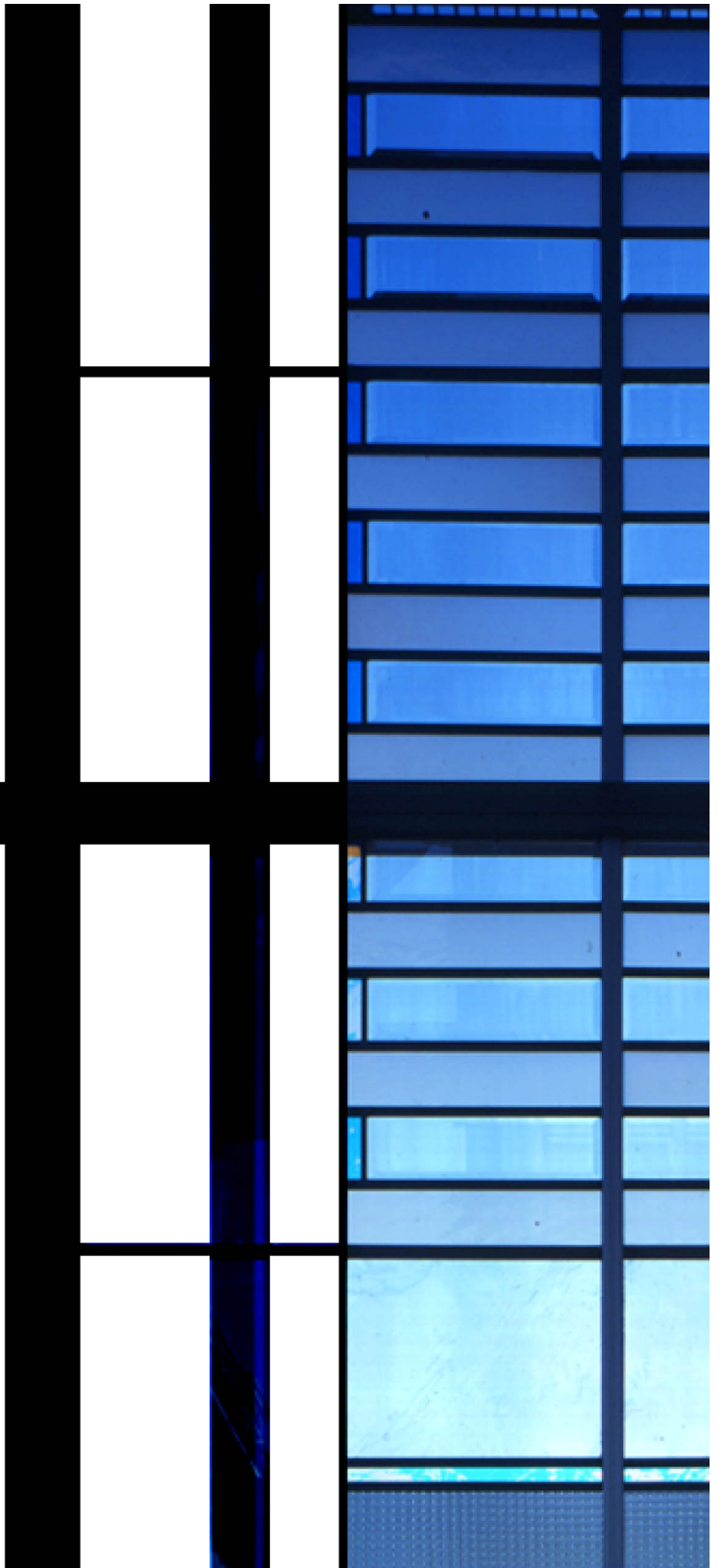


# UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Erie, Pennsylvania



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Erie, Pennsylvania

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and the Design Excellence Program



**Monuments are a reflection of what a culture holds dear. This courthouse, as such a monument, proclaims the fundamental American belief in the majesty of the law.**

Richard L. Nygaard  
Circuit Judge, U.S. Court  
of Appeals for the Third Circuit

## CIVIC REVIVAL

Art, architecture, and historic preservation come together in a noble resolution at the United States Courthouse in Erie, Pennsylvania. Intensive historic restoration intertwined with a bold thread of modernism have created a vibrant revival of the federal presence in the heart of Erie's civic realm.

Comprising four buildings, the courthouse is a microcosm of the city's proud heritage as a thriving port on Lake Erie and of its optimism about the future. Three historic buildings anchor the complex: the Erie Public Library, an 1899 Beaux-Arts structure designed by the Pittsburgh firm of Alden & Harlow that is rich with public artworks; the Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, built in 1937 in the spare classicism of the New Deal-era; and the Isaac Baker and Son building, constructed in 1946 in the sleek Art Moderne style for a clothing store. Woven into this historic architectural fabric is a contemporary courthouse annex and lobby structure that connect the buildings into a cohesive ensemble.

The complex is located across from Perry Square between South Park Row, State Street, Seventh Street, and French Street. Two

smaller blocks were joined to form a single block that provides a classic public setting in downtown Erie. The complex is surrounded by the City Municipal Building, the Erie County Courthouse, Gannon University, and a major corporate headquarters, forming a civic center that is intended to stimulate future downtown development.

The library building, with its richly ornamented exterior of Pompeiian red brick and terra cotta entablature, occupies the eastern end of the site. One of the early public buildings in Erie, its construction was funded by a \$150,000 bond issue from the Erie School District. On the northwestern side of the site stands the solid limestone New Deal-era Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, with its straightforward lines and softly mottled gray surfaces surrounding tall metal-sash windows. On the southwestern corner is the rehabilitated shell of the clothing store, an outstanding example of commercial Art Moderne architecture with its curving stone facade holding glass block windows.

A new building fills in the middle of the site and extends along the southern edge,

weaving together these disparate structures visually and programmatically to create a new whole. The new building is a sympathetic foil to its forebears. With a quiet palette of mostly traditional materials wrought in a modernist vocabulary—a steel-and-glass curtain wall, buff-colored brick, limestone trim, and a granite base—the insertion amplifies the beauty of the older structures while expressing its own identity as a building of the early 21st century.

To protect the historic significance of the existing architecture, all of the proposed design changes to the block came under the intense scrutiny of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Erie County Historical Society, and the U.S. General Services Administration’s Design Excellence peer review, along with examination by the federal judges, tenants, and municipal officials. The final result is a design synthesis made possible through federal, state, and local cooperation.

Preserving the historic buildings and sensitively weaving them together with a contemporary structure has maintained and expanded the visual variety and layering

of the streetscape. By providing an organic chronology of the block as revealed in the varied facades, it is at once familiar and refreshing. In traditional fashion, most of the block’s street edges divide clearly into a base, a middle, and a top. Masonry patterns, gentle reveals, and the rhythm of fenestration all engage the pedestrian, creating expressions of openness even as the complex satisfies modern security needs. It is urban design at its best; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Hand in hand with the distinguished building renovations and additions was an imperative to revive artistic treasures that had aged with time. The materials and craft of the interiors, in particular the wealth of original paintings integral to the library building, have all been painstakingly conserved, secured, and, in some urgent instances, thoughtfully replaced by like elements. Moreover, the installation of new artwork promotes a continuity of civic spirit that will endure for generations to come.

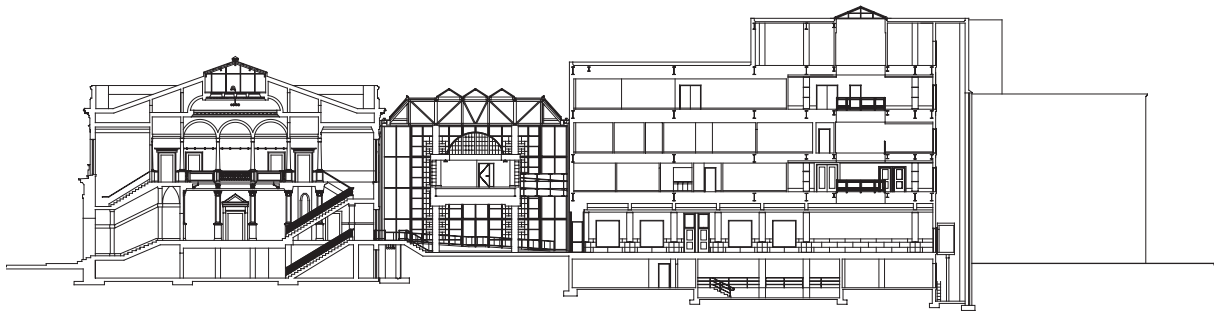








**North Elevation**



**North Section**



**South Elevation**



**South Section**

## A FINE ART LEGACY

### Historic Artwork at the Erie Public Library

The Erie Public Library was conceived as an educational center and a museum, and was home to the administrative offices of the School District. Its rotunda balcony doubled as an exhibition space for paintings, and an art gallery was situated on the second floor. The building served as home to the Art Club of Erie and the Erie Public Museum. Today these institutions continue as the Erie Art Museum and the Erie County Historical Society. The library embodied a vision of literature, art, and education as vital to civic life and progress.<sup>1</sup>

Designed by the architectural firm of Alden & Harlow of Pittsburgh, the library was completed in 1899. The architects also designed the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and many Carnegie libraries in Pennsylvania. They had worked with the artist Elmer E. Garnsey on the Carnegie Institute, and again in Erie, where Garnsey decorated the ceilings.<sup>2</sup> The decorative painting surrounding the rotunda is attributed to Henry Meixner, a scenic painter employed by the decorative painting firm of Crossman and Sturdy of Chicago.

On the first floor, painted demilune transoms depict the official seals of the School District and the City of Erie, the Great Seal of the United States, and Pennsylvania's commonwealth seal and motto.

Flanking the rotunda's grand staircase, niches hold busts of the 19th-century writer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and the statesman Benjamin Franklin. Small statues of the Greek philosopher Aristotle and the Greek playwright Sophocles adorn niches on the stairway's landing. At the second floor, the tympana of the arches facing the rotunda are painted with flora and ribbon motifs, and a decorative frieze around the rotunda wall is inscribed with the names of famous writers entwined with vine patterns. Above all, on each side of the curved ceiling supporting a laylight, are allegorical murals representing *Literature*, *Poetry*, *Science* and *Art*.

**Henry Meixner** (died 1911) was a scenic painter in New York City and Chicago. Meixner also designed scenery for the Chicago Civic Opera. His last work was for the 1910 production of the opera *Salome*, starring the well-known singer Mary Garden. Shortly thereafter, Meixner's health failed, and he passed away at a sanitarium in Milwaukee.

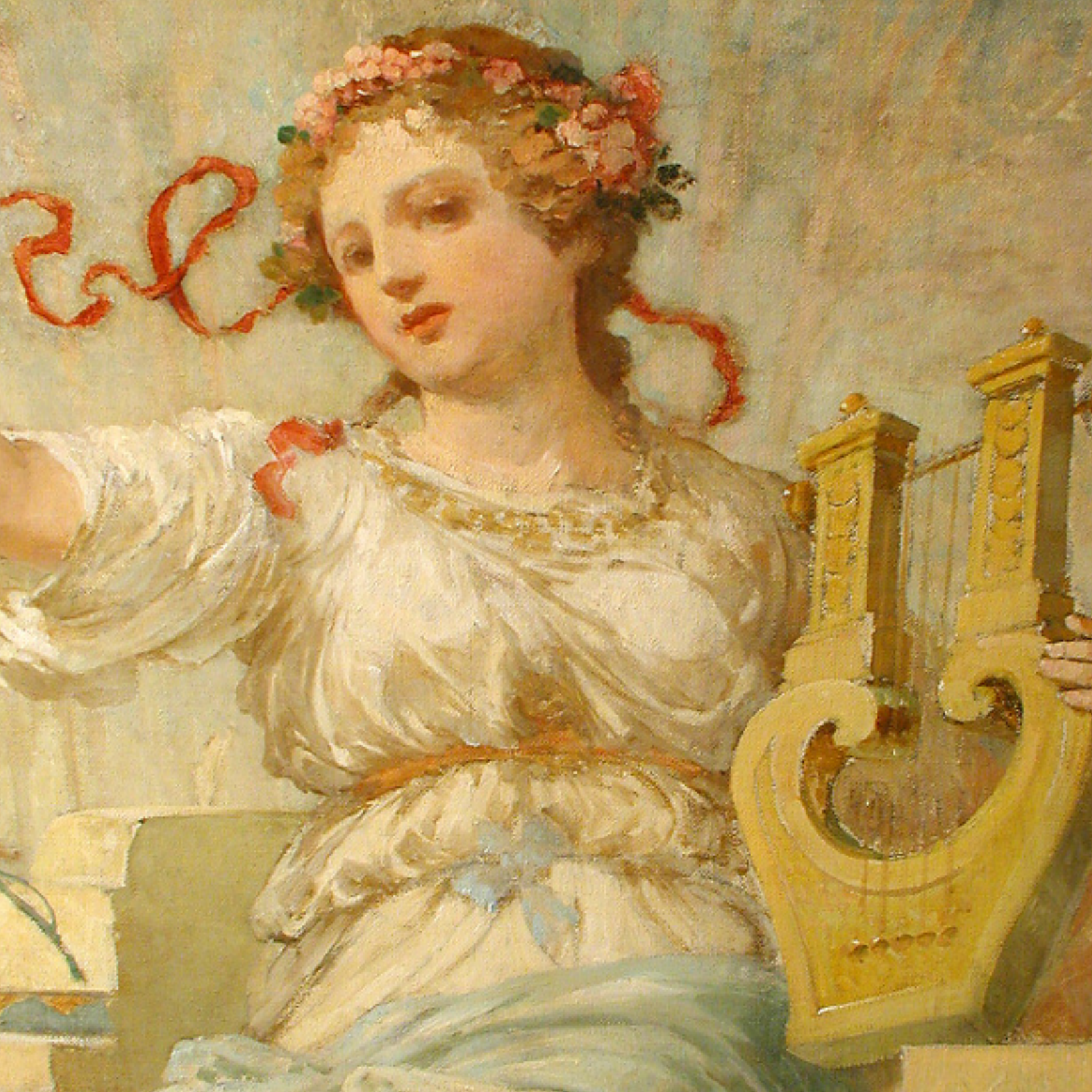






**Elmer Ellsworth Garnsey** (1862 - 1946) was born in Holmdel, New Jersey, and studied at the Cooper Union Art School and the Art Students League in New York. He was a member of the American Academy in Rome, the American Institute of Architects, the Century Association, and the American Federation of Artists. His work received medals at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and at the Paris Exposition in 1900. His high professional recognition led to a career with his son Julian of decorative mural painting for many of the major architectural monuments of his day. His commissions include the Boston Public Library, the St. Louis Public Library, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the New York Stock Exchange, and the State Capitols in St. Paul, Minnesota; Des Moines, Iowa; and Madison, Wisconsin. Garnsey also completed work for the Library of Congress, Yale University, the Richardson Memorial Library in St. Louis, and the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House at Bowling Green in New York City.







## THE ECHO

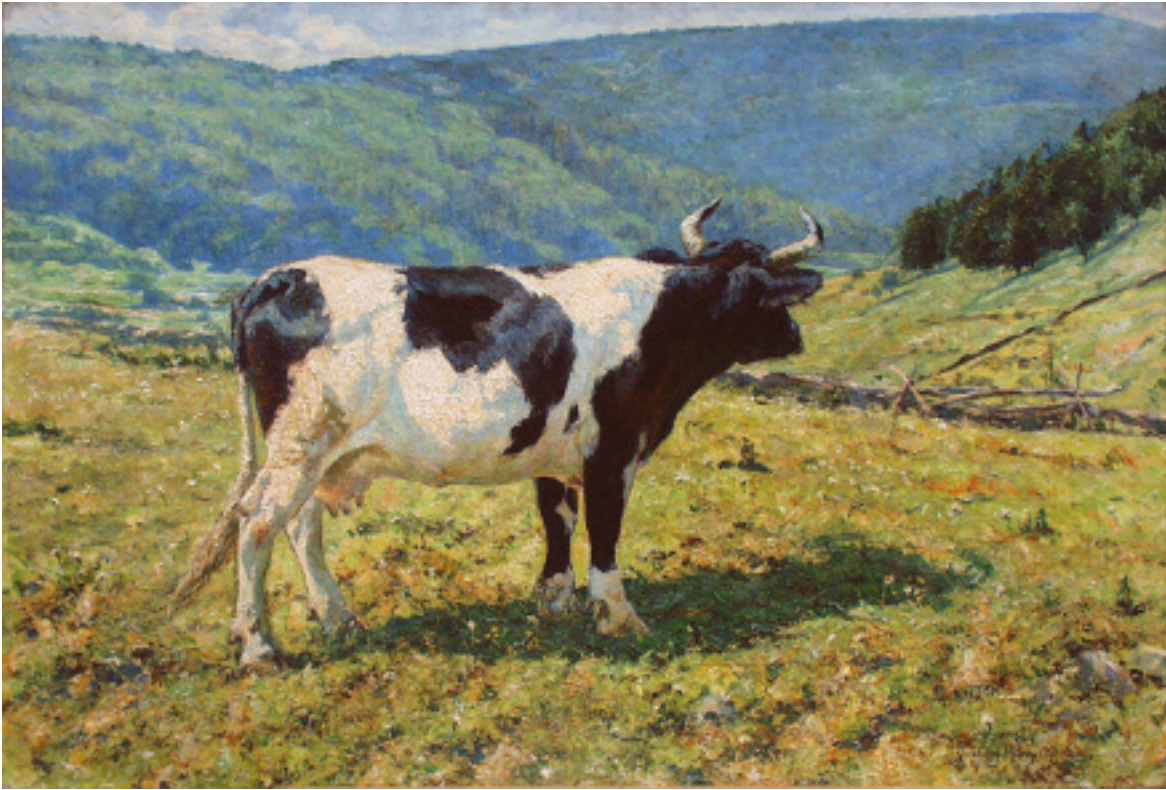
BY GUSTAVE HENRY MOSLER, ca. 1900

OIL ON CANVAS, 51 1/4" x 75 3/4"

Gustave Henry Mosler painted *The Echo* in the Adirondack Mountains of New York at the turn of the nineteenth century. The painting represents a cow in a landscape setting. In 1901, it was exhibited as part of a traveling exhibit in Erie, where a local resident, Mrs. Carlotta Moser, recognized it. Mrs. Moser had observed the artist painting the cow during the previous summer in the Adirondacks, where he brought his "model" out of the barn each morning and tied her to a tree while he painted throughout the day. Mrs. Moser persuaded the Art Club of Erie to sponsor the purchase of the painting for the Erie Public Library as a work that would appeal to children and encourage their interest in art. In 1903, the school children of Erie contributed \$800 towards the purchase of the painting. Since money could not be collected in public schools, collection points were established at candy stores nearest each school.

**Gustave Henry Mosler** (1875-1906) was the son and pupil of the American artist Henry Mosler. He also studied with Leon Bonnat at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He exhibited at the Paris Salon, receiving a medal for his painting *De Profundis* in 1891 at the age of 16. Mosler is best known for his landscapes and paintings of cattle. Today, his portrait of Governor J. W. Stewart resides in the State House in Montpelier, Vermont, and his painting *Empty Cradle* is in the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio.





*Courtesy Erie County Public Library*

## THE SILENT WOODS

BY ROSWELL MORSE SHURTLEFF, ca. 1900

OIL ON CANVAS, 47 1/2" x 71 1/2"

Mrs. Benjamin Whitman presented *The Silent Woods* to the Erie Public Library in 1910 in memory of her late husband. Benjamin Whitman was the editor of the Erie Gazette and a member of the Library Board of Trustees. The landscape painting was exhibited at the fifth Annual Exhibition of the Erie Art Club in 1902. Mr. Whitman had been instrumental in the library's creation and stated at its dedication:

*"This is the people's building—not one for a favored few only. It was built by the people, for the use of the people—of all creeds, colors, races, and conditions. There must be no distinctions here, no prejudices, no preferences."*



*Roswell Morse Shurtleff in the Adirondacks, 1874 (central figure with beard). Winslow Homer is seen in profile with the pipe.*

**Roswell Morse Shurtleff** (1838-1915) was born in Rindge, New Hampshire, and attended Dartmouth College, the Lowell Institute in Boston, and the National Academy of Design in New York City. He began his career as an architect's assistant, an engraver and lithographer, and as a magazine illustrator. In 1861, he volunteered for service in the Civil War and was the first federal officer to be wounded. He spent eight months in a southern prison, after which he returned to New York and Hartford and worked as an illustrator and painter. He was most noted for his paintings of animals and then of forest interiors. He spent his summers painting his signature works in the Adirondack Mountains at Keene Valley, New York. He and John Lee Fitch successfully encouraged other artists to join them, including Winslow Homer, J. Alden Weir, James Smillie, and Alexander Wyant.



*Courtesy Erie County Public Library*



**Federal Building and Courthouse:  
New Deal Artworks**

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the "New Deal" of President Franklin D. Roosevelt offered federal relief and jobs to people who could not find work. Federal art and architecture were no exception. The Treasury Department, which supervised federal architecture, also administered the art program. The program had the goal of securing the best art that the country was capable of producing for the Government.<sup>3</sup> It was the first program to coordinate painting, sculpture, and architecture, and to appoint artists by a system of competitive selection. Artists were encouraged to visit local communities to become acquainted with the folklore, history, industry, architecture, and landscape of the region. The major New Deal art programs include:

- The Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), December 1933 - June 1934. The first federal employment agency for artists, PWAP became the model for the subsequent art projects even though it awarded commissions on a non-competitive basis.

- The Section of Fine Arts (the Section), 1934-43. It awarded commissions for murals and sculpture in the design and planning of new public buildings. Artists were selected by anonymous competitions.

- The Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP), 1935-38. It allowed for the placement of works of art in already existing federal buildings. It had as a goal "the decoration of federal buildings by unemployed artists and sculptors." Artists were selected based upon sketches submitted for other competitions, good work previously accomplished for the art program, or recommendations of local advisors.

- The Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP), 1935-43. WPA/FAP was the largest, and best-known project. The budget of the WPA/FAP has been estimated to be about \$35 million (the equivalent of \$473 million today).

These New Deal initiatives produced the first major body of American public art and represent the nation's greatest period of federal art patronage.

## AMERICAN YOUTH

BY HENRY KREIS, ca. 1939

ALUMINUM, EACH 4' - 6" x 18" x 12"

The two sculptures of *American Youth* act as sentinels to the main courtrooms of the 1937 Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse. The aluminum material and minimal, monumental forms reflect the stripped classicist, or "Art Deco," style of the building, which was designed by Rudolph Stanley Brown. Kreis was selected for the Erie commission based upon his design entry for the Federal Trade Commission Building in Washington, DC. He selected the subject matter, a young man with his faithful dog and a young woman, as universal representations of the American scene and as harbingers of the future. Their diminutive size complements the scale and simplicity of the lobby space.



**Henry Kreis** (1899-1963) was born in Essen, Germany, and began his career at age 14 as an apprentice to a local stone carver. After World War I, Kreis received an appointment to the State School of Applied Art in Munich. He immigrated to the United States in 1923, first living in New York City where he attended the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design at night, while carving architectural details during the day. In 1933, he moved to Connecticut and began teaching at the Hartford Art School. Kreis won several Section of Painting and Sculpture commissions, including the U.S. Post Office in the Bronx, New York; two large marble sculptures for the Stamford, Connecticut Housing Project; and 12 relief panels for the Department of Justice in Washington, DC. In addition, he completed a medal and a half-dollar coin celebrating Connecticut's Tercentenary in 1935, and a half-dollar for the Connecticut city of Bridgeport.





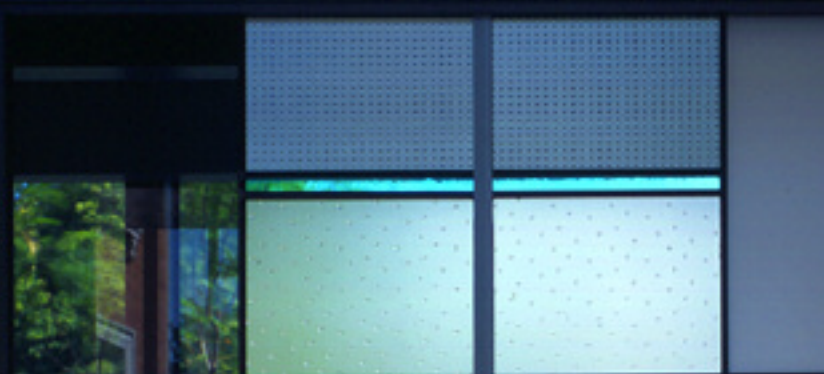
**DESIGN EXCELLENCE  
THROUGH CONSERVATION**

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

Art in federal buildings is an American tradition that is proudly continued by the General Services Administration. GSA's Fine Arts Collection is one of the country's largest and most diverse federal collections, consisting of more than 17,000 paintings, sculptures, architectural or environmental works of art, and graphics. These works date from the 1850s, and are located in federal buildings and nonfederal repositories across the United States. From monumental public works of art commissioned in the Beaux-Arts style, to installed and portable works of art commissioned under the federal patronage of the New Deal Art Projects of the 1930s and 1940s, and today through works of art commissioned under the Art in Architecture Program, these works of art represent the history, culture, and ideals of our country. Under the stewardship of GSA's Fine Arts Program, they are cataloged, conserved, and maintained for future generations as a reminder of the important tradition of individual creative expression.









**The restoration of the historic library building  
reaffirms its role as an elegant and  
'noble lesson in architecture'<sup>4</sup> open to all.**

Michele M. Ridge  
Director, Erie County Library System  
1979 - 1995

## HISTORIC TRANSITIONS

The design of the United States Courthouse in Erie highlights the dramatic evolution of the American courthouse as a building type. While the courtroom itself retains much the same physical appearance of the one-room courthouses of the early 19th century, albeit embedded with 21st-century technology, the courthouse as a whole has undergone vast changes in response to modern needs for security and efficiency.

The administrative and support spaces around courtrooms have multiplied significantly, and functional requirements have become more complex. This is particularly true of the courthouse's circulation spaces. The buildings must now provide discrete, secure corridors for court personnel, prisoners, and the public. In addition, the government now designs and constructs its buildings with a greater awareness of human productivity and environmental factors. At the same time a courthouse must communicate the dignity, integrity, and stability that have defined the nation's judicial system since its founding.

On the interior, the Erie courthouse resounds with the civic-minded design imperatives that define the exterior. The new structural configuration of the block relocates the main entrance to the courthouse to streamline security procedures around the perimeter. Visitors enter the complex on the north side of the block, slightly east of the center, through the new connector volume located between the old library and the historic Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse. This structure recedes slightly from the street edge in a landscaped courtyard. A tall, concrete-and-steel pylon displaying the Great Seal of the United States marks the entrance. The glass curtain wall of the connector gives a clear, visible reading of the entrance lobby in contrast to the heavy masonry facades of the flanking buildings.

Upon entering the building, visitors are immediately engaged in a dialogue between the complex's old and new architecture where the avowedly modern connector volume adjoins the handsome, light-brown brick walls of the historic library and the limestone skin of the older courthouse. Across the south façade of the lobby, extending nearly

from the floor to the ceiling, are tall, narrow panels of art glass with colored geometric patterns by the artist David Wilson.

Daylight pours into the lobby through the two-story curtain wall. The airy lobby is interrupted in the center by the suspended, wood-clad structure of the law library, which is carried on concrete piers to the second-floor level. Inverted corners relieve the bulk of the library's structure, which is clad in wood panels, designed to complement the glass artwork. Exposed trusswork lining the inner perimeter of the roof adds to the lobby's distinction as a contemporary design. The lobby floor is composed of grids of pale-gray terrazzo tile accented by white stripes and dark gray squares.

From the lobby, visitors proceed in either of two directions. To the east, they may ascend a formal terrazzo stair, trimmed with handrails of brushed stainless steel and glass safety panels, and pass through the terra cotta door surround to the library building's rotunda.

In the rotunda, the cumulative glory of the building reveals itself. The grand, two-and-a-half-story rotunda is a product of a golden age in American civic architecture. Diffused natural light softly illuminates the space through a square grid of coffered laylights at the roof level. The rotunda serves as the primary organizing element for the the building, connecting visitors to the other major rooms around it through heavy wood door openings.

From the marble floor of the rotunda, square Corinthian columns and pilasters rise from marble bases to support the second-floor perimeter galleries. These galleries are defined by a mahogany balustrade and smaller Corinthian columns, upon which arches emerge to support a bracketed frieze beneath dome-vaulted ceilings that join the edges of the laylights. A marble staircase encased in a richly stained wood stringer with turned wood balusters and molded railings rises from the center of the west side of the room. The stair leads to a landing, where it divides in a large bay with windows that overlook the new entrance lobby.

The space is wondrous for its wealth of decorative and fine art. Original busts and sculptures have been restored to the niches that flank the grand stairway. Two paintings, *The Echo* by Gustave Henry Mosler and *The Silent Woods* by Roswell Morse Shurtleff, have been graciously loaned by the Erie County Public Library and installed in their original locations on the second floor art gallery. Period paint colors have returned to the walls and to the recessed column and pilaster panels. Reproduction copper sconces have been installed on the lower columns, whose capitals, along with the egg-and-dart moldings of the intermediate cornice and frieze brackets, have been re-leafed in gold. Replacement wainscot across some areas closely matches the bluish-green original.

Fine, early 19th-century paintings cover the interior walls. As visitors look up toward the laylights, they find intricate stenciled patterns on the first-floor cornice, on the semicircular pediments above doors, on the intrados and tympana of the second-floor arcade, and across the second-floor perimeter frieze. At the summit of the room, across the domed ceilings, are the allegorical murals *Literature*, *Poetry*, *Science and Art*.

New functions have been incorporated into the library's floors. The basement level houses regional offices for federal agencies. At the north end of the first floor off the Main Hall is a suite of offices for a United States Senator and to the south is the clerk's office of the United States Bankruptcy Court. A new Bankruptcy courtroom is on the second floor with adjacent judge's chambers. The design of the courtroom summons a sense of judicial gravity with its wood furnishings and details, including stile-and-rail wainscoting, window frames with half-round transom lights, and a coffered ceiling.

Opposite the Bankruptcy courtroom, in the northeast corner of the second floor, are chambers for a U.S. Court of Appeals judge. It is an arresting space with a muscular, arched and coffered ceiling with skylights, a wood and marble mantel, built-in bookcases, and an ornate Palladian window framing a view of Perry Square.

The law library, which appears to float above the main entrance lobby, is accessed by ramps on the northeast and southwest sides of the second floor. Suspended over the law library is an arched, translucent ceiling that recalls the coffered vaults of the

historic library. The ceiling admits softened daylight into the workspace and gives the judges privacy as they work.

Across the main entrance lobby from the historic library, the new annex joins and expands the old Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in a nearly seamless gesture. Indiana limestone interior walls closely match the Indiana limestone of the original courthouse. From the main lobby, visitors proceed through a limestone archway and into a long public gallery, which is defined by seven pairs of large wood-sheathed columns with black marble bases. This gallery leads to the primary District court spaces. The District clerk's office and office for pretrial and probation services occupy the north side. The jury assembly room and a sally port are on the south. At the end of the gallery are the main public elevators, where the corridor opens to the original courthouse lobby and a stair that circulates up to the courtrooms.

There are three courtrooms and chambers on the second floor. Two of the courtrooms, which are located along the north wall, are original and have been restored. One is a Magistrate courtroom and the other is a District courtroom. Each courtroom is







entered through a set of swinging, leather-covered doors with brass nailhead trim. The layout is traditional with a tiered bench area for the judge and the court staff along the center of the wall directly opposite the entrance. The Magistrate courtroom serves as the Special Proceedings courtroom. Its carved wood soffits, finished in a honey color, aluminum panels, and decorative moldings have been returned to their original condition.

The third courtroom, in the annex structure, is new. Like the Bankruptcy courtroom in the library building, the space is traditional with cherry-finished paneling extending three-quarters high up the walls and a coffered ceiling highlighted with nine brass chandeliers. Natural light enters the courtroom through generous windows and an extended curtain wall bay behind the judge's bench.

Public spaces on the second floor surround a three-story atrium that extends to the top of the building. The third and fourth floors contain the U.S. Attorney's office and other federal functions. They are served by a glass-enclosed fire stair and are expressed in a modern idiom to distinguish them

from the surrounding historic buildings. In the central atrium space, which is enclosed with brushed-stainless steel railings and safety glass panels with minimalist hardware, skylight monitors activate and unify the space down to the first floor, furnishing rays of sunlight toward the end of the public gallery and allowing a comprehensive reading of the public interiors that so deftly integrate yesterday's courthouse with its modern counterpart.

## ART IN ARCHITECTURE

Art has always been an important feature of great architecture. For the new building of the United States Courthouse in Erie, Pennsylvania, David Wilson was commissioned to create a glass artwork.

### **Architectural Glass**

*Located in the Main Entrance Lobby*

David Wilson

David Wilson's two glass windows, each measuring 35 feet high and 7 feet 9 inches wide, recall monumental columns. The works use recurring geometric motifs composed of transparent, translucent, and opaque leaded glass. To create tactile and dynamic surfaces, he employed a variety of textures, including stippled, mirrored, and blue dichroic glass. As sunlight passes through the dichroic glass, the colors change, introducing a range of additional hues and producing variegated reflections on the terrazzo floor of the entrance lobby.

Praised for his collaborative work with architects, Wilson adapts traditional stained-glass methods and technology to produce contemporary designs for both secular and religious buildings. His clear, simple forms emphasize the importance of visual harmony

in the built environment. Rather than making images, Wilson enhances a particular space by exploring the interface of glass art and continually changing light. Through his selection of various types, textures, and colors of glass, he manipulates the light entering a building and shapes the viewer's experience of an architectural space.

### **Art in Architecture Program**

GSA's Art in Architecture Program commissions American artists, working in close consultation with the lead design architect, to create artwork that is appropriate for the diverse uses and architectural vocabularies of federal buildings. These permanent installations of contemporary art for the nation's civic buildings afford unique opportunities for promoting the integration of art and architecture and facilitate a meaningful cultural dialogue between the American people and their government. A panel comprised of an art professional from GSA's National Register of Peer Professionals, an art professional from the city or region, the project's lead design architect, and individuals who represent the federal client, the community, and GSA provides guidance in selecting the best artist for each project.



## GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE COURTHOUSE

The United States Courthouse in Erie Pennsylvania, was completed in 2004. It serves the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. The 135,000-square-foot facility is comprised of three historic buildings—the 1899 Erie Public Library and the 1937 Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, both of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the 1946 Isaac Baker and Son Clothing Store building, which is eligible for listing—plus a new annex and connecting lobby structure measuring 60,781 square feet (5,646 square meters). The courthouse is located across from Perry Square between South Park Row, State Street, 7th Street, and French Street in downtown Erie.

The 1.5 acre site held a courthouse, shops, and houses built in the late 19th century until they were demolished for the 1937 Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse and the 1946 Baker's Building. Archeological excavations prior to the recent construction turned up approximately 20,000 artifacts, such as axe heads, musket balls, bottles, and pottery, that will be displayed in the lobby of the new courthouse annex within the complex.

Formal financial planning for the building began in fiscal year 1997, following several years of discussions between local and federal officials. Congress authorized \$3.3 million for the project, and the Erie School District, which owned the 1896 library, sold it to the federal government for one dollar. Final funding in the amount of \$30.7 million was authorized by Congress in fiscal year 2002.

The courthouse contains four courtrooms—two District courtrooms, one Magistrate courtroom that also serves as a Special Proceedings courtroom, and one Bankruptcy courtroom. Each courtroom has adjacent judge's chambers, and there are chambers for one U.S. Court of Appeals judge in the library building. There is also space for a fifth courtroom to be inserted on the fourth floor of the courthouse annex. The layout of both the old and new courtrooms is traditional, with the judge's bench on center opposite the entrance. Gallery benches flank a central aisle behind a railing, and the well of the courtroom contains tables for plaintiffs, defendants, and their legal counsel.

Consolidated within the courthouse are several federal offices including those of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and the U.S. Attorney. The building also houses pretrial and probation services, Internal Revenue Service offices, and offices for a U.S. Senator. In addition, a new post office in the Baker's Building storefront replaces one vacated in the 1937 Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse. The basement level holds 12 secure parking spaces

New technologies bring these historic facilities in line with demands of the modern era. Courtrooms have the technical capacity to use computers during trial, video conferencing, and high-speed data connections. All mechanical systems and services are maintained within the envelope of the complex. Energy conservation strategies have been incorporated into both the building envelope and the mechanical systems.



**Location**

Downtown Erie, between South Park Row, State Street, Seventh Street, and French Street.

**Size**

135,000 Gross Square Feet (New Construction Measures 60,781 Square Feet)  
Three to Six Floors,  
including Basement Floor

**Time Frame**

Design Awarded: March 1997  
Concept Approved: January 1998  
Design Completed: June 1998  
Construction Started: March 2002  
Final Occupancy: October 2004

**Major Building Components**

U.S. Courts: 59, 611 Square Feet  
Tenant Offices: 30,195 Square Feet

**Parking**

12 Spaces Below Grade

**Foundation**

**Library:** Spread Footings  
**Federal Building:** Spread Footings  
**Baker's Building:** Spread Footings  
**Connector and Annex:** Concrete Caissons and Grade Beams

**Structure**

**Library:** Masonry  
**Federal Building:** Steel  
**Baker's Building:** Steel  
**Connector:** Poured Concrete and Steel  
**Annex:** Steel

**Mechanical**

Central plant with gas-fired boilers, central cooling tower for chilled water, seven new and two refurbished elevators.

**Exterior Walls**

**Library:** Restored Pompeian brick with pink granite and terra cotta trim.  
**Federal Building:** Restored Indiana limestone with black granite trim and buff brick.  
**Baker's Building:** Buff brick with limestone trim.  
**Connector:** Glazed aluminum curtain wall.  
**Annex:** Indiana limestone and buff brick with black granite trim.

### **Public Area Interior Finishes**

**Library: Rotunda**—Restored white marble floors with serpentine wainscot, Honduran mahogany paneling, restored murals and painted plaster with decorative stenciling.

**New courtroom**—Red oak trim with fabric acoustical panels.

**Office areas**—Restored oak trim, plaster walls, carpet.

**Federal Building:** Restored terra cotta wainscot, painted plaster, oak trim, ceramic tile floor.

**Baker's Building:** Plaster walls, built-in casework, VCT flooring

**Connector:** Glazed aluminum curtain wall, inlaid wood on shared library exterior, ceramic tile floor.

**Annex: First Floor Lobby**—Granite wainscot, oak paneling, plaster, terrazzo tile floor.

**District Court**—Cherry paneling, drywall, carpet tile floor.





**BIOGRAPHIES: THE ARCHITECTS, ARTIST,  
AND CONSERVATOR**

The design and restoration of the United States Courthouse in Erie, Pennsylvania, was a joint venture of DPK&A Architects of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Kingsland Scott Bauer Associates of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**DPK&A Architects, LLP**

DPK&A Architects is a firm of architects, restoration architects, and architectural conservators based in Philadelphia. In addition to new design work, the firm's specialties include historic restoration, adaptive reuse, and planning. Dan Kopple founded the firm in 1984, bringing his experience in major design and planning projects. Carl Doebley joined the firm in 1991, after working with DPK&A for many years as a restoration consultant. Doebley added to the firm his experience in restoration, adaptive reuse, and materials conservation. Major projects completed by the firm include the renovation of Amtrak's 30th Street Station in Philadelphia, Terminals B and C at Philadelphia International Airport, the reconstruction of Central Synagogue in New York City (as consulting restoration architects) and the restoration of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Savannah, Georgia.

**Kingsland Scott Bauer Associates**

Kingsland Scott Bauer Associates is an architectural firm specializing in the design of information technology offices and adaptive reuse. KSBA began in Pittsburgh in 1984 as a generalist practice. Over time the firm has focused on information technology spaces, specifically customer contact centers, helping clients to measure productivity in their staff and work flow. The firm designed its own offices as a creative reuse of a late-19th century undertaker's stable, and it became one of the first buildings to receive LEED sustainability certification. The firm has completed church renovations such as the St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Cathedral, Munhall, Pennsylvania; Aspinwall Presbyterian Church, Aspinwall, Pennsylvania; and Mt. Iraneus Chapel, West Clarksville, New York.

**David Wilson**

A native of the United Kingdom, Wilson graduated from Ashville College in Harrogate and the fine arts program at Middlesborough College of Art, both in Yorkshire, England. He completed post-graduate studies in stained glass, mural painting, and sculpture at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London. In 1963, he moved to New York City to work for a large stained-glass studio and subsequently established his own studio outside the city in 1978. Wilson has created work for numerous private residences, corporations, religious institutions, and civic organizations throughout the United States. Among his commissions are projects for Corning in New York, Loyola College in Baltimore, the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, and another GSA Art in Architecture commission for the Robert C. Byrd United States Courthouse in Charleston, West Virginia.

**Robert Lodge**

Robert Lodge is a principal of McKay Lodge Fine Arts Conservation Laboratory, Inc., in Oberlin, Ohio, which conserved the historic artwork in the U.S. Courthouse in Erie. Founded by Robert Lodge in 1989, McKay Lodge is known nationally for conservation of 19th- and 20th-century art, and American and European paintings from earlier centuries. Their notable conservation projects include: *Expanding Universe Fountain* by Marshall Fredericks; U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC; 97 Audubon Prints, Kentucky Historical Society; *Welcome Monuments* by Giuseppe Moretti, Highland Park, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; murals at the State House, Columbus, Ohio; and numerous other projects for corporate, public, and private institutions.

**THE DESIGN, CONSERVATION, AND  
CONSTRUCTION TEAM**

**Owner**

U.S. General Services Administration  
Regional Office: Philadelphia, PA

**Design Architects (Joint Venture)**

DPK&A Architects  
Philadelphia, PA

Kingsland Scott Bauer Associates  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Artist**

David Wilson  
South New Berlin, NY

**Conservator**

McKay Lodge Fine Arts Conservation  
Laboratory  
Oberlin, OH

**Design Excellence National Peers**

John Milner  
John Milner Architects  
Chadsford, PA

Emmanuel Kelly  
Kelly/Maiello Inc. Architects & Planners  
Philadelphia, PA

Tom Moran  
New Jersey State Council on the Arts  
Trenton, NJ

**Construction Excellence National Peers**

William Calhoun  
Clark Construction Group  
Bethesda, MD

Gerald Anderson  
Anderson Construction Company  
Fort Gains, GA

Joseph Lawton  
DMJM  
Arlington, VA

**General Contractor**

Mascaro Construction  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Construction Quality Manager**

Jacobs Engineering  
Conshohocken, PA

**Structural Engineer**

Keast & Hood  
Philadelphia, PA

**Cost Estimating**

Emanuel B. Gold  
Penn Valley, PA

**Court Consultant**

Moyer Associates  
Northbrook, IL

**Curtain Wall**

Schaal Glass  
Erie, PA

**Electrical**

Keystone Electric Co.  
Erie, PA

**Fire Protection & Life Safety**

William T. Spaeder Co.  
Erie, PA

**Geotechnical/Environmental**

GAI Consultants  
Monroeville, PA

**Landscape Architect**

LaQuatra Bonci Associates Inc.  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Masonry Restoration**

Franco Restoration Corp.  
Brooklyn, NY

**Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing Engineer**

H.F. Lenz Co.  
Johnstown, PA

**Millwork and Doors**

Sterling Contracting & Millwork  
Farmington Hills, MI

**Surveying**

Hill Engineering  
North East, PA

<sup>1</sup> Floyd, Margaret Henderson.  
*Architecture After Richardson:  
Regionalism Before Modernism – Longfellow,  
Alden, & Harlow in Boston & Pittsburgh*,  
University of Chicago Press, April 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Treasury Department Art Program, Henry  
LaFarge, Treasury Department Art Projects, no  
date.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Whitman,  
Erie Public Library Dedication,  
February 16, 1899.

**U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
AND THE DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM**

*Public buildings are part of a nation's legacy. They are symbolic of what Government is about, not just places where public business is conducted.*

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is responsible for providing work environments and all the products and services necessary to make these environments healthy and productive for federal employees and cost-effective for the American taxpayers. As builder for the federal civilian Government and steward of many of our nation's most valued architectural treasures that house federal employees, GSA is committed to preserving and adding to America's architectural and artistic legacy.

GSA established the Design Excellence Program in 1994 to change the course of public architecture in the federal Government. Under this program, administered by the Office of the Chief Architect, GSA has engaged many of the finest architects, designers, engineers, and artists working in America today to design the future landmarks of our nation. Through collaborative partnerships, GSA is implementing the goals of the 1962 Guiding Principles for

Federal Architecture: (1) producing facilities that reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the federal Government, emphasizing designs that embody the finest contemporary and architectural thought; (2) avoiding an official style; and (3) incorporating the work of living American artists in public buildings. In this effort, each building is to be both an individual expression of design excellence and part of a larger body of work representing the best that America's designers and artists can leave to later generations.

To find the best, most creative talent, the Design Excellence Program has simplified the way GSA selects architects and engineers for construction and major renovation projects and opened up opportunities for emerging talent, small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses. The program recognizes and celebrates the creativity and diversity of the American people.

The Design Excellence Program is the recipient of a 2003 National Design Award from the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, and the 2004 Keystone Award from the American Architectural Foundation.

