



Courthouse Renovation News

Volume 1 - 1987

*The Baltimore City Bar Association commitment to the renovation of Courtroom 400 in honor of the Bicentennial of the Constitution will be inaugurated with a gala Bicentennial Ball in the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse on September 26, 1987. Committee Chairman Joe Pokempner and Ticket Chairman Leonard Cohen have been working with a very impressive committee of Bar members, including Young Lawyers Bob Gonzales and Gail Goldner Green, with the active support of former president Charles Dorsey and current president Sheila Sachs of the Bar Association of Baltimore City. The evening promises to be a memorable and exciting one for the Bar and for the future of the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Building--Room 400 in particular. The Maryland State Bar Association Board of Governors unanimously endorsed the September 26th Bicentennial fund raising effort of the City Bar Association. That effort has also been formally endorsed as an official Maryland Bicentennial project by the Maryland Bicentennial Commission.

*The Monumental City Bar Association through Deputy State's Attorney Stuart Simms, its president, has announced its intention to make its own significant contribution to the restoration effort. The Monumental has also agreed to work with the Baltimore City Bar Association, Courtroom 400 restoration drive event in September.

*The Museum Of Legal History continues its creative exhibits of interesting Baltimore legal history and lore under the leadership of Overseers Judge James Schneider and Phil Sherman, Esquire. There is a continuing need for volunteers to permit greater access to the museum by the public. Many thanks to Museum Docents Justinus Gould and Moses J. Cohen, who, as volunteers, guide hundreds of persons through this impressive Museum.

Do you have anything of historical interest for the Museum? Contact Curators-Overseers Judge Schneider or Phil Sherman.

*Mayor "Du" Burns, Council President Gallagher, Board of Estimates, the City Council and its Budget Committee and chair Tim Murphy have approved a major expenditure of \$150,000 to finance the first major renovation study of the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse in many decades.

This long overdue commitment by the City is of major importance to Judge Kaplan, the Bench and the Foundation as it will provide a professional and comprehensive look at all facets of the restoration-renovation project.

*Foundation President George Solter and Harry Lord, chair of the Finance Committee, and the members of that committee continue to plan financial strategy for an ambitious program of restoration of the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse.

- - -
*Administrative Judge Joseph H. H. Kaplan has announced his plan to reconstruct, in marble, the present dilapidated floor in the Calvert Street lobby. A contract has been awarded to Peter J. Scarpula & Co. This accomplishment, when combined with the beautifully reconstructed skylights (by Rambusch Co. of N.Y.), will totally transform this architecturally significant portion of the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse.

*Many other important beautification-restoration projects have been spearheaded by Judge Kaplan with the support of the Bench, former Mayor William Donald Schaefer, and citizens and government of Baltimore, particularly General Services of the Department of Public Works. These significant improvements include the cleaning of the exterior bronze doors of the Mitchell Building, extensive cleaning of interior floors, woodwork, brass and bronze (which Judge Tom Ward keeps clean with the help of community service probationers), and painting of hallways, chambers and courtrooms in both buildings, replacement of furniture, draperies and carpets, improvements to public restrooms, establishing consistent sign designs, and the placement of attractive brass stanchions, roping and plants.

This Foundation has the special privilege of meeting in the beautifully renovated and decorated Judges' Conference Room in the East Building (interior decorating credit to Mary Widomski, Deputy Administrator).

In the future, look for: new hallway lighting now in the design state (consultants: Spears Votta and Associates and Valley Lighting), and cleaning, pointing and painting of the Mitchell exterior.

- - -
*Portrait restoration continues and co-chairpersons Judges James Schneider and J. C. Byrnes are hopeful that progress will quicken. Representatives of Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore Museum of Art, the Peale Museum and the Maryland Historical Society are assisting. Judge Schneider, in cooperation with the Bar Library, has already accomplished the restoration of the portrait of Martin Luther. It will be on display at the Bicentennial Gala. Four other portraits are "on line."

*A Courthouse publication is planned. It will educate jurors and the visiting public about the judicial system and the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, and publicize the Courthouse Foundation and the Law Museum to make the public more aware of their existence; and hopefully plant seeds for possible contributions of time, money, furnishings or items of historical interest.

- - -
*Administrative Judge Kaplan and Juvenile Judge David Mitchell of the Circuit Court, working with Bar leaders, attorneys and Mayor "Du" Burns developed a significant plan for renovation and upgrading of the juvenile area of the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Building. This area has long been the subject of strong criticism, most recently by President Charles Dorsey of the City Bar Association. Judge Kaplan is confident that those facilities will be eventually upgraded dramatically to reflect the importance of the Juvenile Justice system in the work of the Judiciary in Baltimore City.

- - -
*Thanks to the contributions of Semmes, Bowen and Semmes, the initiative of Judge Kaplan, and the decorating talents of Mary Widomski, Deputy Administrator of the Circuit Court, a beautiful and very comfortable Lawyers' Conference Room is available in the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Building. The Monumental City Bar Association has moved into the previous Lawyers' Conference room.

*Thanks to Nancy Brennan of our Board for her initiative in investigating possible improvements in the interior decoration and arrangement of the Jury Assembly area.

*The Foundation is looking to assist Clerk of the Court Saundra Banks in sprucing up the Marriage Room which all agree should be a place of dignity and beauty. It now is perilously close to being true to its nickname "run-down Reno." Judge Byrnes is working with Mrs. Banks to propose decorative improvements.

*No more suffering from elevator depression. Judge Kaplan, Mayor Burns and the Judges of the Circuit Court have announced a cure--NEW ELEVATORS! It's really happening!

*The Women's Bar Association and friends of the Honorable Shirley Jones (United States District Court and Supreme Bench of Baltimore City, retired) plan to present her portrait to the United States District Court. A copy will be presented to the Circuit Court for Baltimore City.

*Administrative Judge Kaplan and the Bench are optimistic about a conversion of the second floor of "Courthouse East" into five new, spacious and well decorated courtrooms. Judge Kaplan hopes in the future that the entire first floor of Courthouse East will be available for Court use, particularly by the Clerk's Office for easier public access.

*The Baltimore Chapter of the American Institute Of Architects led by Walter Schamau and the Engineering Society Of Baltimore, Inc. led by retired architect Larry Mullen and retired Judge Solomon Baylor have volunteered to work with the Bench, the Foundation and the Bar Association of Baltimore City. The Engineering Society has already submitted a very useful proposal for the renovation of Courtroom 400.

The Judges are actively involved in the restoration process, including Chief Judge Robert I. H. Hammerman, Administrative Judge Kaplan, Senior Associate Judge David Ross and many others who have contributed books, art and furnishings to the Courthouse.

- - -
GIFTS & BEQUESTS: Marc Blum donated a most generous beginning of a capital fund, Judge Solter an historic Supreme Bench photograph, Judge Byrnes a guest register and Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. dedication memorial photographic album to the Museum, and Judge Ross an important collection of books for a law library in Courthouse East. Former Judge Robert Watts has presented a reproduction of an original watercolor of the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse.

The citizens of Baltimore are very grateful to Mrs. Juanita Jackson Mitchell for her generous decision to place the Sunpapers commissioned portrait of her late husband, Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. in the Courthouse.

An unusual donor: Bedroom Window Productions has presented a fine banquet-serving table for use in the Reception Lobby (Calvert Street side). This welcome gift was in gratitude for the courtesy extended them in the production of one of the several movies which utilized the interior of the Courthouse.

- - -
Many thanks to the officers, Board members and committee chairs for their service to the Foundation.

Honorable Solomon Baylor

Marc P. Blum, Esquire
Treasurer

Ms. Nancy Brennan

Honorable John Carroll Byrnes
Secretary, & chair,
Planning Committee

E. Stephen Derby, Esquire Chair, Membership Committee	Charles H. Dorsey, Jr., Esquire
Honorable Frank X. Gallagher	Robert S. Hillman, Esquire
Honorable Joseph H. H. Kaplan Chair, Liaison Committee	Sidney G. Leech, Esquire
Henry R. Lord, Esquire Chair, Finance Committee	J. Michael McWilliams, Esquire
Mr. Lawrence T. Mullen Vice-President	Joseph K. Pokempner, Esquire
H. Morten Rosen, Esquire	Sheila K. Sachs, Esquire
Honorable James F. Schneider Chair, Museum Committee	Honorable George D. Solter President
Mr. Walter Sondheim Chair, Nominations Committee	Kenneth L. Thompson, Esquire
Robert J. Thieblot, Esquire	Honorable Thomas Ward
Martin P. Welch, Esquire Chair, Legal Committee	

(Cover Photo:
Calvert Street
Lobby Skylight)

J. C. Byrnes
Secretary/Editor
The Baltimore Courthouse and
Law Museum Foundation, Inc.
First Annual Report - July 1987

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HELPING?
WRITE TO: Judge John Carroll Byrnes
111 N. Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202