Foundations & Perspectives

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AOC's TLC Keeps Historic
Furniture Looking New

Capitol Rotunda
Restoration

Bringing Cannon
Back to the Future

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Photo by: Susanne Bledsoe

At the south end of the Grant Memorial, the artillery group depicts soldiers and horses in tumultuous action. Restoration of the Grant Memorial begins this spring.

Photo by: Chuck Badal

A worker removes sealant materials from the Dome in support of the Capitol Dome Restoration Project.

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Front Cover: Upholsterer Gene Dixon, who has been with the AOC for 15 years, works to repair the back of a chair from one of the Senate office buildings.

Photo by: Chuck Badal

Letter from the Architect

Spring is often referred to as a time of renewal, and this season it's never been more apparent than on Capitol Hill. As we usher in the spring season, Architect of the Capitol (AOC) jurisdictions are embarking on many important projects that will restore some of America's most iconic treasures.

The U.S. Capitol Rotunda is one of the most recognized spaces in all of America's buildings. Its beauty inspires millions of visitors each year. However, age and weather, common foes to all of our buildings, have damaged the Capitol Dome, allowing water leaks to damage paint, stone and decorative elements in the Rotunda. Work to restore the Rotunda will begin this summer ensuring future generations have the opportunity to enjoy it for years to come (page 2).

The care of the Grant Memorial and the surrounding area known as Union Square were recently transferred to the AOC. We immediately worked to address safety issues and repair the most deteriorated conditions throughout Union Square and developed a preservation strategy to restore the Grant Memorial to its original condition. The preservation effort will begin this spring and include conservation work of the bronze sculptural elements and their stone pedestals (page 20). I know we all take great pride in caring for the nation's buildings and statues entrusted to us, and we look forward to restoring the Grant Memorial to its original splendor.

The Cannon House Office Building, the oldest congressional office building outside of the Capitol, is in need of a top-to-bottom renewal. The deteriorating building is plagued with serious safety, health, environmental and operational issues. We recently began a 10-year renewal project of the building, which will provide a workplace to support congressional operations for the next century (page 14).

As we move forward with these important projects, I am grateful for the diverse skills and talents of the AOC workforce. The work you do each day ensures the process of democracy can continue, and I appreciate your continued commitment to support Congress and preserve America's historic buildings and grounds.

Stephen T. Ayers, FAIA, LEED AP
Architect of the Capitol

Capitol Rotunda *Restoration*

Photos by: Chuck Badal

The U.S. Capitol Building Rotunda is among the most recognizable and hallowed spaces within all of America's public buildings. The Rotunda is used for important ceremonial events, including the lying in state of eminent citizens such as President John F. Kennedy and Rosa Parks, the awarding of Congressional Gold Medals and the dedication of works of art.

"The Rotunda is a beautiful space; however, age and leaks in the Dome above have caused a lot of problems," said Architect of the Capitol (AOC) Project Executive Augustine Angba. "The Rotunda belongs to all Americans and we should do everything we can to restore and preserve it."

The U.S. Capitol Rotunda is 96 feet in diameter and 180 feet in height and is located in the center of the U.S. Capitol on the second floor. As it appears today, the U.S. Capitol Rotunda is the result of two different building campaigns, one under Charles Bulfinch and another under Thomas U. Walter. Dr. William Thornton, credited as the first Architect of the Capitol, won the competition for the design of the U.S. Capitol in 1793 that included a central rotunda.

Due to construction delays to the Capitol created by shortages of funding and material, and the British burning the Capitol in 1814, the Capitol Rotunda construction did

not begin until 1818. The Rotunda was completed in 1824, under the direction of Architect of the Capitol Charles Bulfinch. Bulfinch's design for the Rotunda was intended to recall the Pantheon, the ancient Roman temple.

In the fall of 1856, Bulfinch's wooden dome atop the Capitol was removed, and a temporary roof was installed over the Rotunda to protect it during the construction of a new cast-iron Dome designed by Architect of the Capitol Thomas U. Walter. In 1866, artist Constantino Brumidi completed the Apotheosis of Washington in the eye of the Rotunda canopy.

Over time, weather and age have led to extensive damage to the cast-iron Dome. Water has leaked through more than 1,000 cracks, damaging paint, cast iron, stone and decorative elements both in the exterior of the Dome and in the Rotunda. In late 2014, H.R. 83, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act 2015, was enacted and included funding for the restoration of the U.S. Capitol Building Rotunda.

The Rotunda restoration starts during the summer of 2015 and will include work to remove hazardous materials (such as lead paint), restore ironwork, upgrade electrical and mechanical systems, install new lighting and repaint it to historically appropriate colors.

AOC Project Construction Manager Shane Gallagher said, "The restoration will involve installing scaffolding throughout the inside of the Rotunda. The Rotunda will need to close during the peak of this activity, but will reopen for visitors after this point."

Water infiltration has led to leaking and staining in the Rotunda.

In mid-July 2015 floor and art protection will be installed. Following that, the Rotunda will close while a scaffolding system is installed. The closure will begin Saturday, July 25, 2015, and continue through Labor Day. The Capitol Visitor Center will provide special programming while the Rotunda is closed.

Most work will be conducted at night and on weekends to ensure minimal disruption to congressional business. The entire scaffolding system, including art protection, is expected to remain in the Rotunda through late summer 2016 with work being completed before the Presidential Inauguration in 2017.

The restoration of the Rotunda will ensure this hallowed space will be enjoyed by generations of visitors, staff and members of Congress for years to come.

— By Matt Guilfoyle

Better Management
Through Research

Photos by: Michael Dunn

Above: Liz Buday, Director, Equal Employment Opportunity-Diversity Programs, addresses a class in the Supervisory Academy. Below: Capitol Grounds Supervisor Steven Berryman high-fives the Supervisory Academy instructor, Hal Pitt.

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is committed to continuously improving service not only to our customers, but also to our employees. As part of this, the AOC contracted with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to perform an organizational assessment survey (OAS) of all employees. The OAS is research-based and standardized, allowing AOC to compare our progress with other government agencies based on objective employee feedback.

As a result of OPM's analysis of the results and recommendations, the Training, Education and Development (TED) team has built a powerful new academy to train supervisors to better serve employees. Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers greeted the first class of the Supervisory Academy, emphasizing the importance of the supervisor's frontline role, including their guardianship of the AOC's mission and vision.

The one-week Academy includes three days of intense supervision, management and leadership theory and skills development essential to becoming an extraordinary leader.

"This was unlike any other training I've been to," said Billy Louis, Chief of the Information Technology Division Service Delivery Branch. "I've actually copied a lot of the material they provided and put it on my wall, as daily reminders."

What particularly impressed Louis was how the Academy related the latest brain research to improve employee relations and communication. "These were things I'd never heard before. For example, there's a threat sensor in your brain — the amygdala — that plays a key role in the release of cortisol, a stress hormone. Cortisol is present when a person feels threatened, which can hinder concentration and creativity."

Louis found it informative to discover that something as seemingly benign as a new job duty could trigger the release of cortisol. For example, when you begin a new task that is uncertain and unpredictable, your brain may perceive the task as a threat, resulting in cortisol being released into the blood stream. Knowing this, Louis learned, a supervisor can take steps at those times to reduce stress, and to better understand employee reactions.

In addition to connecting brain research to management, Ken Eads, Director of Office of Security Programs, observed that the Academy also connected management practices to AOC's core values and strategic vision. "I'm most impressed with how well the Academy tracks with our strategic vision. It is very easy to cross-reference the Academy syllabus with our goals."

Two full days of the program are dedicated to providing supervisors the information they need to better serve their employees on topics such as

Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers greets a class in the Supervisory Academy.

employee relations, the Employee Assistance Program, Workers Compensation/e-Comp, labor relations, Equal Employment Opportunity, diversity and inclusion, conflict resolution, and staffing and classification.

Providing all of this information in one week also serves supervisors better than the previous training system, which spread these topics out over months of individual sessions on specific skills. TED is already collecting their own data to help improve the Academy in future sessions. The comments they've received are overwhelmingly positive:

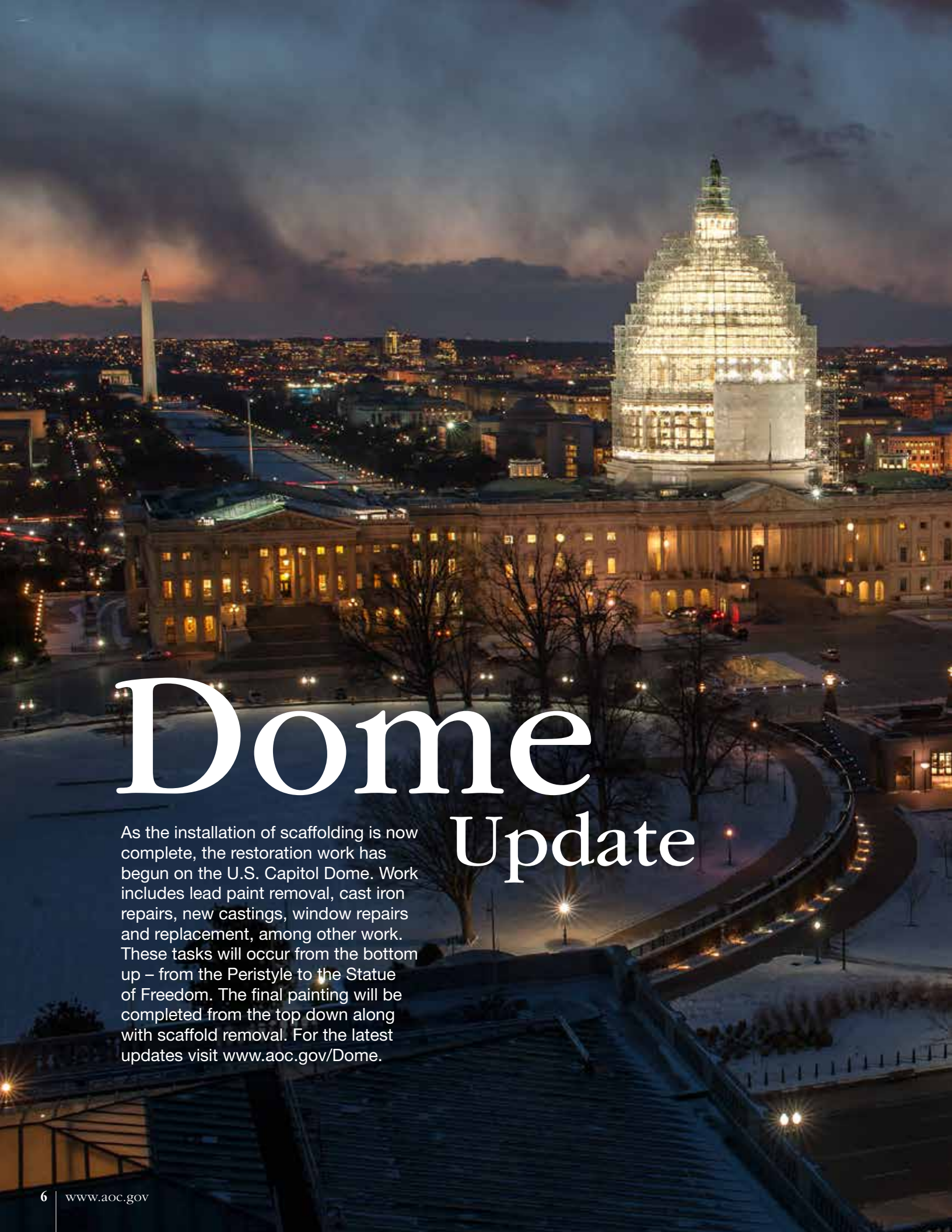
"By far the best supervisory training I've had."

"I love the outside-the-box thinking about how the brain works."

"The Supervisory Academy provided me with many valuable tools that as a new supervisor has made my transition to this position a seamless process. An asset to the AOC as a whole."

Applying their research, TED will continue to improve supervisor skills and employee relations, allowing AOC to better serve our customers.

— By Franklin Bradley



Dome Update

As the installation of scaffolding is now complete, the restoration work has begun on the U.S. Capitol Dome. Work includes lead paint removal, cast iron repairs, new castings, window repairs and replacement, among other work. These tasks will occur from the bottom up – from the Peristyle to the Statue of Freedom. The final painting will be completed from the top down along with scaffold removal. For the latest updates visit www.aoc.gov/Dome.

Scaffolding installation at the lantern.

A worker removes sealant from the Dome.

Workers disassemble the boiler plate balustrade.

Ornaments after paint is removed.

Photos by: Chuck Badal

Photos by: Chuck Badal

AOC's TLC Keeps Historic Furniture Looking New

Hands-on Attention Helps Blend Vintage and New into Cohesive Collection

Upon the recent retirement of a long-time senator, the Senate Office Buildings Painting and Refinishing Branch is set to work on one of the oldest desks in the Senate office buildings. Perched on a large dolly like an elephant on training wheels, the 1909 flat-top desk awaited its treatment, which, according to Leader Vince Lusi, could take as long as 10 days. The desk is a partner desk with drawers, cabinets and kneeholes on each side so that a senator and a secretary could be seated and work across from one another.

The first step in the desk's refurbishment is to remove the finish and then make repairs such as treating gouges or scratches. The refinishers next perform a three-stage sanding process, using different grades of sandpaper. The work is tedious and could take hours – or days – depending on how badly damaged the desk is.

The mahogany desk will then be carefully stained to enhance the rich veneer and original color. "It's a big deal when a historic desk

Upholsterer Ben Riffe refurbishes a senator's high-backed desk chair.

Leader Vince Lusi and Painter/Refinisher Wayne Beaton apply a stripping agent to a flat-top desk, custom-made to furnish the Russell Senate Office Building in 1909.

"It's interesting and fun – especially the historic pieces."

comes in," said Wayne Beaton, Painter/Refinisher, as he admired the desk. "You don't see it all the time. The wood, the detailing, the old mahogany – it's really pretty."

The staff in the refinishing shop are versatile – every man can perform any of the steps in the process.

Their new shop on the fourth floor of the GPO Building B, where they've been since 2013, is airy and light filled. There is plenty of room to maneuver large furniture like the partner desk, which according to Senate Curator Melinda Smith, used to be called a "battleship desk."

When an older piece like the 1909 desk comes in, the refinishers take special pride in making it look good. "It's interesting and fun – especially the historic pieces," says Beaton who has been with the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) since 1990. Added Lusi, "We take a lot of pride in making it look like it's never been damaged or worn down."

In 2008, in preparation for the 100-year anniversary of the opening of the Russell Senate Office Building, the Senate Curator's office conducted extensive research on the history of the furnishings. The office located an original dark green leather sample from the AOC Records Management and Archives, as well as the original formula for products to be used on refinishing the desks. "This discovery now allows us to return these furnishings to their original 1909 look with dark green leather," said Smith. Dark green leather is now available as an upholstery option for historic Senate furniture.

Top: Painter/Refinisher Wayne Beaton applies sealer to a Senate office chair. Inset: Upholsterer Willie Brown, who has worked on Capitol Hill for 34 years, sews a chair cushion.

Flat-top desks were custom-made to furnish the Russell Building when it was first occupied in 1909. New York cabinetmaker Thomas D. Wadelton was hired to manufacture full-scale models of the furniture under the direction of the architectural firm of Carrere & Hastings, which designed the building. Following an in-depth review process, George W. Cobb, Jr. was awarded the furniture contract on August 6, 1908. Cobb submitted the lowest bid at $61,715.70, which at the time was the largest single furniture contract issued by the Senate.

When the Russell Building officially opened on Friday, March 5, 1909, 92 sets of mahogany furniture – including the desk in the refinishing shop – had been delivered for use by each of the senators from the nation's 46 states.

Painter/Refinisher Oliver Pluntke prepares a Senate office chair for refinishing.

"A nice leather sofa can go from senator to senator without ever being recovered because they are so durable."

The staff at the Senate Office Buildings Upholstery Branch sees mostly chairs and couches (davenports). "Everything we do is pretty much by hand," said Upholsterer Danny Kreitman. "Even our modern tools are 100 years old – things like clamps – we use them because they work."

When a chair arrives at the upholstery shop, the staff tightens the springs, which could take a day or a week, depending on its size. Sometimes the chair needs new webbing or new upholstery. The original Russell chairs are stuffed by hand with combed horsehair. Others are stuffed with foam and cotton.

The shop sometimes won't see a piece of furniture for 50 years. "A nice leather sofa can go from senator to senator without ever being recovered because they are so durable," said Kreitman.

It's clear that the refinishers and the upholsterers take a lot of satisfaction in their work, especially when it comes to working with a piece of history. "It is a privilege to work here," said Lusi. "How could you not be proud?"

— By Sharon Gang

The Candy Desk

Few traditions associated with Senate furniture are as intriguing as the "candy desk" on the floor of the Senate. Although the desks on the Senate floor are cared for by the Senate, they provide a fascinating story to share with friends. In 1965, Senator George Murphy of California originated the practice of keeping a supply of delicious candy in his desk for his fellow senators. In every Congress since that time, a candy desk has been located in the back row on the Republican side (see diagram) of the aisle and adjacent to the chamber's most heavily used entrance.

During the 114th Congress, the candy desk is assigned to Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA), who plans to provide candy from his home state. Since 1965, the senators who have supplied the desk include George Murphy (R-CA), Paul Fannin (R-AZ), Richard Lugar (R-IN), David Durenberger (R-MN), Roger Jepsen (R-IA), Steve Symms (R-ID), Slade Gorton (R-WA), John McCain (R-AZ), James Jeffords (R-VT), Robert Bennett (R-UT), Rick Santorum (R-PA), Craig Thomas (R-ID), George Voinovich (R-OH), Mel Martinez (R-FL), George LeMieux (R-FL), Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Pat Toomey (R-PA).

In the image below, the candy desk is denoted by the yellow desk location #80.

Photo courtesy of: U.S. Senate

History with a Side of Mystery:
the Rotunda Benches

Photo courtesy of: National Archives and Records Administration

The benches currently in the Capitol Rotunda were used in the chapel at Saint Elizabeths Hospital for many years. The photo above shows the benches in the chapel, which was decorated for Christmas circa 1896.

History

The AOC cares for the benches in the Capitol Rotunda whose cast-iron supports and arms were based on a design sketched by Constantino Brumidi in 1859.

Their history is complicated.

Forty-eight benches were cast by Janes, Beebe & Company and given a "Florentine bronze" finish by the Capitol Paint Shop. Capitol carpenters constructed the wooden sections of the benches of American oak.

The benches in the Rotunda were originally designed for use in the Hall of the House of Representatives, and they were installed there in 1859. The representatives decided that benches would facilitate their communication more so than the desks and chairs that had been in the chamber since 1857. By 1860, however, they had passed a resolution to remove the benches and bring back the old desks and chairs.

Thirty-two of the benches were loaned to Saint Elizabeths Hospital for use in its chapel. Sixteen went to the Supreme Court, which in turn lent them to the U.S. Court of Claims. In 1929, all of the benches from the Court of Claims were returned for use in the Rotunda. In 1973, when additional benches were desired for the Rotunda, Saint Elizabeths could only locate six of its original 32 benches to return.

Mystery

Mystery surrounds the missing benches – along with why the benches were loaned to Saint Elizabeths in the first place. According to AOC Curator Barbara Wolanin, there was a connection between the two institutions. Both the Capitol and the Center Building at Saint Elizabeths, which housed the chapel, were under construction at the time the benches were crafted. And Architect of the Capitol Thomas U. Walter was working on designs for both of them.

"Thomas Walter might have suggested the loan of the benches since so many were no longer needed in the Capitol," said Wolanin.

From the time Saint Elizabeths opened its doors in 1855, addressing patients' spiritual needs was an important aspect of their treatment and recovery. According to Jogues Prandoni, a volunteer historian at Saint Elizabeths, the chapel played an important role in hospital life. In addition to providing space for religious services, it also was used for educational and

> "We have a responsibility to take care of these extraordinary objects. Everyone in this building can make a difference in preserving its history."

recreational assemblies, with the Rotunda benches providing much-needed seating for the hundreds of patients and staff who were required to attend. As the campus grew, however, the third-floor chapel became less convenient, especially for those patients with physical disabilities. Sometime between 1939 and the opening of a new chapel in 1956, religious services were moved to a small room in the basement of another building.

"Since it was 100 years before anyone at the Capitol asked for the return of the benches, they probably weren't considered very important," said Wolanin. "Some were even left outside in the weather."

Present-day Care

The benches currently in the Rotunda are moved periodically to accommodate special ceremonies or for floor cleaning. Wolanin and Museum Curator Jennifer Blancato worked with a contracted furniture conservator to develop special platforms and handling carts to move the benches without damaging them or the floor.

In 2006, the benches were moved from the Rotunda for off-site restoration that included restoring the cast-iron supports for the benches with a metallic finish that replicates the original Florentine bronze. Periodically, the conservator attends to the benches to address dust, hand oils, losses to coating layers, and the worst annoyance of all, chewing gum. Basic maintenance and conservation is done on-site and takes about a week.

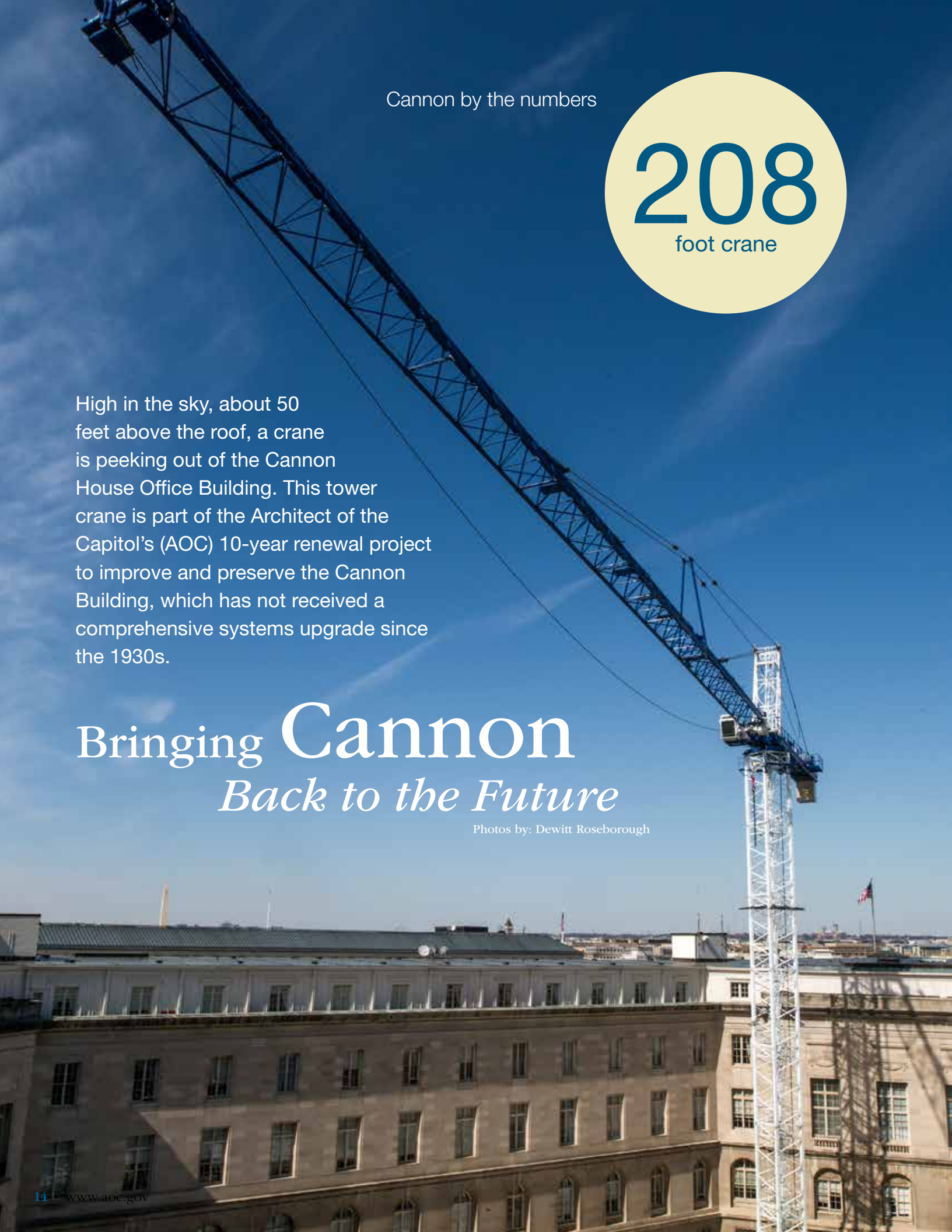
At the present time, two of the benches in the Rotunda are reproductions made when the Architect of the Capitol decided in 1975 to place two benches under every painting. The other 14 are originals from 1859. Three of them still contain the original

One of the Brumidi-designed benches in the Rotunda today.

Florentine bronze finish under layers of paint. When the benches were restored in 2006, exposures of the original layers guided the modern finishes.

"People didn't always care about the preservation of historic furniture like the Rotunda benches, which is probably why so few were returned from Saint Elizabeths," speculated Wolanin. "But now, we all know that we have a responsibility to take care of these extraordinary objects. Everyone in this building can make a difference in preserving its history."

— By Sharon Gang



Cannon by the numbers

208
foot crane

High in the sky, about 50 feet above the roof, a crane is peeking out of the Cannon House Office Building. This tower crane is part of the Architect of the Capitol's (AOC) 10-year renewal project to improve and preserve the Cannon Building, which has not received a comprehensive systems upgrade since the 1930s.

Bringing Cannon *Back to the Future*

Photos by: Dewitt Roseborough

The Cannon Renewal Project will improve the functionality of the building for both members and staff, making it far more efficient, comfortable and safer, while retaining the historic grandeur of the building.

Once referred to as simply the "Old" House Office Building, the Cannon Building was modern in every respect when it was completed in 1908.

Photo courtesy of: AOC Archives

Construction of the Cannon House Office Building in 1907.

"It had cultural implications for the House. In fact, it changed the rhythms and concourse of legislative life on the House side of Capitol Hill," said Dr. Matthew A. Wasniewski, Historian for the U.S. House of Representatives.

For the first time in the nation's history, each representative had an office and the House floor was no longer the main area of activity on Capitol Hill. The Cannon Building was comprised of member suites, committee hearing rooms, the historic Caucus Room and the Rotunda.

The offices themselves had all of the modern facilities needed to conduct business. As AOC Historian Bill Allen wrote in *History of the United States Capitol*, "The offices were outfitted with telephones, lavatories (supplying hot, cold and iced water), steam heat and forced-air ventilation."

Today, the Cannon Building's mechanical systems cannot meet modern efficiency standards. The

Fallen plaster in the Cannon Building.

systems are past the end of their useful lives and the increasing risk of their failure jeopardizes the building's long-term functionality and safety.

"There are holes in the rain leaders, so when we get a substantial rain, it manifests itself in the members' offices," said Bill Weidemeyer, Superintendent of House Office Buildings. These and other pipe

The Cannon Building has a very wide range of temperature fluctuations from one space to another due to the aging heating and air conditioning system, causing some within the building to wear their winter coats inside to keep warm.

"This is our Old House and it needs a lot of work."

leaks are causing the plaster in the walls and ceilings to bubble, crack and detach.

Water isn't the only way weather is reaching the inside of the building. "There isn't a tight energy seal between the outside elements and the inside of the window," said Weidemeyer. "The window can be completely closed and it's almost as if the window is open." The Cannon Building also has a very wide range of temperature fluctuations from one space to another due to the aging heating and air conditioning system, causing some within the building to wear their winter coats inside to keep warm.

Deteriorated stone from more than a century of weather damage and at left, an example of one of the many corroded pipes in the building.

On the exterior of the building, the original stone façade is crumbling. More than a century of weather damage is causing chunks of decorative stone to dislodge and fall to the ground.

"This is our Old House and it needs a lot of work," said Weidemeyer.

Construction work in preparation for the Cannon Renewal Project began in December 2014, when a portion of the parking lot south of the building was closed to accommodate office trailers, material storage and project staging.

The initial two-year phase will take place in the basement and areas of the courtyard and focus on utility infrastructure upgrades.

Each additional phase will impact a quarter of the building, one side at a time. This work will replace or repair key building systems such as electrical, heating, cooling, lighting, plumbing, fire and life safety, accessibility and structural integrity.

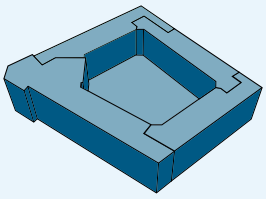
The Cannon Renewal Project will bring the building to modern standards and provide an effective workplace for years to come.

— By Sarah Bublitz

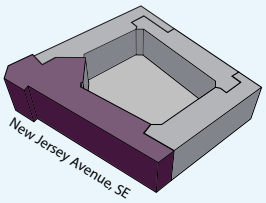
As the Crane Turns

A tower crane erected in the courtyard will rotate to serve each side of the Cannon Building during its designated construction phase. Portions of streets around the building will be partitioned off to create temporary areas for delivery trucks and space for workers to conduct their operations.

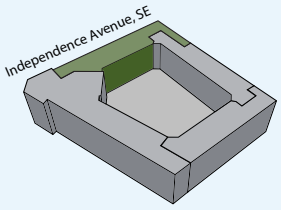
Watch the renewal animation video and get updates at aoc.gov/cannon.



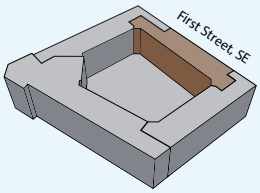
PHASE 0:
BUILDING UTILITIES
JAN 2015 - DEC 2016



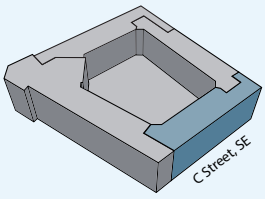
PHASE 1:
FLOORS B-5
JAN 2017 - NOV 2018



PHASE 2:
FLOORS B-5
JAN 2019 - NOV 2020



PHASE 3:
FLOORS B-5
JAN 2021 - NOV 2022



PHASE 4:
FLOORS B-5
JAN 2023 - NOV 2024

DOING GOOD: Investing in the Next Generation

What do you want to **achieve** in your lifetime?

Photos by: James Rosentahal

Emmanuel Akinjide recently began his third year as a mentor with D.C. public schools.

While these are hard questions for even the most mature adults, they are questions Emmanuel Akinjide poses to every high school student he mentors. "I want to help shape future generations by imparting the knowledge I've learned to them and making them think about their futures," he said. "This has been my path." A path he has walked for most of his life as a mentor and teacher. He now continues his efforts as a volunteer with the D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) Competitive Employment Opportunities (CEO) Program. This innovative, career-focused mentoring program connects high school students with various disabilities to D.C.-area mentors who work in a variety of occupations.

Akinjide, an Electrical Engineer in Planning and Project Management and Robert Mitrocsak, a Jurisdiction Executive for the Capitol Power Plant and Office of Security Programs, are both entering their third year as mentors with the highly competitive DCPS CEO Program. There are thousands of applicants and only dozens of mentors. Each applicant is carefully screened and those accepted into the program are matched with a mentor working in their career field of interest.

The program begins in January and ends with a graduation in June. For those six months, students attend class every two weeks to learn basic job skills. In the weeks between class, students work with mentors to apply what they've learned in a year-end project. With the help of their mentor, each student develops a project related to a career they are interested in pursuing. At the end of the program, students present their projects to a panel and those with the best presentations are awarded scholarships.

Students are often intimidated by the thought of speaking in front of a large audience. One student that Akinjide mentored was so frightened by public speaking that he wanted to quit the program. "He said, 'I cannot stand in front of people. I'm going to drop out of the program. How am I going to do it?' and I said, 'That's why I'm here – to help you,'" Akinjide said.

How will your achievements improve the world and **define your legacy** when you are gone?

Thanks to Akinjide's patience and encouragement, the student stayed in the program and developed a business proposal for his year-end project. The student's presentation was a defining moment for Akinjide. "For a kid that did not have any aspirations, and goes from wanting to drop out of the program to finding the confidence to pursue a career in business – that moment serves as a powerful example of why it's so important to invest in the next generation."

Mitrocsak believes one of the program's greatest benefits is the way it builds the students' confidence – a direct result of the presentation. "At the end of the day when the students have presented their projects, they've achieved a level of confidence that their peers have never experienced before. It leads them to see themselves in a different way and think, 'If I can do this, what else can I do?' And that's what mentorship should do – it should always have a positive impact on students," he said.

Robert Mitrocsak has mentored kids from D.C. public schools since 2013.

The program also includes a two-week internship in the summer at the mentor's organization. Mitrocsak believes the internship is a good opportunity for students to get hands-on experience. "I assign them tasks, and we go on project site visits. Last summer we were working on the fifth floor renovation in the Ford Building. I asked my student to work with the other interns to take measurements of the room. I realize taking measurements isn't the most exciting work, but I think it's important for kids to understand you don't start out by designing the Louvre," Mitrocsak said.

The internship allows students to see what they like about their potential career field and what they don't, which are valuable lessons to learn at their age. "At 15 or 16, I didn't know what the day-to-day life of an engineer was like. For these students to get a good, in-depth look is very helpful. They're in this program and they've learned so much by working on their projects. Maybe their views have changed and they've decided to go in a different direction – that's okay. That's part of the mentoring process – helping students discover who they are and their interests," Mitrocsak said.

As volunteers with the DCPS CEO Program, the time commitment for mentors is not huge, but the impact they have on the students' lives certainly is. For Akinjide, the reason is simple. "When you mentor kids and help direct them to what they like, they will excel," he said. And seeing the kids excel is all the incentive he needs to continue his work as a mentor. "That's my motivation. I keep going back for those moments."

For more information on the DCPS Competitive Employment Opportunities Program and how you can get involved, visit http://dcpsceo.com.

— By Erin Nelson

Investing in Our Local Community

In addition to providing internships to the DCPS students, the AOC also partners with the Phelps Architecture, Construction and Engineering High School in northeast Washington, D.C.

The partnership provides an opportunity for minority and female students to learn more about occupations that are in demand at the AOC.

The AOC often hosts the students at the Capitol campus. Most recently, the AOC held "Engineering Shadow Day" where students were able to shadow AOC employees from several jurisdictions, including: Library Buildings and Grounds, Planning and Project Management, House Office Buildings, Senate Office Buildings, Capitol Building and the Information Technology Division. Phelps students spent the day with AOC mentors learning more about the work they do. The event was deemed a success as positive emails filled the inbox of Ed Lopez, Equal Employee Opportunity Specialist and coordinator of the Phelps Partnership for AOC.

"Thank you for inspiring and enriching the lives of our students. You have made a difference! We are very grateful and proud to have you in our corner as we educate these students."

"Thank you all who participated in this event. It was an overwhelming success and the students had truly amazing experiences. As one kid said, 'It was the best day of my life.' Thank you for taking time out of your day to mentor the students and organize this event."

Restoring Grant's Glory

"Time and the elements of nature have ravaged the monument's surfaces."

The Grant Memorial sits in silent, yet powerful repose beneath the shadow of the U.S. Capitol Dome, serving as a timeless sentinel to the heroism, valor, strength and also the anguish our nation endured when it was torn apart by the Civil War.

During the war, the Capitol was briefly used by Union troops as soldiers' quarters, a hospital and even a bakery. Today, millions of visitors approach the large bronze and marble memorial that honors the Civil War general, Ulysses S. Grant, whose victories as a military strategist are credited with saving the Union and who later became our nation's 18th president.

"Time and the elements of nature have ravaged the monument's surfaces," said Eugene Poole, Jr., U.S. Capitol Jurisdiction and Project Executive in Planning and Project Management, who is managing the Grant Memorial's bronze conservation and Union Square rehabilitation. "We are moving aggressively to conserve, preserve and restore the historic fabric of the Grant Memorial and Union Square to its former glory."

The care of Union Square and the Grant Memorial were transferred from the National Park Service to the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) in late 2011. The Grant Memorial is located by the reflecting pool at the east end of the National Mall, west of the U.S. Capitol.

Upon transfer, the AOC addressed immediate safety issues and repaired the most visibly deteriorated conditions throughout Union Square. Because weather and time have not been kind to the Grant Memorial, AOC staff developed a preservation strategy to restore the Grant Memorial to its original condition.

Who was Ulysses S. Grant?

1822

Hiram Ulysses Grant was born on April 27, 1822, in Point Pleasant, Ohio. Appointed to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1839, he arrived to learn that he had been erroneously enrolled as Ulysses Simpson Grant. Simpson was his mother's maiden name. The roll could not be corrected, so Grant changed his name.

1843

Upon graduation he was posted near St. Louis, where he met his future wife, Julia Dent. After distinguished service in the Mexican War and at several garrison postings, he resigned his commission in 1854.

Grant Sightings

During portions of the conservation of the Grant Memorial, the statues may not be visible, but you can still catch a glimpse of Grant as a marble statue in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol and on the $50 bill. The lions from the Grant memorial can also be seen during the opening credits of the political thriller "House of Cards."

The memorial to Ulysses S. Grant is the largest statuary group in Washington.

Photo by: Susanne Bledsoe

The preservation effort will begin in the spring of 2015, with the conservation of the 11 bronze sculptural elements. Fencing and scaffolding will surround the sculptural groups. The conservation will include cleaning, repairing, repatinating and protecting the existing bronze. Ninety missing or broken bronze pieces will be recast. After the bronze conservation is complete, stone cleaning, setting and conservation will follow.

"After worrying about the poor condition of the largest and probably most visible and visited sculptural monument in the city, I am thrilled that we will be restoring it so that everyone will be able to see and appreciate the incredible accurate and life-like details and strong emotional impact that have been obscured by corrosion," said Dr. Barbara Wolanin, Curator for the AOC. "In addition to all that it commemorates, the Grant Memorial is a masterwork of American sculpture to which Henry Shrady devoted 20 years of his life and sadly, passed away just two weeks before the memorial was dedicated."

Getting the statue restored to its original brilliance before the bicentennial of Grant's birth in 2022 – a century after its dedication – will properly honor this American hero. Wolanin added, "The conservation of the memorial will demonstrate the commitment of the Architect of the Capitol to preserve and care for our national treasures for current and future generations."

— By Laura Condeluci

Memorial Details

At more than 250 feet wide and 70 feet deep, the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial by Sculptor Henry Merwin Shrady and Architect Edward Pearce Casey is the largest statuary group in Washington, D.C.

The sculpture of Grant, measuring 44 feet high, is among the largest equestrian statues in the world.

Congress authorized the creation of the memorial in 1901, and it was dedicated on the centennial of Grant's birthday in 1922.

The Grant Memorial's central figure depicts the Civil War general seated and still on horseback, as was Grant's custom while observing a battle. Four bronze lions around the pedestal impart a sense of strength and dignity. Grant is the calm in the center of the turmoil; bronze reliefs on the marble pedestal show infantry soldiers on the march. At the ends of the monument, groups of soldiers and horses appear in tumultuous action, portraying a cavalry charge at the north and an artillery unit wheeling into battle position at the south.

1861

Volunteering to serve the Union cause after the start of the Civil War, Grant was the strategist of victories that earned him national attention. His achievements at Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga and Appomattox were decisive in the course and outcome of the war.

1869

He served as the 18th President of the United States (1869-1877). His political inexperience and misplaced trust in unscrupulous advisers, however, led to scandal despite his own innocence of corruption.

1885

Grant died of throat cancer on July 23, 1885, and is entombed with his wife Julia in New York City, in a mausoleum overlooking the Hudson River.

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Photo by: Chuck Badal

Flowers and the fountain in Senate Park have come alive for the spring season.