the original architectural details, returning the Court House to its original beauty. In 2003, a celebration of the centennial of the laying of the building's cornerstone took place. That same year, the structure was renamed the Birch Bayh Federal Building and United States Court House.



*Postal workers and vehicles along the north side of the building, circa 1905.  
This area was filled in with the 1938 addition.*

Photo: Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Neg. 237052-F



*Bottom Left: Postal workroom,  
circa 1905.*

Photo: Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Neg. 237052-F

*Left: Catwalk lookout used by  
mail inspectors.*

Photo: Radius Media

## Mailroom Mischief

Hidden catwalks were installed above the Post Office's mail sorting rooms for use by mail inspectors. The inspectors used the catwalks to observe postal workers discretely and ensure that no mail theft occurred. If a postal worker was caught pocketing a piece of mail, it was possible for them to be hauled upstairs to be charged by the U.S. Attorney's office then taken to the District Court Courtroom for an initial appearance before a federal judge, all in the same day.



*The United States Court House at the southeast corner of Market and Pennsylvania Streets, erected in 1860, was turned into a bank after the court moved out in 1905. It was demolished in 1963.*

*Photo: Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Neg. 5036*



## ESTABLISHMENT of the COURT

For over two centuries, the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana and its predecessors have been called upon to resolve the most significant legal, political, and social problems of the day. The federal judicial presence in Indiana began with the creation of a territorial court in 1800. Seventeen years later, following Indiana's move to statehood, Congress established the United States District Court for the District of Indiana, and President James Monroe appointed Benjamin Parke as the court's first district judge.

Sitting alone, Judge Parke exercised federal jurisdiction throughout Indiana. Indeed, a lone federal judge served the entire state until 1925, when Congress approved a second judgeship. Three years later, President Calvin Coolidge signed a law that divided the state into a Northern District and a Southern District. The Southern District was served by one judge until 1954, when Congress created an additional judgeship. Cale J. Holder then joined William E. Steckler on the court.



*Left: The second floor originally featured a Judge's Library adjoining two judges' chambers. As the District Court grew, the library was eventually converted into additional chambers space.*

*Photo: Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society, Neg. 6574*

*Right: The original District Court Courtroom, circa 1906.*

*Photo: Bass Photo Co. Collection, Indiana Historical Society*

# HISTORIC CASES

From its earliest days, the court has made its mark on the nation's judicial landscape. In 1818, Judge Parke upheld the constitutionality of the 1783 Fugitive Slave Act, permitting the return of fugitive slaves to the states from which they had fled. Judge David McDonald played a preliminary but important role in the development of constitutional law in *Ex parte Milligan*, a case in which the United States Supreme Court held in 1866 that a military court may not try and sentence a civilian when civilian courts are available. The present-day court has addressed such complex and divisive issues as busing, obscenity, school prayer, police brutality, prison conditions, civil rights, voting rights, and public corruption, in addition to many significant private lawsuits with national and international implications and effects.



*Jurors in U.S. v. Ryan pose for a photo, 1912*  
Photo: U.S. District Court

## *The Dynamite Conspiracy Case – U.S. v. Ryan et al*

From 1906 until 1910, a series of explosions rocked construction sites across the nation, the suspected work of labor unionists seeking to undermine non-union work. The bombings reached their peak on October 1, 1910, when a dynamite time bomb exploded outside of the *Los Angeles Times* building in California, killing 21 people in what was known then as the “Crime of the Century.” The *Los Angeles Times* had been chosen as a target because its owner and publisher was ardently anti-union and had worked tirelessly to prevent unionized workers from obtaining employment in the city. While the bombers responsible for the attack in Los Angeles were caught and convicted in California state court, the federal government believed the explosion was part of a larger conspiracy.

After intensive investigation, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Indiana brought charges against 54 members of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, a union that was headquartered on Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis. Two years to the day after the Los Angeles bombing, 40 men went on trial in the District Court courtroom. Due to threats against the jurors, the jury was sequestered in the postal dormitories on the fourth floor of the Court House for the duration of the three-month trial. On December 28, 1912, 38 of the 40 defendants were convicted of a variety of conspiracy charges for transporting and shipping dynamite and other explosive materials across state lines. Just two days later, the guilty men were sentenced to prison terms of up to seven years and sent to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to serve out their time.



*Convicted dynamiters enter Court House to receive their sentence, December 30, 1912*  
Photo: Indianapolis Sun





George Remus, circa 1920s

### *The Jack Daniel's Whiskey Case – U.S. v. Motlow et al*

The passage of Prohibition in 1920 drove the sale of alcoholic beverages underground, creating a lucrative black market for bootleggers. George Remus, a former attorney and pharmacist, was known as the King of the Bootleggers after making millions of dollars on the black market. Following a brief stint in prison for violating the National Prohibition Act, Remus was brought in on a conspiracy to siphon off and sell 5,000 gallons of Jack Daniel's whiskey from storage barrels at a bonded warehouse in St. Louis. The 5,000 gallons represented just a fraction of the whiskey that was being stored; Remus advised that the conspirators would have a better chance of getting away with the crime by removing small amounts from each barrel rather than taking it all.

Unbeknownst to Remus, his co-conspirators ignored his advice and took all the whiskey from 895 of the 896 barrels, leaving just one full barrel behind. The aim was to have any government inspectors who visited the warehouse take the necessary test samples from the unadulterated barrel; however, this plan backfired when a Prohibition agent stopped by after hours and demanded that the night guard let him in to perform his inspection. The conspirators had never informed the night guard of the conspiracy, and the guard thus led the agent to the first barrel they came across. The agent quickly discovered, by both tasting and testing the contents of the barrel, that the contents were not Jack Daniel's whiskey, but rather a disgusting mixture of neutral grain alcohol and water.

And so the conspiracy came crashing down. With police on the lookout for the missing whiskey across the Midwest, four barrels of Jack Daniel's, worth about \$16,000, were recovered from an armored truck following a brief chase just west of Indianapolis. This, along with the fact that the pump used to drain the whiskey had travelled through Indiana, gave the District of Indiana jurisdiction.

George Remus and 31 co-defendants went on trial in the District Court courtroom on December 14, 1925. Remus became a witness for the government, incensed that his orders to only drain and sell a fraction of the whiskey had been disobeyed. This turncoat decision led to death threats against Remus, who required bodyguards even while in the courtroom. Eventually, 24 defendants were found guilty, including Remus, who served another two years in prison as a result.

# SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* INDIANA TODAY

The name, “United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana,” tells much about the institution. It is a court of the United States, created by the federal government, not the state. The District Court is a trial court, one of 94 across the nation, and is the first of three levels of the federal judiciary (the others being the Courts of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court). The Southern District’s venue consists of the sixty southernmost Indiana counties, extending generally from Howard County on the north, to the state lines on the east and west, and down to the Ohio River.

The Southern District bench was an all-male institution until President Ronald Reagan appointed the first female judge, Sarah Evans Barker, to the court in 1984. In 2010, Tanya Walton Pratt became the first African American judge appointed to the federal bench in Indiana. Today, the Southern District consists of five district judges, five full-time magistrate judges, two part-time magistrate judges, and four bankruptcy judges. A sixth district judge is serving on senior status.

District judges are appointed by the President, confirmed by the Senate, and serve for life, in the words of the Constitution, “during good behavior.” Magistrate judges are appointed by the district judges to eight-year terms and work with the district judges to guide cases through the legal process. Bankruptcy judges handle bankruptcy cases only and are appointed by the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit to fourteen-year terms.



*The Hon. Tanya Walton Pratt takes the Oath of Office, October 8, 2010*  
Photo: U.S. District Court



*Judge Barker congratulates a newly naturalized United States citizen.*  
Photo: Radius Media





Photo: David Jaynes

The Southern District of Indiana has four divisions: Indianapolis, Evansville, New Albany, and Terre Haute. A district judge and a magistrate judge sit full-time in Evansville, and one bankruptcy judge sits full-time in New Albany. There is one part-time magistrate judge assigned to New Albany and another part-time magistrate judge serving in Terre Haute. All other judges sit full-time in Indianapolis and travel occasionally to the other divisions to hear cases as needed.

Federal courts have jurisdiction to hear two types of cases: federal question cases, which involve disputes governed by the United States Constitution or federal laws and treaties; and diversity of citizenship cases, governed by state law but which involve disputes between citizens of different states. Federal question cases can be either criminal or civil suits; diversity cases are all civil suits. Generally, only about two percent of federal civil cases actually go to trial; the rest are settled, dismissed, or adjudicated by a judge's written ruling.

The District Court is also responsible for conducting naturalization ceremonies, through which immigrants become citizens of the United States. The court presides over two ceremonies a month, naturalizing up to 120 new citizens at each ceremony.

## SOUTHERN DISTRICT *by the* NUMBERS

# 2<sup>nd</sup>

*As of 2019, the Southern District of Indiana was the second busiest court in the nation, based on weighted caseload.*

# 6,966

*Between September 2018 and September 2019, 6,966 filings were made in the Southern District of Indiana.*

# 1,393

*The total filings between that period made for an average of 1,393 total filings per judge.*

# 4<sup>th</sup>

*The average total filings per judge ranks 4th in the nation.*



### *District Judges:*

Jane E. Magnus-Stinson  
*Chief Judge*

Sarah Evans Barker

Richard L. Young

Tanya Walton Pratt

James R. Sweeney II

James Patrick Hanlon

### *Magistrate Judges:*

Tim A. Baker

Debra McVicker Lynch

Mark J. Dinsmore

Matthew P. Brookman

Doris L. Pryor

Craig M. McKee

Van T. Willis

### *Bankruptcy Judges:*

Robyn L. Moberly

*Chief Judge*

James M. Carr

Jeffrey J. Graham

Andrea K. McCord



# THE BADGE



IT'S TAKEN HUNDREDS OF YEARS  
TO FORGE THIS STAR

Photo: Shane T. McCoy, U.S. Marshals

## FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

### UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE

Established in 1789, the United States Marshals Service is the oldest federal law enforcement agency in the country. Since the beginning, the agency has acted as the enforcement arm of the federal courts, tasked with ensuring the judiciary's ability to operate effectively. The work of the U.S. Marshals Service is often unseen, but critical to the administration of justice. Deputy marshals apprehend fugitives, protect judges, provide security during court proceedings, operate the Witness Security Program, transport federal prisoners, enforce court orders, execute federal arrest warrants, and seize property acquired through illegal means.

U.S. Marshals are appointed by the President to each of the nation's 94 judicial districts. Nationwide, there are close to 4,000 deputy marshals and Criminal Investigators actively involved in enforcing federal law. The Southern District of Indiana is protected by a force of around 20 deputy marshals.

### THE UNITED STATES PROBATION OFFICE

The United States Probation Office is a unit of the District Court. The Probation Office supervises criminal defendants before trial and at the conclusion of incarceration. They provide access to resources to help newly released individuals transition back into the community. The office also conducts pretrial and presentence investigations and prepares reports for the judges to use in determining sentences.



Photo: U.S. Probation Office



*Above: In federal court, attorneys always stand when speaking in front of a judge as a sign of respect.*

*Below: The gavel is used to bring order to the court at the start of a proceeding. It is also used to signal the conclusion of a hearing or trial.*

Photos: Radius Media



# INSIDE THE COURTROOM

## 1 Judge

District judges are trial court judges for the federal courts. They hear civil and criminal cases, supervise the pretrial process, manage jury selection and instruction, and issue criminal sentences. Magistrate judges conduct initial proceedings in criminal cases, handle pretrial matters, and preside over settlement conferences. They may preside over civil trials with the consent of all parties.

## 2 Jury

A jury is a group of citizens who hear evidence presented by both sides at trial and determine the facts in a dispute. Federal criminal juries consist of 12 people, while federal civil juries must have at least 6 people.

## 3 Court Reporter

The court reporter transcribes spoken speech into written form using machine shorthand. The written copy produced serves as the official transcript of a court hearing or trial.

## 4 Witness

A witness gives testimony about the facts or issues in a case.

## 5 Courtroom Deputy

A courtroom deputy assists a judge with processing and managing court proceedings. The courtroom deputy also manages a judge's caseload.

## 6 Law Clerk

Law clerks are attorneys who work for federal judges. They review, summarize, research, and analyze matters before the court. They assist in drafting opinions and preparing for the disposition of cases.

## 7 Prosecution or Plaintiff

The prosecutor in a federal criminal trial is an attorney from the United States Attorney's Office. The lawyer presents the government's case against the criminal defendant in court. In a civil trial, the plaintiff is the person or entity who brings a suit to court, along with their legal representation.

## 8 Defendant

The defendant is the party being accused in a criminal case or sued in a civil case.

## 9 Counsel for the Defense

The counsel for the defense is an attorney who represents the defendant in a court proceeding. In criminal cases, the defendant may be represented by the Indiana Federal Community Defenders, who provide legal defense services to criminal defendants who cannot afford to hire counsel.

## 10 Deputy United States Marshal

The Deputy United States Marshal provides security to judges and ensures courtroom safety during a criminal proceeding.









Photo: Radius Media



Photo: Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc.

## MAIN CROSS CORRIDOR

The Main Cross Corridor's original use as the public service hallway for the Post Office can be seen in the restored tellers' cages, writing desks, and representations of Post Office boxes. Today, the offices on either side of the corridor serve the Clerk's Offices of the District and Bankruptcy Courts. The vaulted ceilings are decorated with ceramic mosaics in floral designs and borders. In 1963, the floor was replaced with terrazzo flooring in the colors and designs of the original marble (the second floor above retains its original marble floors).

### *Haunting the Hallways?*

Are there ghosts in the courthouse? The federal government can neither confirm nor deny the presence of ghostly apparitions, but over the years, unexplained occurrences have led to speculation that spirits from the past still walk the building's halls. Reported events include doors opening and closing on their own, chairs spinning themselves, and hints of pipe smoke wafting through offices.



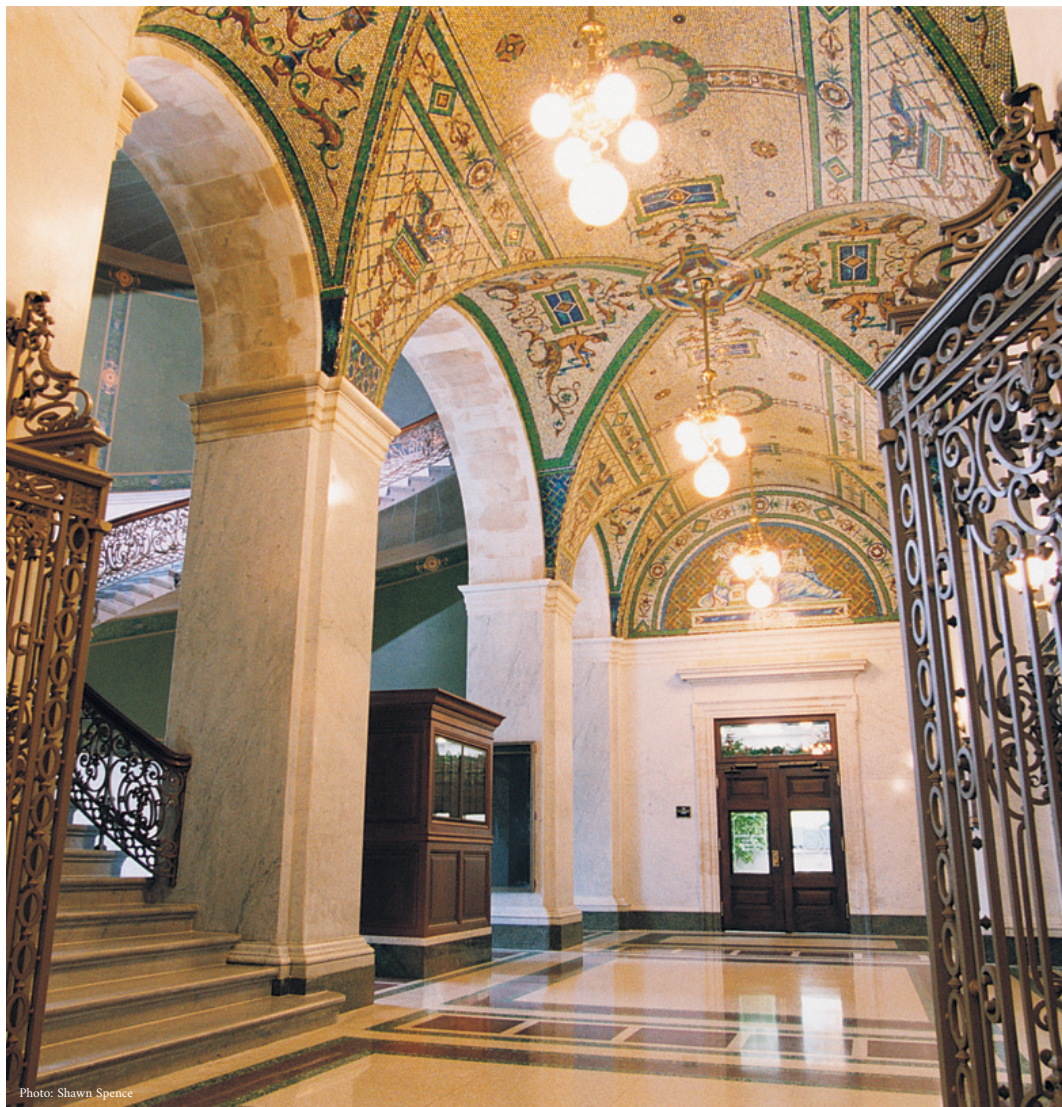


Photo: Shawn Spence

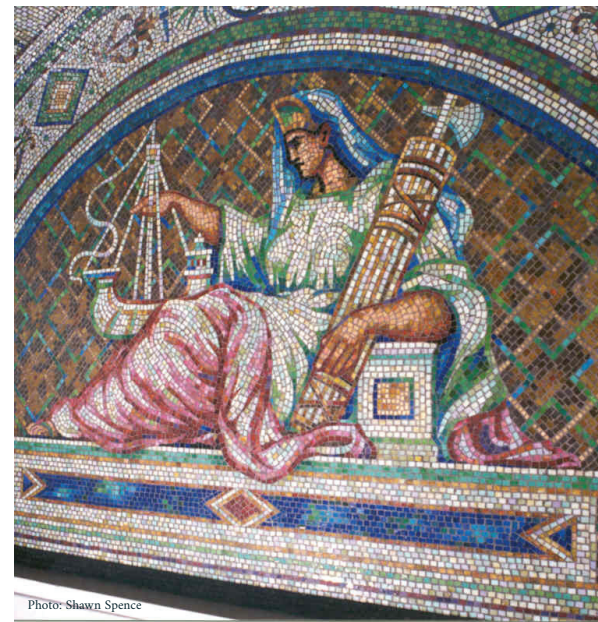


Photo: Shawn Spence

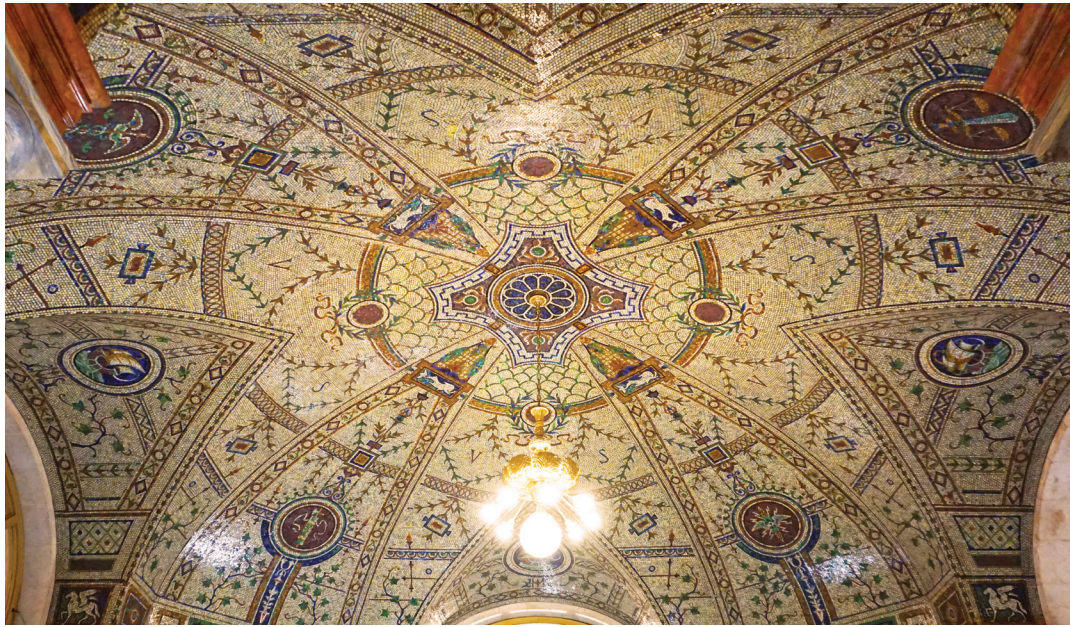
## ELEVATOR LOBBY and LOBBY MOSAIC

The vaulted ceilings in the first floor Elevator Lobbies and in the two Octagonal Rotundas are decorated with glass mosaics in a Roman style, including several classical symbols representing the powers and functions of the federal government. The bronze gates originally served to close access to the upper floors from the Post Office, which was open on weekends.



# ENTRYWAYS *and* OCTAGONAL ROTUNDAS

The two Octagonal Rotundas on either end of the Main Cross Corridor display some of the most colorful of the twenty-two different marbles from around the world that were used in the Court House. The mosaic tiles on the ceiling are made of glass. Through the arched doorway you can see the coffered barrel-vaulted ceilings of the entrance vestibules, sculpted from Indiana limestone.



## *Why are the statuary empty?*

Both entryway rotundas feature four beautiful marble statuary, or niches. While some are being used for functional purposes, none contain the type of decorative art originally intended for the spaces. As it turns out, the federal government did commission eight busts of illustrious federal statesmen for the niches around the time that the Court House opened. The artist shipped the busts to the courthouse, but they were lost, ironically, in the mail.





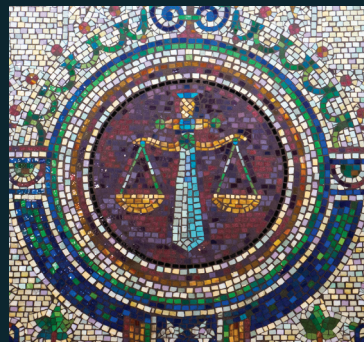
# SYMBOLS *in the* ROTUNDAS

Featured within the vibrant glass mosaic ceilings in the building's two entryway rotundas are themes related to the federal government and the original function and purpose of the building. Many of the classical themes are borrowed from Greek and Roman culture and mythology. Even the lettering is reminiscent of Roman script. The Roman initials V.S. artfully crafted into the mosaic tiles translate to U.S., or United States, in the English language.



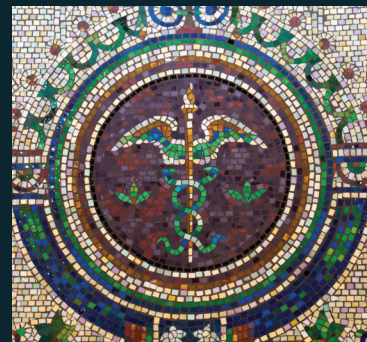
## THE FASCES

An ancient Roman symbol of a government's power and authority, the fasces appears as a bound bundle of rods with an axe emerging from the top. The symbol has been used in iconography representing the United States government since the country's founding in the 18th century.



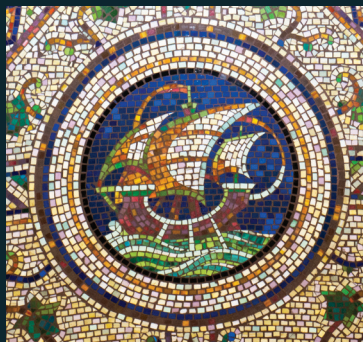
## SWORD & SCALES

A classic judicial icon, the scales of justice symbolize the fairness of the legal process; in court, evidence is metaphorically weighed and balanced. The sword symbolizes the power, authority, and strength of the judiciary.



## THE CADUCEUS

In Greek mythology, the caduceus was the staff carried by Hermes, a messenger god. The ancient symbol manifests as a short staff entwined by two serpents. Its presence in the mosaic ceiling is thought to be a reference to the Post Office, one of the building's original tenants.



## SHIPS UNDER SAIL

Rising from the sea, a sailing ship can be seen in each of the rotunda's four points of entry. The ships are meant to represent international transportation and commerce.



## THE ROMAN SHIELD

Displaying the famous thunderbolt emblem of the Roman Legion, the Roman shield has long been associated with military strength and power. Here, it is meant to represent the United States Armed Forces.



## PEGASUS

A mythical winged horse from Greek mythology, Pegasus is depicted at the top of each column in the rotunda. Known for pulling Zeus's chariot, it is thought that Pegasus's appearance here is a reference to the Postal Service's early reliance on horses to make deliveries.



# GRAND STAIRCASES

Two marble, semi-circular, cantilevered staircases, with intricate bronze balustrades, run from the first to the third floors. The stairways feature white Italian marble wainscoting, restored hand-painted garland borders around the plaster walls, and stained-glass windows between the second and third floors. The landings onto which the stairways open include marble walls, bronze balustrades, Doric columns on the first floor, Ionic columns on the second floor, and Corinthian columns on the third floor.



## *Stairway to Freedom*

According to courthouse legend, the building's spiral stairs were designed and constructed by a state prison inmate. The inmate, a German stonemason, had written a letter to the building's architects suggesting that a self-supporting spiral staircase would be a stunning showpiece in the new federal building. The architects were intrigued, but lacking the skills necessary to create self-supporting stairs, they arranged for the stonemason to be transferred to Indianapolis, where he served as the foreman on the project. Supposedly, the governor was so impressed by the completed stairs that he granted the stonemason a full pardon and arranged for his transfer home to Germany.

Photo: David Sundberg





Photo: Carol M. Highsmith Photography, Inc.

## STAINED GLASS DOMES

The Grand Staircases soar to semicircular domes, at the apex of which are fish scale and floral design stained glass skylights. The sections of the domes contain paintings of three classical symbols of the governmental functions historically carried out in the Court House. The caduceus, two snakes entwined around a winged staff, was the emblem of Hermes, the Greek messenger god. The caduceus is also a symbol of peace, balance, and peaceful resolution of conflict. The sword and scales represent the authority and balance of law and justice. The center panel depicts Hermes carrying a letter.



Photo: U.S. District Court



# THE WILLIAM E. STECKLER CEREMONIAL COURTROOM

The Honorable William E. Steckler Ceremonial Courtroom, at the southwest corner of the second floor has been occupied by the District Court since 1905. The courtroom features two stained glass windows by the New York firm of Heinigke & Bowen. The frieze murals along the top of the side and back walls depict the seals of the original thirteen colonies; the frieze murals across the front wall depict the seal of Indiana in the center panel, and allegories for agriculture and industry on the right and art and literature on the left. The painting over the bench is by Philadelphia artist W.B. Van Ingen and is titled "Appeal to Justice." The original skylight in the center of the ceiling has been closed and replaced with artificial lighting. Hanging on the south wall is Edmund Brucker's portrait of Judge Steckler, who presided in this courtroom during his 44-year career on the bench. The richly colored and molded coffered ceiling is decorated with Greek Key, egg and dart, and oak leaf garland borders, among other design elements.



Photo: David Sundberg



# COURTROOM PROCEEDINGS

For over 100 years, the Honorable William E. Steckler Ceremonial Courtroom has been the site of many interesting legal proceedings. It was in this courtroom that Judge Steckler gave Charles Manson his first criminal sentence. In 1935, Judge Robert C. Baltzell sentenced a man to death in this courtroom for murdering an FBI agent. A suspect in an interstate auto theft ring, George Barrett had resisted arrest at the Indiana-Ohio border, before shooting and killing FBI agent Nelson B. Klein. Barrett's execution was the second and last to take place in Marion County.

In the 1980s, the courtroom was used by a Hollywood film crew to shoot scenes from "Eight Men Out," a movie about the 1919 Chicago White Sox baseball scandal. The plot followed eight of the team's players who had conspired with a group of gamblers to throw the World Series against the Cincinnati Reds. The players were later tried on conspiracy charges, but acquitted. The movie's trial scenes were filmed in this courtroom.



W.B. Van Ingen, "Appeal to Justice," Fine Arts Collection,  
U.S. General Services Administration

Photo: U.S. District Court



Photos: Radius Media

## INSIDE *the* JUDGE'S CHAMBERS

The bulk of a judge's work takes place in their private offices, referred to as a judge's chambers. Each chambers consists of a judge's office, work space for staff, and a conference room.





Photo: David Sundberg

## THE SARAH EVANS BARKER COURTROOM

The Sarah Evans Barker Courtroom, named in 2016 in honor of Indiana's first female federal judge, was originally used by the Seventh Circuit Court, whose judges traveled to federal courts throughout Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin until 1912. At that time, all federal Circuit Courts became Courts of Appeals and were assigned to fixed locations; the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit settled in Chicago. With the absence of Circuit Court visits to Indianapolis, the courtroom fell into disuse. It was primarily used for storage until 1954, when Cale J. Holder was elevated to the bench. As a result, some of the courtroom's original features were lost.





Photo: U.S. District Court

## BARKER COURTROOM FRIEZE MURALS

The frieze murals in this courtroom, created in the 1930s, list the names of six chief justices and seven associate justices of the United States Supreme Court. At some point, these murals were painted over and forgotten. During a renovation of the courtroom, they were rediscovered and restored.

One name that originally appeared on the frieze murals was Chief Justice Roger B. Taney (1836-1864), who is best known for his authorship of the majority opinion in the infamous Dred Scott case. This 1857 ruling stated that African Americans, whether slave or free, were not, and could never become, citizens of the United States. While the ruling in the Dred Scott case was nullified by the ratification of the 14th Amendment, Taney's name continues to be regarded as a symbol of racism and oppression. In 2018, a focus group was convened to discuss whether to remove Taney's name from the courtroom mural. In response to that discussion, the District Court and General Services Administration agreed to paint over Taney's name in a reversible manner and replace it with the name Marshall to represent former Supreme Court justices John Marshall (the longest-serving chief justice, 1801-1835) and Thurgood Marshall (the first African American justice, 1967-1991).

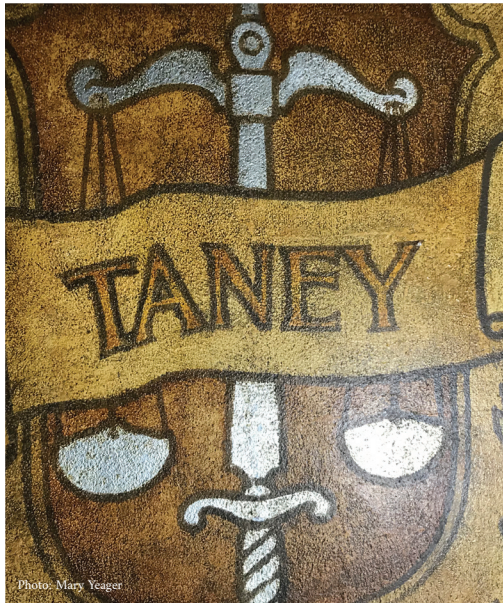


Photo: Mary Yeager



Photos: Radius Media



# MURALS - “MAIL, TRANSPORTATION and DELIVERY”

In 1935, Grant Christian, a 24-year old graduate of the Herron School of Art in Indianapolis, entered a competition run by the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP), a Depression-era program, to produce murals for the Court House. Typically, TRAP would review dozens of submissions for such competitions before making an award. In this instance, the folks at TRAP remembered Mr. Christian's submissions from previous competitions. Recognizing that the unusual layout of the mural space would require a special talent, Olin Dows, the director of TRAP, canceled the competition and made the award directly to Mr. Christian.

Located in the southwest corner of the third floor, the panels on the south wall are collectively titled “Mail, Transportation and Delivery.” From left to right, the individual panels are titled, “The Capital's First Railroad,” “Transportation and Communication,” and “Industry and Legislation.” The panels progress chronologically, from left to right.

Of note is the airplane featured in the center panel, representing the height of mail delivery technology in the 1930s. To the left of the airplane, the night sky is visible; to the right, the sun rises, creating a visual metaphor for the postal service's progression.



## *Mural Movers and Shakers*

A young girl in a red coat holds a letter addressed to Mr. Olin Dows, Washington, D.C. Perhaps this is a thank you note to Mr. Dows, the man who awarded the contract to Grant Christian. Coincidentally, Mr. Christian can be seen standing above and behind the little girl, wearing a brown suit and glasses.

The right panel shows Indiana Governor Paul V. McNutt (holding document) and Indianapolis Mayor John W. Kern (behind the Governor) who were both in office when Mr. Christian painted the murals. The Indiana State House dome can be seen at the upper right of this panel.





## MURALS - “EARLY & PRESENT DAY”

The murals at the northwest and northeast corners are titled “Early and Present Day Indianapolis Life.” The northeast murals depict progressive stages in the history of Indianapolis development from the frontier to the beginnings of urban life. From left to right, the individual panels are titled, “Marion County Pioneers,” “Clearing and Building,” and “Backwoods Indianapolis.”

The development of Indianapolis from prairie and swampland to state capital took place rapidly, and to illustrate the passage of time, the artist painted the same man into all three panels. In the panel to the left, the man kneels in the foreground (note the old-fashioned fur cap on his head). In the second panel, he is one of two figures seen working with tools (note the old-fashioned clothing and same fur cap on his head). In the final panel, he has aged somewhat. He sits on a barrel at the front of the panel. His hair has greyed, but he still wears the same old-fashioned clothing. His fur cap sits in his lap.



# MURALS -

## “CULTURE & EDUCATION”

## “SAFETY PATROL”

The murals in the northwest corner of the vestibule are panels titled, from left to right, “Culture and Education” and “Safety Patrol.” In “Culture and Education,” children gather with their teacher and play at the park. The building featured in the background is the Central Library, which stands just a few blocks north of the Court House. “Safety Patrol” depicts the work of a school crossing guard, police officer, and firefighter.

Grant Christian, “Culture & Education” and “Safety Patrol,” Fine Arts Collection, U.S. General Services Administration, Photos: Radius Media







## MURALS - “TO THOSE WHO SERVED”

The panel depicts patriotism and the sacrifices of those who served in war. At the time the murals were painted in 1935, the largest war in recent memory was World War I. Thus, themes from the “Great War,” as it was then called, are present through the panel. In the upper left, the Indiana War Memorial, located just north of the Court House, is depicted. Below it, to the right, women tend the graves of fallen soldiers, while poppies grow in a nearby field (a reference to the poem “In Flanders Fields”). On the horizon, men emerge from the trenches, while a plane breaks through the clouds.

At the bottom of the mural, an old man and boy watch a parade of soldiers. The old man appears to be a Civil War veteran. The boy wears a sailor suit and salutes the American flag. Representatives of the three branches of the armed forces that existed at the time – Army, Navy, and Marine Corps – march past. Together, these figures represent the past, present, and future of the United States Armed Forces.

Grant Christian, “To Those Who Served,” Fine Arts Collection, U.S. General Services Administration, Photos: Radius Media

### *Honoring the Allied Powers*

The World War I army veteran depicted in the panel wears three distinct medals. The medals that he wears are, from left to right, the Distinguished Service Cross (USA), the Croix de Guerre (France), and the Distinguished Service Order (Great Britain). Each of these medals were awarded during World War I for acts of bravery or heroism during combat. Christian likely used them in the mural to represent the three primary allies during the war.

The soldier’s uniform shows a rainbow emblem on his sleeve and helmet, indicating that he served in the famed Rainbow Brigade, also known as the 42nd Infantry Division, of the U.S. Army. The 42nd Division was activated in August 1917, just four months after the U.S. entered the war. It was among the first American divisions to join the battle on the Western Front. The men of the Rainbow Brigade fought in four major operations, including the Second Battle of the Marne and the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. In 264 days of combat, the division had 2,058 men killed in action and over 12,500 wounded. The soldier in the mural panel appears to have been wounded: he is missing his left hand.





# EAGERTON MURALS

In 2010, the Historical Society of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana commissioned murals for the southeast corner of the third floor, down the hall from Grant Christian's Depression-era paintings. In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Christian murals, the Historical Society held an open competition for Indiana artists to submit their ideas. In the end, Herron School of Art Professor Emeritus Robert Eagerton's design was selected. Using a combination of photography, painting, and drawing, Mr. Eagerton's murals focus on the role of the court as well as the nature, industry, and technology that is found throughout the Southern District of Indiana.

The main panels above and around the stairwell door capture the courthouses in the four divisions of the Southern District. From

left to right, the divisions are New Albany, Evansville, Indianapolis, and Terre Haute. Note that Terre Haute features two buildings – the old Post Office and Court House that is now home to Indiana State University's business school, and the new replacement building that opened in 2009. The text on the panels below the courthouse images comes from the court's original Order Book and features the original oath that attorneys took when becoming members of the District of Indiana's bar (left side). The text on the right is the original order establishing the court on March 3, 1817.

Directly across from the main panels, on either side of the elevator lobby entrance, are panels capturing seasonal images from around the Southern District. One panel features images and scenes captured during the fall and winter, including the changing colors of autumn, birds flying south, and snowy days. In a second panel, signs of spring and summer have emerged. Birds return to Indiana and signs of new life abound.





JUSTICE  
INTEGRITY  
SERVICE



TO PROTECT THE FEDERAL COURTS  
AND ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE OPERATION  
OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM



## United States Marshals Service

The United States Marshals Service plays a crucial role in the protection of judges and enforcement of court orders and warrants. A deputy marshal's badge is the focus of this panel. The background is a satellite image of the United States, representing the Marshals Service's nationwide jurisdiction. Each element of the panel has a special meaning. The blue rectangle at the top of the panel represents justice. The brown rectangle represents the agency's vast territorial jurisdiction. The red rectangle represents deputies who have died in the line of duty since 1789. Thirteen stars represent the original 13 U.S. Marshals.

## Immigration & Naturalization

Federal judges are authorized to administer the Oath of Allegiance to new citizens of the United States. The panel includes the full text of the Oath of Allegiance, a powerful and moving statement requiring naturalized citizens to renounce all prior allegiances, swear complete loyalty to the United States, and take up the responsibilities of citizenship. The oath is superimposed over a painting of the globe. Above the globe, three figures take the oath. At the bottom of the panel, the butterfly and crane represent other living things that migrate to Indiana.

## SCULPTURES & EXTERIOR FRIEZES

The four statues at the Ohio Street entrances to the Court House were sculpted by John Massey Rhind and installed in 1908. They are named “Industry,” “Agriculture,” “Literature,” and “Justice.” The sculptures are carved in limestone and mounted upon granite plinths. “Industry,” shown here, is personified as a neoclassical female figure holding a T-square and seated next to an anvil. John Massey Rhind (1860-1936), born in Edinburgh, Scotland, was a prolific creator of public monuments, fountains, and architectural sculpture. After studying at the Royal Scottish Academy, he came to America in 1889. He received the gold medal at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, along with numerous commissions for federal and municipal buildings.

In 1939, Herron School of Art instructor David K. Rubins carved the limestone spandrels and keystones over the driveway entrance arches on the 1938 North Addition. He carved them in place. Mr. Rubins is also known for creating the statue of Young Abe Lincoln, which sits on the Indiana State House lawn, and the bronze cherub which graces the old L.S. Ayres & Co. clock at the corner of Meridian and Washington Streets every Christmas.



*Top: David K. Rubins, Carved Limestone Spandrels and Keystones*

*Bottom: John Massey Rhind, “Industry,”*

*Fine Arts Collection, U.S. General Services Administration*

*Photos: Shawn Spence*



*The building's green roof.*

Photo: David Sundberg



## THE MODERN COURT HOUSE

Despite its historic appearance, the Court House continues to serve the needs of the modern court and federal agencies who call the building home. The General Services Administration (GSA), an agency of the United States government that manages and preserves government buildings, provides day-to-day upkeep and maintenance. Starting in 1992, GSA began a \$9 million restoration of many of the building's original details. An additional \$70 million renovation occurred from 2010 until 2012.

While maintaining the historic character of the building, GSA has balanced the need to provide modern services and technology to the space. Of interest is the building's green roof, visible from the third floor. A stormwater recovery system provides water for select building functions, including flushing toilets.

Additionally, GSA's Historic Preservation Officers and Fine Arts Officers ensure that historic art and architecture in the Court House are preserved. Across the country, GSA maintains a Fine Arts Collection comprising artworks dating from the 1850s to the present day. Their collection includes approximately 1,000 large-scale murals, sculptures, and other site-specific artworks that are installed permanently in federal buildings nationwide, as well as portable artworks on loan to museums across the country.



*An exterior statue is power washed.*

Photo: McKay Lodge Inc.



*System maintenance is performed by a GSA contractor.*

Photo: David Sundberg



# VISIT *the* COURT HOUSE

## Guided Tours

The Clerk's Office of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana offers free guided tours by appointment. Tours focus on the building's history and architecture, along with the function of the judiciary, and last approximately one hour.

## Field Trips

Teachers, are you looking for a destination for your next class field trip? Bring students to the Court House for a memorable outing. Tour our historic building and participate in engaging activities designed to increase students' knowledge of the federal courts. Visits begin with a short orientation, followed by a combination of building tour and activity. Our field trips meet Indiana Department of Education standards in social studies and language arts, and they are open to all grade levels.

## Schedule Your Trip

To get started planning your trip, contact court staff using the information below:

**Email:** [tours@insd.uscourts.gov](mailto:tours@insd.uscourts.gov)

**Phone:** (317) 229-3700





# FIELD TRIP ACTIVITIES

The court offers field trip options for elementary, middle, and high school student groups. All field trip options are customizable.



## Elementary School

Popular options include:

### *Design a Federal Court House*

Following a building tour, students will draw building plans for a new courthouse. Students will consider what needs might be most important based on what they learned about federal court during the tour.

### *Objects & Images of Federal Court*

Students examine objects and images related to federal court and work together to determine the purpose of each object.

## Middle & High School

Popular options include:

### *Finding a Fair & Impartial Jury*

Students learn about jury service and then participate in a jury selection simulation.

### *Observe Court*

Watch a courtroom proceeding in action! Please note this option is subject to availability and group size. It may be necessary to substitute a different activity.

## All Grade Levels

Popular options include:

### *Scripted Mock Trial*

Students role play judge, attorneys, witnesses, and jury in this fun simulation of a federal court proceeding. Trial topics vary by age and student interests. Available for 4th grade and up.

### *Observe a Naturalization Ceremony*

Learn about the naturalization process and what it takes to become a U.S. citizen. Students will witness a ceremony and learn the power behind the words spoken in the Oath of Allegiance. A short discussion will follow the ceremony.

For more details and a complete list of options by grade level, please visit our website at:

[www.insd.uscourts.gov/tours-and-field-trips](http://www.insd.uscourts.gov/tours-and-field-trips)

The United States Court House is owned and managed by the United States General Services Administration. The Court House is located in downtown Indianapolis, one block north of Monument Circle in the block bounded by Meridian, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York Streets.

A valid, government-issued photo identification is required to enter the building.

Please note that no weapons, cameras, recording devices, or liquids may be brought into the building. Photography, video recording, and audio recording are not permitted in the building. Free guided tours of the Court House are available. Please call, write, or email for an appointment.

Membership in the Historical Society of the U.S. District Court is also available. Please visit [www.insd.uscourts.gov](http://www.insd.uscourts.gov) for more information.

## COURT HOUSE TOURS

United States Court House  
46 East Ohio Street, Room 105  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Telephone 317:229-3700  
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