

UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Orlando, Florida



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CONNECTING THE COURTHOUSE TO THE CITY

The new United States Courthouse in Orlando, Florida, establishes a civic magnet for future urban redevelopment in this tourism-driven city. The 319,000-square-foot building and newly created two-acre park, together with the adjacent 1973 George C. Young U.S. Courthouse and Federal Building, occupy an entire downtown block. This well-ordered complex of buildings and open spaces creates an eight-acre campus for justice that serves as a public amenity for the neighborhood. Expanding and reorienting the existing courthouse, the precinct integrates the federal presence into the city by linking the two sides of a downtown divided by a freeway.

The site of the new courthouse, known locally as governmental plaza, occupies a highly visible, critical location within downtown Orlando. It is positioned between the city's business district to the east and a poorer residential neighborhood to the west and, as a civic precinct, serves as an important transitional point between these two different areas. The parcel for the new building is bounded by North Hughey Avenue and Interstate 4 to the east, Central Boulevard to the south, Division Street to

the west, and the Young courthouse and West Washington Street to the north. Especially challenging is the presence of the elevated highway, which forms a formidable barrier between the site and the rest of downtown.

Key to the design of the courthouse was respecting the urban street grid and reorienting the federal complex away from the freeway. The new courthouse, therefore, presents its main public face to Central Boulevard, Orlando's primary east-west street, which extends under the interstate. Buffering this six-story structure from the highway is a two-level parking garage.

Design inspiration for the courthouse, in part, came from Orlando's legacy of postwar public buildings. Among those structures are glass and concrete landmarks such as the public library, county services building, city hall, and the existing Young courthouse. In keeping with this late 20th-century context, the new courthouse is modernist in its planar architecture of concrete, glass, and metal, yet clearly expressive of today. Sunlight-filled courtrooms, jury rooms, offices, and

public spaces both symbolize the clear light of reason represented by our laws and humanize the setting for visitors, judges, and staff.

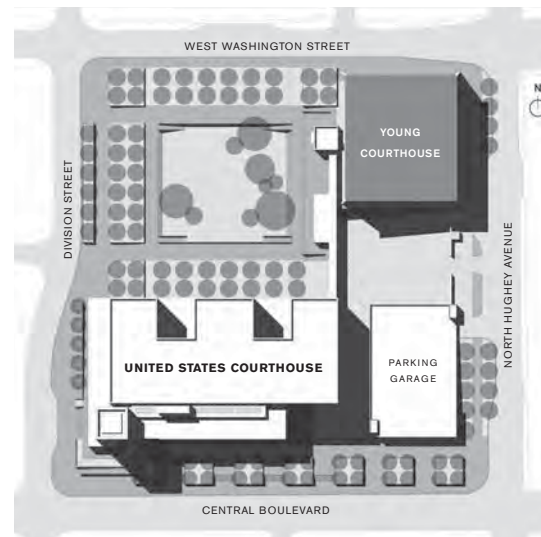
Along Central Boulevard, the southern façade indicates the civic purpose of the courthouse with a large window wall covered by an aluminum screen. This metallic shield marks the location of the building's grand public interior, a five-story atrium, while serving the practical purpose of filtering sunlight. In front of the façade, a raised, landscaped terrace, lined with live oak trees in planters, provides both a secure perimeter and shady canopy between the sidewalk and the building. This green edge, set 80 feet in front of the building, also serves to revive the boulevard and positively announce the federal presence in this neglected part of the city.

At the corner of Central Boulevard and Division Street, the public entrance to the courthouse is clearly announced in a precast-concrete-clad tower. This vertical element is pulled away from the metal-paneled and precast-concrete building mass with doors set into the base and

square openings lightening its top. With its visual references to Orlando's 1941 Federal Building and Post Office, it creates an identifiable civic marker for the courthouse that is visible from a distance.

Along Division Street, the metal-clad lower stories are pushed out at an angle to the taller building mass and distinguished further by a pronounced cornice and clerestory windows. This smaller section of the building responds to the pedestrian scale of the neighborhood and connectedness to the adjacent public park. Along the park, the north-facing rear of the building is segmented into three separate wings divided by open-air courtyards to allow ample daylight to reach the interior. Tall bands of glass and smaller windows within these precast-concrete bays indicate the location of courtrooms, judges' chambers, and offices for support staff. The vertical expression of these wings deliberately contrasts with the more horizontal fenestration of the Young courthouse, yet complements the heavier, Brutalist architecture of that older concrete building.

Between the new and old courthouses, a tree-lined public park designed by landscape architect Dan Kiley forms the heart of the federal precinct at the interior of the urban block. Both buildings, now linked by a glassy connector, share access to the park and buffer its grassy open space from the highway. Pylons mark the entrances to the park and its walkways, providing access from West Washington Street to the north and Division Street to the west. Live oaks and cypress lining the sides of the park are planted in raised beds to form a secure perimeter. The concrete pavement between these terraces and the park is also elevated with steps leading down into a sunken lawn, which is dotted with three oaks and a magnolia tree.





LIGHTING THE PATH TOWARD JUSTICE

From the main entrance, the public proceeds into the light-filtering shaft of the precast-concrete tower, past a wood-framed security area and into the atrium extending behind the southern façade. This light-filled, 92-foot-high space, accented by shimmering stained glass windows and substantial limestone walls, feels like a modernist, secular interpretation of a cathedral. It serves to orient visitors to both the civic purpose of the courthouse and their own civic responsibilities as jurors.

To the left of the 39-foot-wide atrium, offices for District Clerk Operations, Probation, and Pretrial Services are located behind a bank of elevators sheathed in glowing translucent glass panels. Behind these publicly accessible areas are administrative offices for the courts and U.S. Marshals. Extending along the right side of the atrium from the entrance, limestone-clad seating and niches holding panels of colorfully patterned stained glass, created by the late New York artist Al Held, form a base to the upper window wall. This large expanse of glass, screened by aluminum louvers, is the main source of lighting in the soaring space.

Straight ahead, at the eastern end of the atrium, a jury assembly room clad in limestone is clearly distinguished as a two-story pavilion within the larger space. Just to the right of this room, a grand staircase leads to lobby terraces on the second and third floors that provide access to balconies in front of the courtrooms. A dramatic, stained glass window, also by Held and rendered in vibrant, abstract imagery, at the top of the stairs provides a focal point within the atrium and terminus for the public procession. During morning hours, sunlight shining through the glass casts colorful patterns on the terrazzo floor.

Visitors entering the ground-floor jury assembly room are treated to a light-filled space with a connection to the outdoors. At the eastern end of the room, doors open to a walled garden—also designed by Dan Kiley—planted with shade trees and furnished with metal benches. This exterior space is only accessible to jurors, not the general public and staff, as a place to take a break and enjoy some fresh air. Landscape images of native Florida settings by photographer Clyde Butcher extend the sense of the outdoors inside the room.





As architects, we have the skills and responsibility to express the dignity and stability of the judicial process, establish a balance between openness and security, and positively contribute to the urban and regional setting with inventiveness and renewed energy.

Andrea Leers
Architect



LAYERING ACCESS TO COURTROOMS AND CHAMBERS

Guiding the architectural design inside the new courthouse is a simple organization of functions: a zone of public spaces facing Central Boulevard; judges' chambers on the park side; and eight District, six Magistrate, and one Special Proceedings courtrooms in between. On levels four, five and six, two pairs of courtrooms are located on each floor, and each pair shares a secure core of spaces for jurors, lawyers, and defendants placed in between them. On level three, a Special Proceedings courtroom, plus one District and one Magistrate courtroom are similarly arranged. Also housed on this floor is the Circuit Satellite Library, a book-lined space at the eastern end.

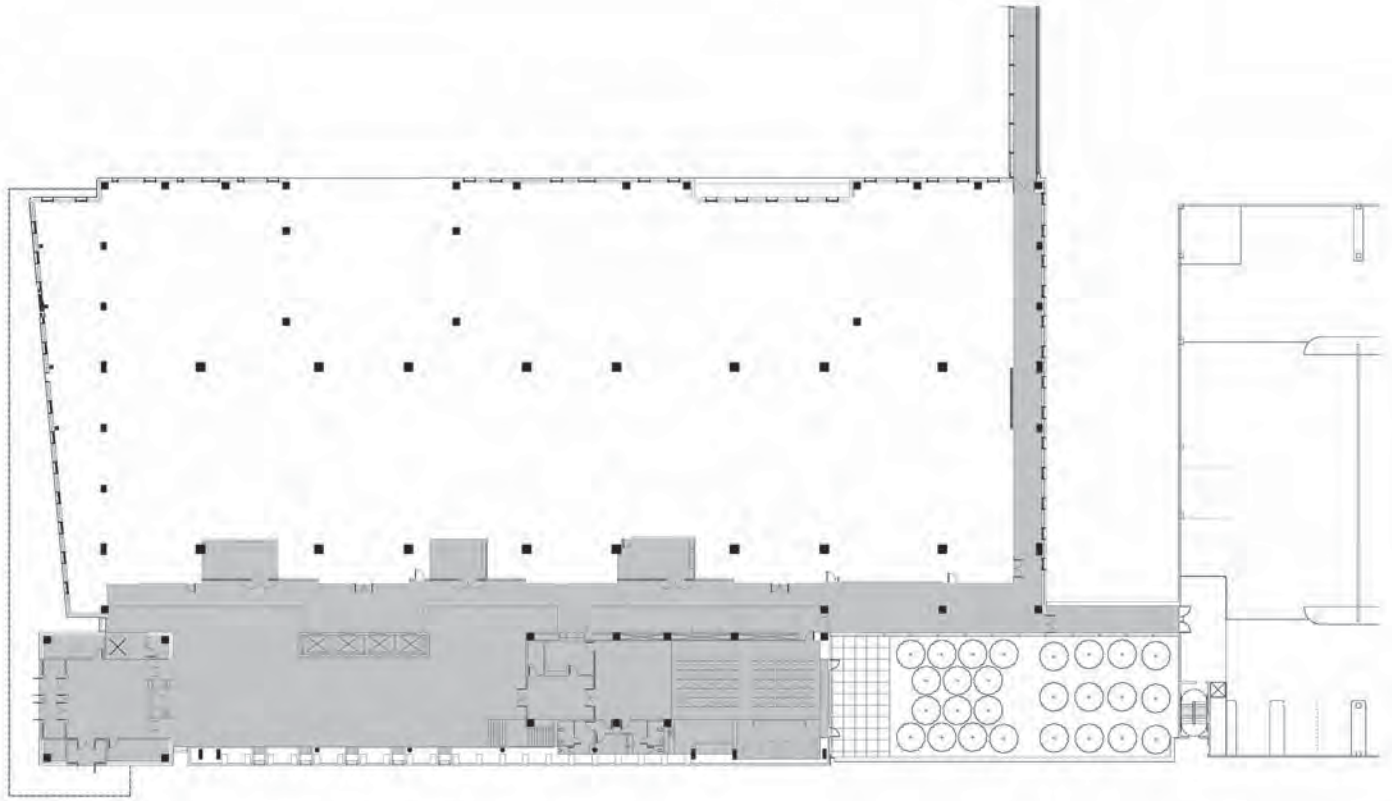
The 185,000-square-foot Young courthouse will be renovated to provide space for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and the U.S. Attorney, plus an assortment of smaller federal agencies. The connection between these courtrooms and offices and the new courthouse has already been anticipated with an enclosed, glazed corridor now stretching between the two buildings. Overlooking the park, this link incorporates a cafe and allows passage from the new parking garage to the older courthouse.

For security, pathways for the public and judges are completely separate by being located on opposite ends of the courtrooms. The public reaches the courtrooms from balconies overlooking the south-facing atrium, while the judges enter them from a hallway adjacent to their chambers on the north side of the building. This private corridor provides direct access into 16 chamber suites, which are divided among three bays overlooking terraces. On level three, judges enjoy access to the outdoor terraces. Positioning the courtrooms next to these light terraces and glass-lined judges' corridor allows sunlight to filter into the courtrooms. Daylight streams through windows in the hallway to reach each courtroom through clerestories placed high above and behind the judges' benches. On the top floor, direct daylight enters the courtrooms through clerestories above the bench.

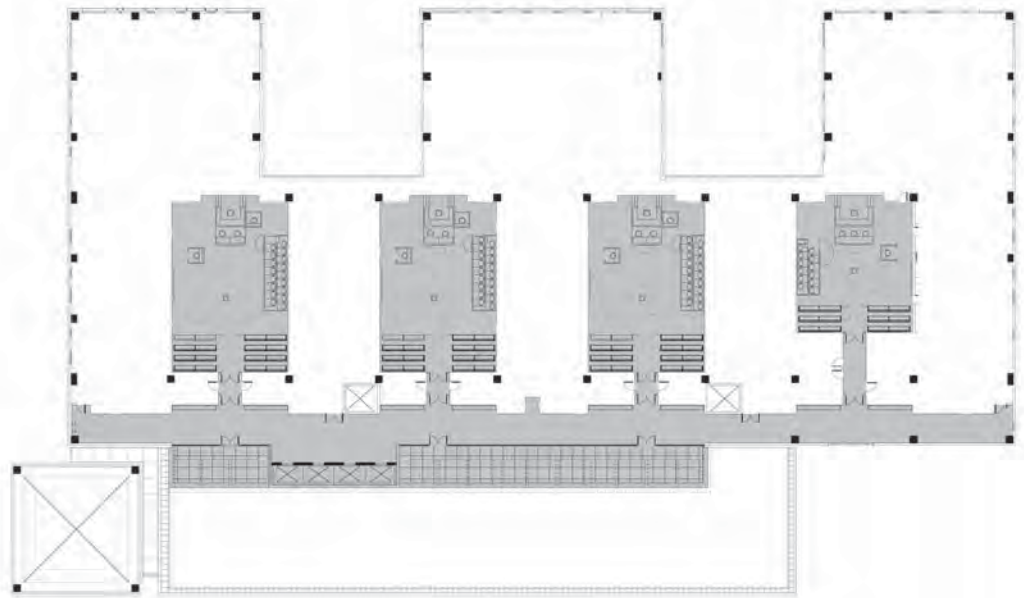
While clean-lined and simple, the courtrooms hint at more traditional settings in their cherry-paneled walls, tables and benches, and shellstone panels behind the judges' benches. Each interior is similarly designed with only the carpeting varied by color to differentiate the courtrooms.



Longitudinal Section Through Atrium



First Floor



Sixth Floor









Within the history of courthouse architecture, this building is an unparalleled achievement, combining modern expressions of design, materials, art, and landscaping to provide a significant public place for the dispensing of justice.

Honorable Patricia C. Fawcett,
Chief Judge, U.S. District Court
for the Middle District of Florida



ART IN ARCHITECTURE

Art has always been an important feature of great architecture. The major civic artwork for the new United States Courthouse in Orlando, Florida, is art glass windows by Al Held. Additional artwork includes photographs by Clyde Butcher.

Untitled

Inlaid laminated art glass
with mouth blown art glass

One window is 20 feet x 50 feet

Located at the top of the grand staircase

Five windows are 4 feet x 11 feet

Located in the atrium

Al Held

Al Held was internationally recognized for his immense abstract paintings. In the latter part of his career, he was often asked if he used a computer program to create the extraordinarily complex patterns and forms, but quite to the contrary—he sketched, developed the idea in watercolor, and then realized the final work in large-scale acrylic on canvas. The completed paintings are pristine with crisp-edged facets of pigment showing no mark of the brush, but their generation was entirely a product of the hand.

When approached about the Orlando courthouse project, Held declared that he wanted to try to work in glass. He began to explore the vertical format demanded by the large window in the atrium (his usual compositions were horizontal) and soon produced a number of beautiful watercolors. Rather than pick one, he offered GSA the opportunity to realize six works: the large window at the top of the staircase and five smaller ones along the length of the atrium. The resulting ensemble permeates the courthouse with color, energy, and intense focus—rare in a contemporary building.

The colossal window sets the tone.

It consists of a lively interplay of swirling abstract forms—dominated by a ribbon of piercing blue in the top half of the composition—in combination with more geometric forms below that anchor the movement. Each of the windows is unique, but all share common characteristics, many of which are rooted in the principles of Baroque painting. Taking advantage of the verticality of the windows, Held designed brightly colored circular shapes that drift above grid-like structures and background

patterns in a spiraling motion that leads the eye upward through the composition, imparting an overall feeling of ascendancy, appropriate for a setting where justice is sought and administered. The compositions are crowded with geometric figures, cropped forms, and shifts in perspective.

The windows consist of colored art glass, much of it mouth-blown, laminated between layers of clear glass. The transparency of the picture plane and the reflection of colored light within the atrium probe questions of surface, boundaries, and space that are inherent in two-dimensional art and that challenged the artist for decades. With the windows in Orlando courthouse, Held broke through the illusionary space of the picture plane to fill real space with color.

Three Sisters, Florida Trail, and Estero Island

Black and white photographs
36 x 46 inches, 36 x 46 inches, 46 x 60 inches
Located in the Jury Assembly Room

Clyde Butcher

Three large-scale, black and white photographs by Clyde Butcher have been installed in the jury assembly room. Each

provides a view of nature that seems to be from another time or place, far removed from the congestion Orlando. Yet, each records a location that can be found in the region served by the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida. An isolated beach with rain ruffled sand, a path through the woods receding toward an ovoid of light, and a swamp with its still water reflecting the trees and sky all serve to remind us of nature's serenity.

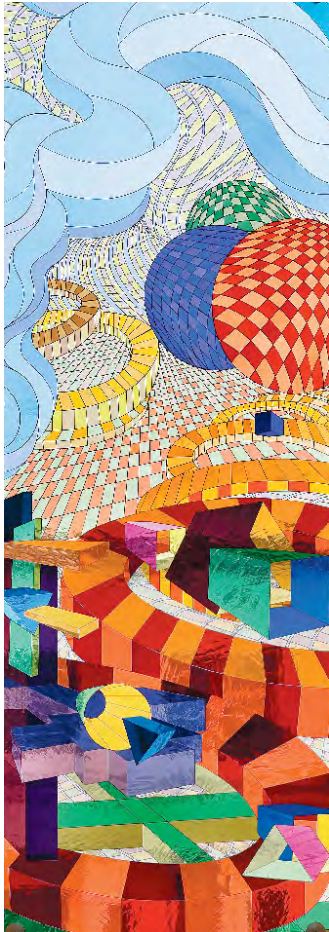
Butcher does not include people or signs of their activity in his photographs. His images record unsullied nature rendered in intense detail. Today, people are accustomed to taking in a scene rapidly, getting a quick overview. These photographs demand attention, and reward with the pleasure of discovering a dense array of incidents that far exceeds what we normally see. Butcher's use of black and white film, rather than color, not only heightens the clarity of the forms and the contrasting light and shadow, but also instills a sense of calm. The beauty of nature, the importance of conservation, and each person's responsibility for preserving the environment for future generations are the artist's subject.

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 to 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 representing the federal client, the community, and GSA provides guidance in selecting the best artists for each project.

Untitled
Five art glass windows
Located in the atrium
Al Held







GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE COURTHOUSE

The new United States Courthouse in Orlando, Florida, occupies an eight-acre site bounded by Central Boulevard to the south, West Washington Street to the north, Division Street to the west, and North Hughey Avenue and Interstate 4 to the east. The new courthouse and its adjacent 180-space parking garage are located to the south of the George C. Young United States Courthouse and Federal Building and connected to that 1973 building by an enclosed pedestrian corridor. In addition to the freestanding, two-level parking garage, the building incorporates 40 subterranean parking spaces for judges and staff.

Both new and existing buildings frame two sides of a newly created two-acre public park on the northern side of the block. This open space is protected by rows of live oak and cypress trees planted in raised beds and concrete pathways with steps leading down into the lawn at its center.

Rising 120 feet from grade, the 319,105-square-foot courthouse is set back from Central Boulevard and protected by an 80-foot-wide, tree-lined, landscaped

security perimeter. It incorporates a public entrance at its southwest corner that leads into a 92-foot-tall and 39-foot-wide atrium. This open public space is flanked by a public elevator bank and a jury assembly room at its eastern end. Behind the elevators on the northern side of the building are offices for the District Clerk, Pretrial Services and Probation. A grand public staircase at the eastern end of the atrium leads to the second and third levels, providing access to the courtrooms from a balcony.

The courthouse has 15 courtrooms, including eight for District judges, six for Magistrate judges, and one Special Proceedings courtroom. Courtroom floors are organized so that 16 judges' chambers are clustered in three separate wings on the north side of the building. The chamber wings are divided by terraces, which, on the third floor, can be accessed from the suites and used for outdoor activities. An east-west corridor separates the chambers from the courtrooms to provide a private route for judges.

Location

An eight-acre parcel in downtown Orlando, Florida

Size

319,105 gross square feet
120 feet/36 meters high
6 floors above grade
1 level below grade

Time Frame

Design Awarded: December 1999
Design Completed: January 2004
Construction Started: June 2004
Dedication: September 2007

Parking

180 spaces in garage
40 spaces in building

Foundation

Cast-in-place concrete

Structure

Cast-in-place concrete/roof steel bar joists

Mechanical

Central chilled water system with electric heat. Outdoor air intakes on roof pre-treat air before being circulated to air-handling units on each floor. Air flows are controlled through VAV boxes located throughout the interior.

Exterior Walls

Precast concrete, metal panels, glass

Public Area Interior Finishes

Atrium and lobbies: terrazzo floors, limestone-veneered walls

Courtrooms: stained cherry wall paneling, drywall, carpeted floors



BIOGRAPHIES: ARCHITECT, ARTISTS, AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Andrea Leers, FAIA, has built a national reputation for award-winning civic and institutional buildings in this country's major cities and university campuses. She began independent practice in 1970 and joined Jane Weinzapfel in 1982 to start Leers Weinzapfel Associates in Boston, MA. In 2007, the practice was honored with the National Firm Award from the American Institute of Architects for its "commitment to the public realm and to the craft of building in dramatically complex projects," in the words of the awards committee.

A national leader in courthouse design, Leers has taught a seminar entitled "The New American Courthouse" at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design since 1992. She has also participated in numerous international conferences on courthouse architecture, including the U.S. Judicial Conference and the National Center for State Courts in Washington, DC. In 1997, she taught at the Federal Judicial Center and, a decade later, gave a series of lectures on the architecture of the American courthouse at the University of Paris, Sorbonne.

Leers received her Bachelors of Arts degree from Wellesley College and Master of Architecture from the Graduate School of Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania, which was then led by celebrated architect Louis I. Kahn. In 1991, she was elected to the American Institute of Architects' College of Fellows.

In addition to her architectural practice, Leers maintains a career teaching at universities in this country and abroad. She is currently Adjunct Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at Harvard University and has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, University of Virginia, Yale University, and the Tokyo Institute of Technology.

Leers is a member of the Board of Overseers of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston, Inc., a trustee of the Boston Foundation for Architecture, and a former board member of the Boston Society of Architects. She is currently a member of the Office of Overseas Buildings Operations Architectural Advisory Board for the U.S. Department of State. Leers has been a GSA national peer since 1996.

Al Held had a long and distinguished career in American art. He, like many of his colleagues in the early 1960's, rejected the emotional energy and gestural surface marks of Abstract Expressionism in favor of a cooler, more austere hard edge abstraction. Over the following decades Held, who died in July 2005, continued to make a significant contribution to the evolution of abstract painting and to the internal dialogue of art. In the late '60s he challenged the flatness of the picture plane and replaced it with complex spaces, multiple points of perspective, and changes of scale. Initially he worked only in black and white but then introduced color. His last works pushed the boundaries of serious painting even further and on a grand scale. It was as though he had taken on the challenge of history painting to create massive scenes with illusions of great depth, complex composition, and moving subject matter, but in contrast to past generations, he used only abstract forms. Yet, even without "a story," these works evoke a sense of poignancy and wonder in the viewer.

Held was born in New York. He studied art at the Art Students League in New York and the Academie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris. He was a professor at Yale University from 1962 to 1980 and was a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. His work is in collections worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the Australian National Gallery in Canberra, the Kunstmuseum in Basel, Switzerland, and the Nationalgalerie in Berlin. Held also completed a number of public commissions, among them, a 450-foot-long work in glass titled *Gravity's Rainbow* for the Ronald Reagan National Airport in Washington, DC, and a previous commission for the GSA Art in Architecture Program in 1977, *Order/Disorder/Ascension/Descension*, two 91-foot-long murals for the Social Security Administration's Mid-Atlantic Program Center in Philadelphia.

Clyde Butcher is one of the country's preeminent nature photographers. Born in Kansas City, MO, in 1942, he moved frequently as a child before eventually settling with his family in California, where he studied architecture at the California Polytechnic University. While still in school, he became interested in photography, inspired in part by an exhibition of works by Ansel Adams. By 1970, Butcher had given up architecture to pursue landscape photography. Moving to Florida in the mid-80s, he explored the remaining wilderness areas in the state and eventually settled on 13 acres in the Big Cypress National Preserve. Surrounded by nature, he became all the more aware of the fragility of the ecosystem. Through his work, he hopes to inspire others to preserve these natural resources.

Butcher shoots only in black and white, which, as he notes, allows him to see design and texture in a way not possible with color. Using large format cameras (his negatives range in size from 4" x 5" to 12" x 20"), he captures extremely detailed images.

Butcher has exhibited his work widely and has been featured in books, films, and documentaries. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Florida Artists Hall of Fame (1998), the Ansel Adams Award from the Sierra Club (2000), and the North American Nature Association Lifetime Achievement Award in Nature Photography (2005).

Daniel Urban Kiley (1912-2004) was a leader of modern American landscape architecture, along with Thomas Church, Lawrence Halprin, and Garrett Eckbo. Kiley's first professional training was an apprenticeship with Warren Manning, an influential Boston landscape designer and believer in naturalistic gardens who was a key figure in the formation of the American Society of Landscape Architects. This experience contributed to the young landscape designer's longstanding interest in plants and his creative selection of materials.

From 1936 to 1938, Kiley attended the landscape architectural program at Harvard University where he first learned of

European modernism. He worked briefly for the National Park Service and the U.S. Public Housing Authority before serving in the U.S. Army. He was assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers in the Office of Strategic Services, where he became design director and helped to shape the courtroom for the war crimes trials at Nuremberg. While in Europe, Kiley visited the French gardens created by Andre Le Notre and others. These formal European landscapes helped shape his aesthetic along with Manning's ecological planning and the picturesque parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Even more influential on his vision were the modern designs developed during the postwar decades, including buildings by prominent American architects such as Eero Saarinen, I.M. Pei, and Louis Kahn.

Eventually, Kiley set up a practice in Vermont and began collaborating with Eero Saarinen on several important projects. In 1947, he was on the winning team with Saarinen for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Competition, known as the St. Louis Arch. Eight years

later, he created the setting around the modern house designed by Saarinen for J. Irwin Miller and his family in Columbus, IN, which is considered the most important postwar garden in the United States. In 1963, he designed the landscape for Saarinen's Dulles airport terminal outside Washington, DC.

In the late 1960s, Kiley teamed with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) to shape geometric gardens for the new Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO; and with architect Kevin Roche, to create the rooftop gardens at the Oakland Museum of California. His work with leading American architects continued in the 1980s and 1990s on such prestigious commissions as the Dallas Museum of Art's sculpture garden; Fountain Place in Dallas, TX; and Independence Mall in Philadelphia, PA. The new public park at the Orlando Federal Courthouse was one of the last projects designed by Kiley, who died in 2004.

The challenge for our time is to define a new generation of courthouses to reflect our dynamic and evolving democracy and its concept of law. To do so we must reinterpret traditional symbols, examining their underlying principles rather than their specific forms.

Andrea Leers
Architect



THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Owner

U.S. General Services Administration
Regional Office: Atlanta, Georgia

Design Architect

Leers Weinzapfel Associates
Boston, Massachusetts

Architect of Record

HLM Design/Heery International
Orlando, Florida

Artists

Al Held
Boiceville, New York

Clyde Butcher Photography
Venice, Florida

Landscape Architect

Office of Dan Kiley
Charlotte, Vermont

GSA Project Team

Michael P. Fifty (Senior Project Manager)
Wylene Bell (Contracting Officer)
Jill Shafer (former Project Manager)
Michelle Price (former Assistant Project Manager)
Stacy Cowles Keefer (former Project Manager)
Linda Lockett (former Contracting Officer)
Jack Walsh (Buildings Manager)
R. Jahmal Overton (Asset Manager)
Donna Lamb (Director, Project Management)
Pam Murphy (Realty Specialist)
William Lau (Contracting Officer's Rep)

Design Excellence National Peers

Deborah K. Dietsch
Washington, DC

Margaret McCurry
Tigerman McCurry Architects
Chicago, IL

Roger Schlunz
Dean, School of Architecture and Planning
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM

Robert Ivy
Editor-in-Chief
Architectural Record
New York, NY

Art in Architecture National Peer

John Wetenhall
Executive Director
The John and Mable Ringling
Museum of Art
Sarasota, FL

Construction Excellence**National Peers**

Gerald Anderson
Anderson Construction Co.
Gainesville, GA

Kenneth M. Grunley
Grunley Construction Co., Inc.
Rockville, MD

John Sebastian
Dick Corporation
Pittsburgh, PA

General Contractor

Hensel Phelps Construction Co.
Orlando, FL

**Civil, Structural, Mechanical
and Electrical Engineering**

HLM Design/
Heery International
Orlando, FL

Fire Protection / Life Safety

HLM Design/
Heery International
Orlando, FL

Security Design

HLM Design/
Heery International
Orlando, FL

Environmental Graphics Design

HLM Design/
Heery International
Orlando, FL

Lighting Design

Lam Partners
Cambridge, MA

Acoustical Engineers

Cavanaugh & Tocci Associates
Sudbury, MA

Geotech / Hazardous Materials**Abatement / Materials Testing /**

Threshold Inspection
Nodarse & Associates
Orlando, FL

Site Survey

Allen & Company
Winter Garden, FL

Blast Engineering

Baker Engineering
San Antonio, TX

Vertical Transportation

CMH & Associates
Dallas, TX

Waterproofing Consultant

Williamson & Associates
Maitland, FL

Woodwork Consultant

Vaughn Woodwork Consultants
North Attleboro, MA

Cost Management

Construction Cost Systems
Altamonte Springs, FL

Audio-visual

Newcomb & Boyd
Atlanta, GA

Courtroom Mockup

RC Stevens Construction
Orlando, FL

Curtain Wall and Exterior**Aluminum Fabrications**

TSG Industries
Valdosta, GA

TriPyramid Structures, Inc.
Westford, MA

Art Fabricator

Architectural Glass Art, Inc.
Louisville, KY

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, the 2004 Keystone Award from the American Architectural Foundation, and a 2007 Collaborative Achievement Award from the American Institute of Architects.



