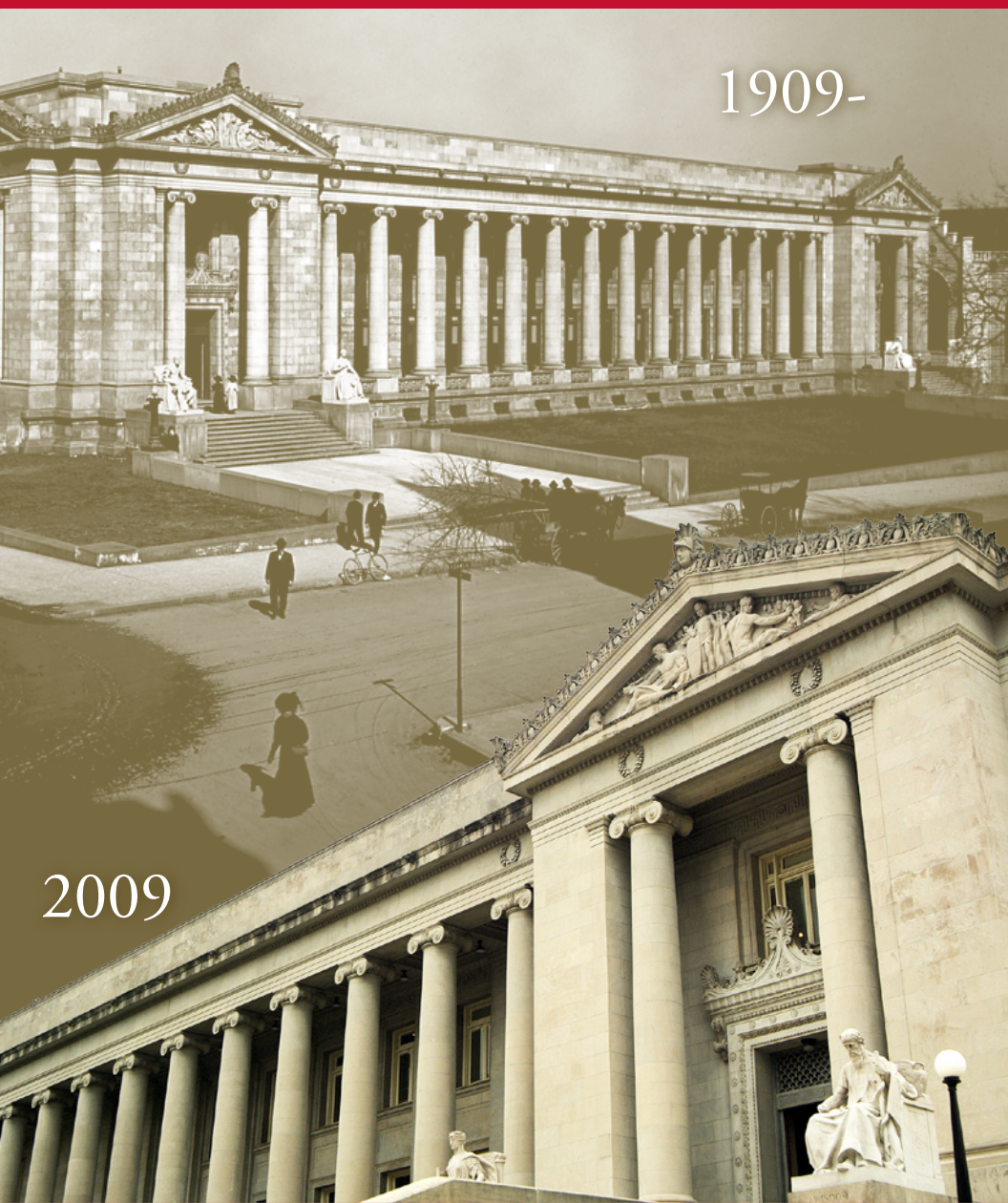


*Celebrating 100 Years!*

The Shelby County Courthouse

Centennial Celebration, October 13, 2009



1909-

2009



Completed in 1909, the Shelby County Courthouse was built by craftsmen using Tennessee blue limestone, marble, granite, bronze, mahogany, and glass. As its offices filled up toward the end of that year, the Courthouse began its slow accumulation of another, intangible material: history. The wide hallways resonate with the sounds of current trials, the echoes of historic ones, and the stories of the judges, lawyers, and litigants who have had business here for the past hundred years. A climb up the interior marble staircases parallels the long battle against segregation within these walls, as African-Americans and women worked tirelessly toward achieving recognition, then equality, as judges and lawyers. In the south corridor, a bust of President Andrew Jackson, one of the city's founding fathers, has watched people come and go since 1921, and perhaps bore witness to the probating of Elvis Presley's will more than half a century later.

The Shelby County Courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, seventy years after its grand opening celebration. That same year saw the start of a major renovation of the Courthouse that would continue through the early 1990s and refurbish almost every detail, right down to the brass knobs on the office doors. Hollywood took a fancy to the building's neoclassical style, and the Courthouse has appeared in several high-profile films. Now, at its centennial, the Courthouse is home to the Shelby County Civil Courts—Chancery, Circuit, Probate, and General Sessions—which hear cases ranging from wills and estates, real property, and divorce to adoptions and appeals from lower courts. With each case, and every decision handed down, a new layer of history is created. by Danna Greenfield, Courtesy of Icon Archive Co., LLC



Construction photo above courtesy of Robert W. Dye Photography. Other photos this page courtesy of the Shelby County Archives.  
Cover Photos: 1909 photo courtesy of Robert W. Dye Photography. Modern Courthouse photo by Drue Diehl.

# *Celebrating 100 Years!*

## The Shelby County Courthouse

Centennial Celebration, October 13, 2009

*4:30 to 5:30 p.m.*

Hors d'oeuvres & Refreshments with  
music by the Christian Brothers High School Band,  
directed by Patrick Bolton, on the south lawn

Tours & Historical Exhibits Inside the Building  
*see tour map, back cover*

*5:30 to 6:00 p.m.*

### Welcome

Master of Ceremonies Jim Eikner of WKNO

### Special Thanks

Arthur E. Quinn, President, Memphis Bar Association

### Keynote Address

Walter Durham, Tennessee State Historian

### Presentation of Proclamations

Shelby County Mayor A C Wharton & Memphis Mayor Pro Tem Myron Lowery

### Closing

Master of Ceremonies Jim Eikner of WKNO

*6:00 to 7:00 p.m.*

Hors d'oeuvres & Refreshments with  
music by the Christian Brothers High School Band,  
directed by Patrick Bolton, on the south lawn

Tours & Historical Exhibits Inside the Building  
*see tour map, back cover*

# Historic Christian Brothers Band

“The Oldest High School Band In America”

The Christian Brothers, a Catholic religious order of teachers, came to Memphis in November of 1871 and opened a school with 26 students. Brother Maurelian, founder and president of the school known as “Christian Brothers College,” hired Professor Paul Schneider to organize the school band in 1873. The band’s purpose was to take part in community parades and school entertainment.

From the moment of its founding, the CBHS Band has been a part of Memphis history. In 1876, the band played for the dedication of the fountain in Court Square. Its name can be seen inscribed on the fountain. At a political reception in 1887, President Grover Cleveland was honored with a CBHS Band performance. The Memphis community called on the CBHS Band in 1892 for the dedication of the old Frisco Railroad Bridge (The Memphis Bridge). It was the first bridge of its kind between St. Louis and New Orleans.

Showing its patriotic zeal, the band par-

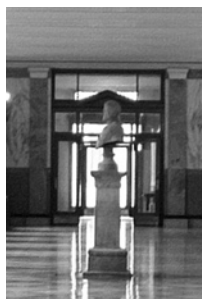


ticipated in the Preparedness Parade in 1916 in honor of those going “over there” to defend democracy in World War 1. Since then, the band has played at numerous historical events in Memphis and the surrounding areas and for leaders from across the nation. It is an honor to have them present for the Centennial Celebration of the Shelby County Courthouse.

Pictured is the CBHS band in front of the Courthouse in the 1930s.  
Text adapted from [faculty.cbhs.org/pbolton/Band\\_History.htm](http://faculty.cbhs.org/pbolton/Band_History.htm).

## Historical Exhibits

The Centennial Celebration planning committee contracted with Icon Archive Company during the Summer of 2009 to update the display cases located in the south corridor of the Shelby County Courthouse and create exhibits “to enhance overall visitor experience and establish a more comprehensive, engaging and focused educational exhibit.” The new displays debut at the Centennial Celebration.



### Andrew Jackson

The bust of Andrew Jackson in the Courthouse’s south corridor was sculpted from life by John Frazee in 1835. The City of Memphis purchased the bust in 1858 and placed it in Court Square. One of the four sides at the base bears Jackson’s declaration: “Our Federal Union / It must and shall be preserved.” During the Civil War, that part of the piece was defaced, but was re-created with a new face of marble. In 1921, the City relocated the bust to the Courthouse, where it is sheltered from the elements and from those who might wish to make further edits to the stone.





# Historical Exhibits

## Architecture: Construction & Renovation

*Sponsored by Hnedak Bobo Group Inc. & Inman Construction Corp.*

In 1905, Shelby County Justice James H. Barret appointed a Courthouse Commission to spearhead and administer construction of a new Shelby County Courthouse. Construction began in 1906 and was completed in fall of 1909. Taking into account the entire construction process, from land acquisition to final fixture installation, the total cost of the Courthouse was \$1,592,596.69.

As with any building located in the heart of a busy city, the Courthouse has needed both renovations and restoration through the decades. From 1980 to 1992, then-County Commissioner Charles Perkins supervised the painstaking work that included modernization, refurbishing, and cleaning down to the smallest detail. The redesign reunified the spirit of the building.



## Segregation in the Legal System

*Sponsored by The Leo Bearman, Sr. American Inn of Court*

At the time that the Shelby County Courthouse was completed, the legal system in the County was an almost exclusively white male province. Acceptance of women and African-Americans slowly gathered momentum in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as women earned the right to vote and the civil rights movement began to change the nation's political landscape and to level the playing field for people of color in the legal system.

## Movies

It's small wonder that the Courthouse's neoclassical façade and grand interior have made appearances in blockbuster films, including *Great Balls of Fire*, *The Client*, *A Family Thing*, *The Rainmaker* and *The People vs. Larry Flynt*.



## Justice System

The Shelby County Courthouse is home to the county's civil courts—Chancery, Circuit, Probate, and General Sessions Civil Court—and foreclosed properties are auctioned off regularly on the steps outside the Courthouse. In August 1975, the Belz family's winning bid landed them the historic Peabody Hotel.



## Edward H. Crump

January 1, 1910, rang in not only the new year and the official grand opening of the new Shelby County Courthouse, but also the day Edward Hull Crump stepped into his role as mayor of Memphis. In addition to the courts and the mayor's office, the Shelby County Courthouse was once home to numerous other offices including all City and County offices.

*Text adapted from exhibits written by Danna Greenfield. Courtesy of Icon Archive Co., LLC. Photos, this page: "Authority" statue courtesy of the Shelby County Archives. Interior courtroom photo by Drue Diehl. The Rainmaker, Matt Damon & Danny Devito, 1997. Photo of young Mayor E. H. Crump, "Civic Affairs, Souvenir Courthouse Edition, March, 1910." Courtesy of Memphis & Shelby County Room, Memphis Public Library & Information Center.*

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## Centennial Planning Committee

*a special thanks to all the volunteers who have made this celebration possible.*

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**Paul Matthews**, Centennial History Committee Co-Chair

**Jimmy Ogle**, Courthouse Tour Chair

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**Vincent Clark**, Shelby County Archives

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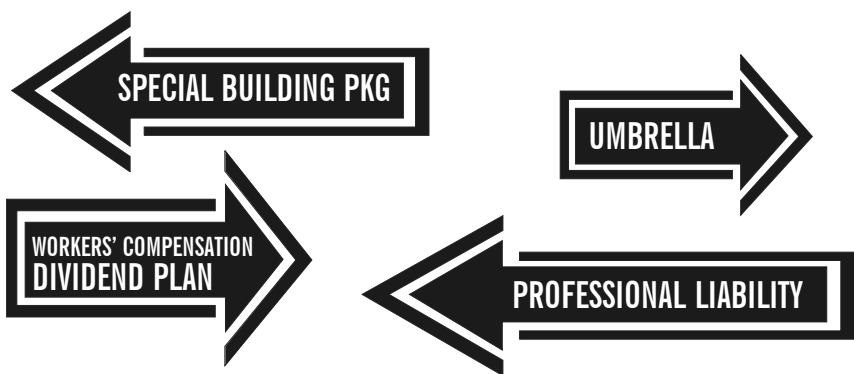
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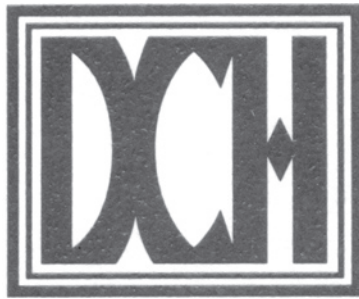
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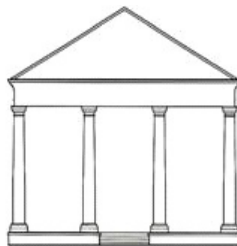
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**Exhibit Opening  
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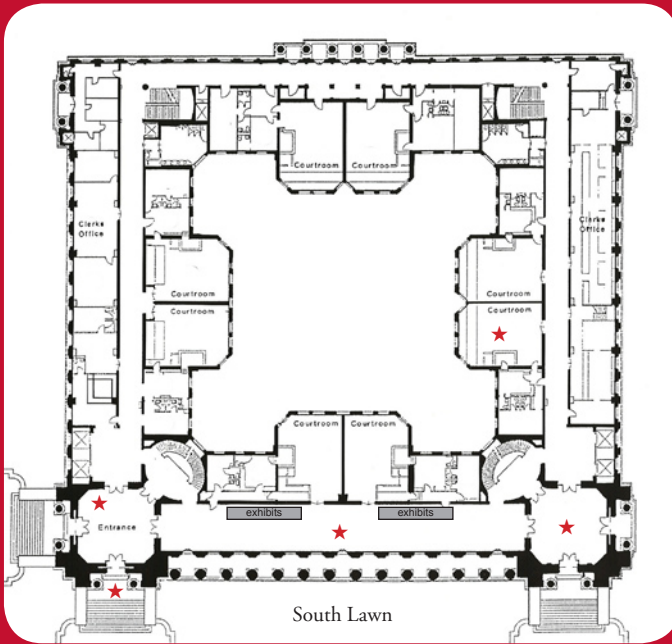
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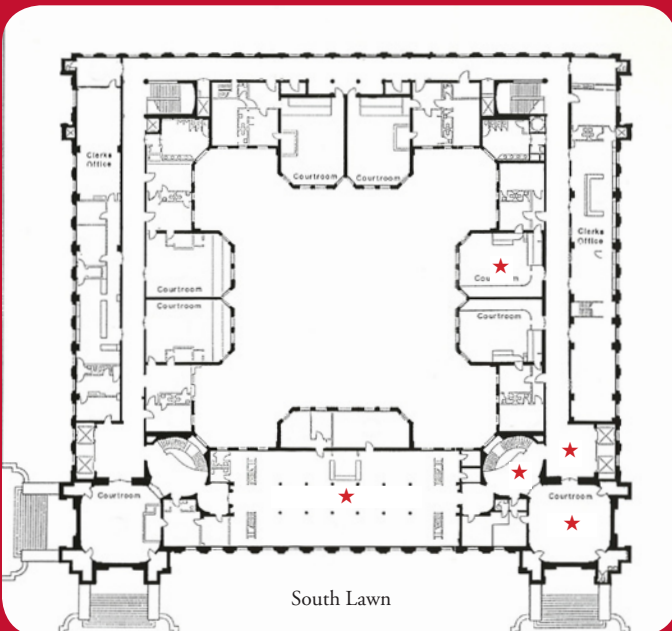
Tour guides are located at the points designated with a red star below.

*A handicap entrance to the building is located on the first floor off of Third Street.*



## Second Floor Stops

- ★ Main Entrance at Adams & Second
- ★ Main Corridor, near the Andrew Jackson bust
- ★ Southeast Corridor
- ★ Room 227, the Modern Courtroom



## Third Floor Stops

- ★ Elevator
- ★ Top of Stairwell
- ★ Law Library
- ★ Supreme Court Courtroom
- ★ Antique Courtroom

Please use the staircases & elevators located at the southeast corner of the Courthouse to access the third floor.