

KENOSHA COUNTY **COURTROOM** RESTORATION PROJECT

LET EVERY AMERICAN, EVERY LOVER OF LIBERTY, EVERY

Within the historic Kenosha County Courthouse lies a hidden gem: The ornamental Ceremonial Courtroom ceiling, covered over during a 1960s-era remodeling.

Now **you** can be part of the process of bringing it back to light.

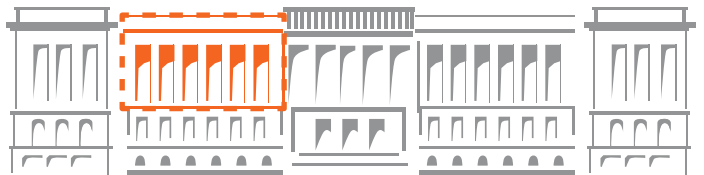
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The Kenosha County Courthouse, opened in 1925, was designed by the architectural firm of Lindl, Lesser & Schutte in the neoclassical style. The Indiana Limestone structure became an important contributor to the Kenosha Civic Center. The building is listed as an individual landmark in the National Register of Historic Places (1982) and as a contributing structure in the Civic Center Historic District (1989). This district, which remains intact, is unique in that it represented various units of government — city, county and federal — executing a unified vision for a town square in the neoclassical style.

The courthouse originally held two grand double-height courtrooms, a municipal court (since subdivided) and a circuit court, now considered the Ceremonial Courtroom. Designed in the Renaissance Revival Style, the courtroom featured a decorative plaster ceiling with inlaid art glass laylights, currently concealed above a dropped ceiling.

The proposed restoration project will involve removal of the suspended ceiling as well as all the ductwork, mechanical, plumbing and electrical work. The new mechanical and fire protection systems will be re-routed to an area above the decorative ceiling. A new electrical lighting system will be installed. The art glass laylight will be restored, with LED backlighting provided above. The original historic ceiling and upper wall finishes will be restored. The courtroom walls will be decoratively painted to replicate the original.

Kenosha County's objective in completing this project is to restore the Ceremonial Courtroom to its former grandeur, preserving this focal point of the building — as it was originally imagined — for future generations.



WHAT IT WAS



All interior finishes original to the building were provided by the William G. Andrews Decorative Co. of Chicago, which completed similar projects at courthouses and state capitol buildings throughout the Midwest. The Ceremonial Courtroom includes two murals by Charles Holloway, a renowned artist of the period who executed large murals for the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago and numerous other, high-profile locations.



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While the Ceremonial Courtroom maintains a stately presence, much of its original ornamentation is now obscured by the drop ceiling. Above that ceiling, however, remains a stark reminder of the room's former grandeur. In the process of installing modern ventilation equipment, great damage was done to the original decorative plaster, but much of it also remains in outstanding shape. Exploratory, micro-restoration work that has been conducted proved that a full restoration is possible — should Kenosha County be able to obtain funding from grants, private donations and other sources.



HOW IT APPEARS TODAY



INVESTIGATORY WORK COMPLETED TO DATE:

- Engineering to relocate HVAC equipment into the attic
- Documentation of damage to original ornamental plaster, painting and stained glass skylight
- Sound and lighting analysis



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A computer-generated 3-D rendering depicts the Ceremonial Courtroom, post-restoration.

A decorative frieze that encircles the room displays a quote from Abraham Lincoln, much of which remains intact:

“Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well-wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others.”

Lincoln delivered this quote as part of his Address Before the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield, Ill., in January 1838. One of his earliest published speeches, it was given when Lincoln was just 28 years old, 23 years before he became president.

WHAT IT CAN BE



The project includes restoration of the art glass skylight, which was covered over with cement but remains otherwise intact. An alternate — depending on the level of funding received for the project — would also return leaded glass to the room's south-facing windows, an original feature of the Courthouse.

For more information, scan the QR code.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Restoring Kenosha County's Ceremonial Courtroom back to its original beauty will not happen without private support. If you're interested in becoming a partner by making a tax-deductible contribution of any amount, please contact the Office of the County Executive at **262-653-2600** or **County.Executive@kenoshacounty.org**.

You or your business/organization can join the Ceremonial Courtroom Wall of Recognition with donations of the following amounts:

\$250,000+

Supreme Court Level

\$25,000-\$249,000

Appeals Court Level

\$5,000-\$24,999

Circuit Court Level

\$500-\$4,999

Municipal Court Level

For more information about this project, please contact Frank Martinelli, Kenosha County Engineering Projects Manager, at 262-857-1863 or Frank.Martinelli@kenoshacounty.org.