The background of the entire page is a detailed, golden-brown illustration of the Arkansas State Capitol's facade. It features three prominent Corinthian columns supporting an ornate entablature. Below the columns are three sets of double doors, each with a circular window and decorative studs. The overall style is classical and architectural.

# Through These Doors

*A Self-Guided Tour of the  
Arkansas State Capitol*



# JOHN THURSTON

ARKANSAS SECRETARY OF STATE

Welcome to the Arkansas State Capitol!

I take great pride in the history that embraces this building and find it an extraordinary privilege to be able to share it with you.

One of my most important duties as Secretary of State is maintaining and preserving the rich history of the Arkansas State Capitol.

Since 1911, this building has been the center of Arkansas's state government. In addition to being a beautiful historic landmark, the Capitol is both a handsome structure and a vital working building. It's the official home to six constitutional officers and over three hundred civil servants in the Legislative and Executive branches. It is my privilege to be one of them.

I hope you enjoy your time at the Arkansas State Capitol. Please feel free to stop by the Capitol Visitor Services Center with any additional questions or comments that you may have. You are always welcome to come back with your friends and family for another visit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Thurston".

John Thurston  
Arkansas Secretary of State



# General Tour Information

Welcome to the Arkansas State Capitol!

Please sign the guest register at the Capitol Visitor Services Center. We like to document how far everyone has traveled in coming to visit our beautiful building.

## Click and Share!

Feel free to take photos and capture memories while on your visit. We would love it if you shared images of our state capitol on your favorite social media site, but be sure to tell your friends and family to come visit us in person!

Remember to tag the Arkansas State Capitol in your post: #ARStateCapitol

## Hours & Accessibility

The Capitol Building is open from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday. There are two public passenger elevators, which are located in the east lobby, near the front entrance of the building.

## Tour Option

The Capitol Theater, located near the Visitor Services Center, features continuous informational videos about the construction history of the State Capitol and the notable people, places and events of Arkansas history.

We hope that you enjoy exploring the Arkansas Capitol with the aid of this self-guided tour booklet. There is also an audio version of the tour that you can play on your smartphone or other device. Just use a QR code app to scan this code to begin:



We also offer *A Walk on the Hill*, a self-guided tour of the Capitol's grounds that are noted for its seasonal landscaping, grand monuments and wide variety of native trees. *A Walk on the Hill* is available on our website at [www.sos.arkansas.gov/statecapitolinfo/pages/statecapitoltour.aspx](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/statecapitolinfo/pages/statecapitoltour.aspx). You may also obtain information about local attractions at the Capitol Visitor Services Center.

# Capitol Directory

Features in **bold** are highlighted in this booklet.

## **First Floor (Map on page 4)**

Visitor Services Center	Lower Rotunda
Exhibit Cases	North and South hallways
Great Seal Display	Lower Rotunda
State Capitol Police Desk	Elevator Lobby
<b>State Land Commissioner</b>	<b>Room 109</b>
Gift Shop	Lower Rotunda
Post Office	Lower Rotunda
Exhibit: Mentors and Models & Testament	North Entry
Restrooms	North and South Ends



## **Second Floor (Map on page 6)**

Governor's Office	Room 250
Secretary of State's Office	Room 256
State Treasurer's Office	Room 220
<b>State Auditor's Office</b>	<b>Room 230</b>
Lieutenant Governor's Office	Room 270
<b>Governor's Reception Room</b>	<b>North End</b>
<b>Rotunda and Bronze Doors</b>	<b>Center</b>
<b>Old Supreme Court Chamber</b>	<b>South End</b>



## **Third Floor (Map on page 11)**

<b>Senate Chamber</b>	<b>South End</b>
<b>House Chamber</b>	<b>North End</b>
<b>Heerwagen Murals</b>	<b>North and South Stairways</b>
Exhibit: Building Forever	Center, Northwest corner
Snack Stand	Center, Southeast corner
Restrooms	South End



## **Fourth Floor (Map on page 15)**

Senate Gallery	South End
House Gallery	North End
Exhibit: Arkansans at War	Center, Northeast corner
Exhibit: Arkansans Through the Years, By the Numbers	Center, Southeast corner
Exhibit: Arkansas State Symbols	Center, Northwest & Southwest corners



## **Lower Level**

Exhibit: State Capitol Construction images	Elevator lobby
Exhibit: Seasonal photos	East-central hallway
Capitol Café	West-central hallway
Capitol Salon	West-central hallway
Restrooms	North and South Ends



# Building the Arkansas State Capitol

Arkansas was still in its infancy as a state in 1842 when the first capitol building was completed. As the new government grew, the building we now know as the Old State House was no longer large enough, and it fell into disrepair. As chunks of plaster began raining down to the Senate floor, legislators debated whether to repair and expand the building, or construct an entirely new building with ample space and modern conveniences.

In 1899, the state's legislators voted to build a new State Capitol and began looking for at least 40 acres of land on the very western edge of Little Rock. The perfect spot was found about a mile up the Arkansas River from the Old State House — a plot already occupied by the state penitentiary. Like Arkansans do, they turned a problem into an opportunity and used a convenient labor force of 200 convicts to level the prison and build a new capitol in its place.

Construction of the new Arkansas State Capitol began just before the turn of the 20th century in July 1899.

Missouri architect George Mann designed the original plans for the Arkansas State Capitol and oversaw the project until 1909. The work was slow with a series of delays brought on by cost overruns, budget shortfalls and even charges of bribery. The state eventually replaced Mann with renowned architect Cass Gilbert, who is noted for his designs of the Minnesota State Capitol and the United States Supreme Court building.



State Capitol around 1914

Gilbert acted quickly to remove substandard materials and revise the interior design. Features that were intended to meet a low budget were upgraded. Marble for the floors and wall panels came from Vermont, while the grand staircases were carved of Alabama stone. Elegant fluted columns were quarried in Colorado. Hard, lustrous Batesville, Arkansas, limestone formed the exterior walls while a softer Indiana limestone was used for the dome.

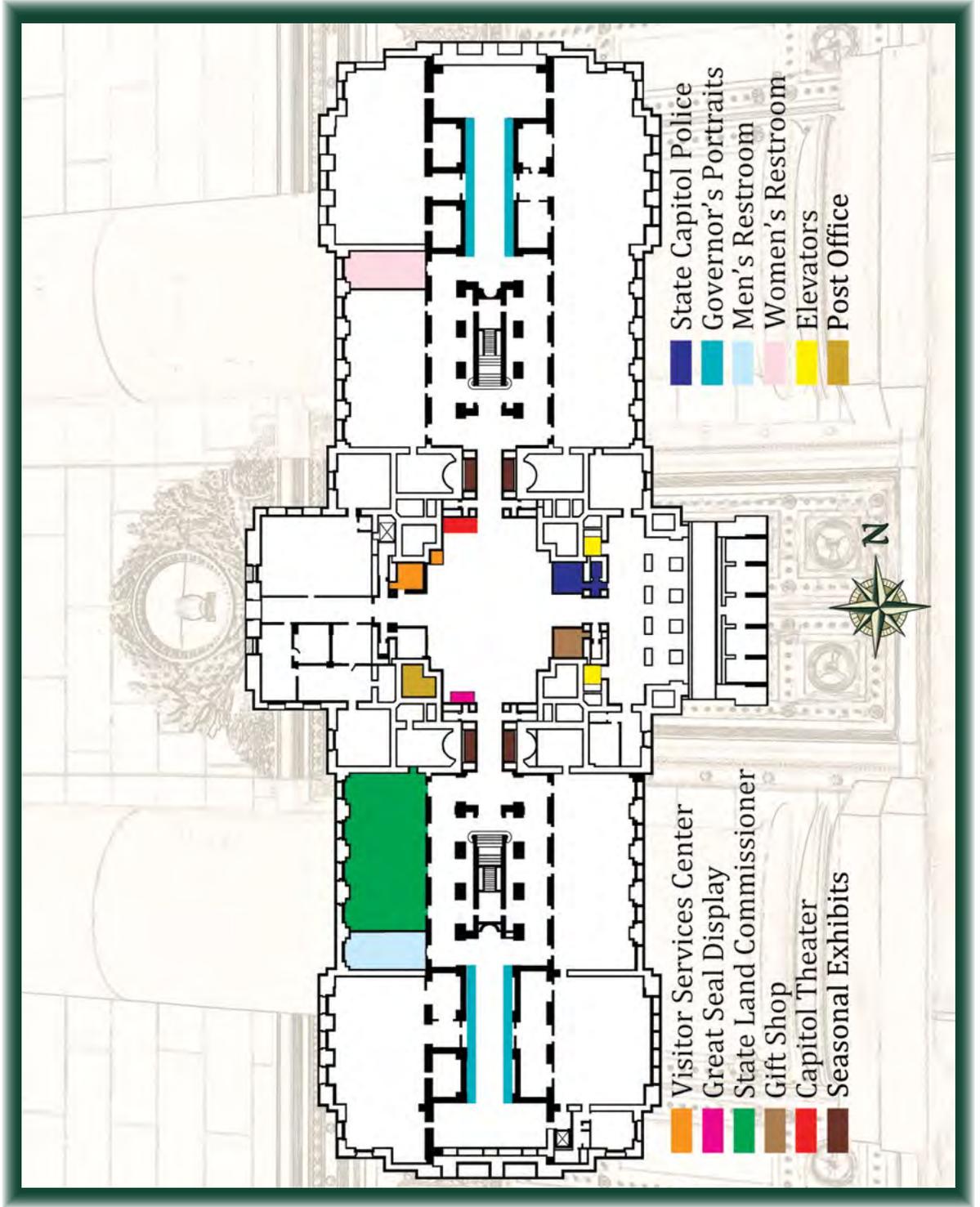
The legislature first met in the unfinished State Capitol in 1911, although it lacked permanent heating, lighting and many furnishings. It wasn't until January 1, 1915, that construction was officially declared complete. The final cost of the project topped \$2.2 million, surpassing the initial budget of \$ 1 million.

Today, the neo-classical Arkansas State Capitol looks much as it did in 1915. It measures 440 feet north to south, 196 feet east to west and covers nearly 287,000 square feet. The distance from ground level to the top of the dome's cupola is 213 feet. It is topped by a ball finial that is covered in gold leaf.



State Capitol Today

# First Floor



# The First Floor

Begin your tour in the first floor rotunda. Notice the lighted stained-glass rendering of the Great Seal of Arkansas in the southwest corner. Adopted by the state legislature in 1874, the seal includes 16 elements linked to aspects of Arkansas's history and economy. These symbols include the goddess of Liberty, an angel of mercy and the sword of justice. The eagle is holding emblems of both peace and war in its talons. Inside the shield are emblems of the state's 19th century economy such as steamboat transportation, agriculture and industry.



## *Exhibits and Displays*

In the north and south corridors of the first floor, adjacent to the lower rotunda, four exhibit cases offer changing installations that interpret and celebrate aspects of Arkansas's rich history, culture and attractions. They are curated by a team of archival experts who often use items donated by various organizations in Arkansas.

## *The Commissioner of State Lands*

The office of the Commissioner of State Lands dates back to Arkansas's earliest days. During the territorial period, the Land Office administered and recorded the transfer of federal lands to private ownership. Many of those original land records remain in its holdings, such as handwritten field notes and plat maps from the first survey of the Louisiana Purchase, Spanish Land Grants and Military Bounty Lands from 1812.

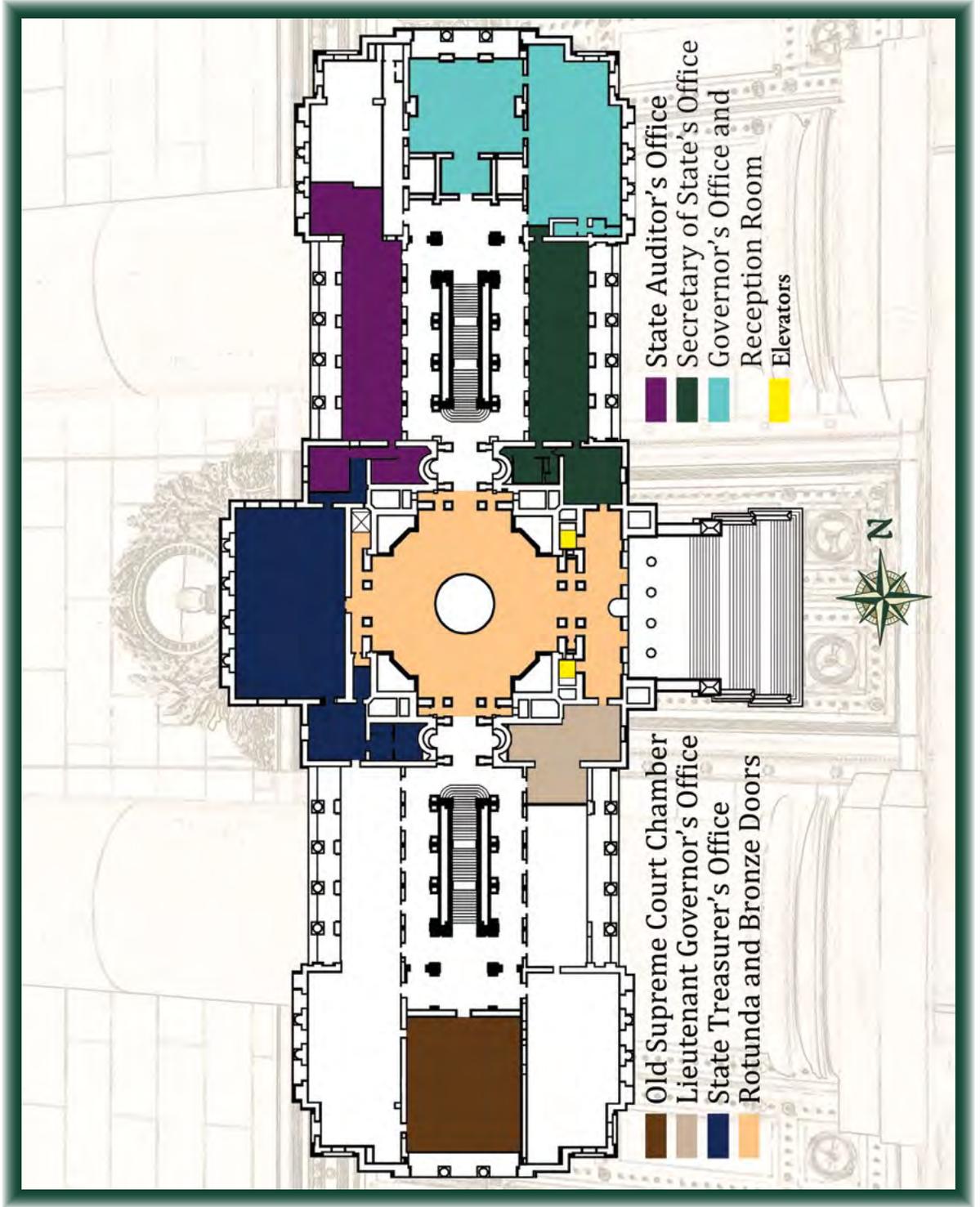


In early 2013, the Commissioner of State Lands unveiled its renovated Capitol offices that made many of those records available

for public view. Climate-controlled vaults, exhibit space and research facilities bring artifacts to light, many for the first time in more than a century. The restoration also uncovered beautiful hardwood floors that are original to the Capitol's construction.



# Second Floor



# The Second Floor

## Governor's Reception Room

The Governor's Reception Room is both a public room and the governor's dedicated conference space, used for staff meetings, press conferences, bill signings and other public events. Originally decorated with ornate plaster moldings, the room's décor was revised by Cass Gilbert to reflect the Craftsman style, emphasizing simpler designs and undisguised natural materials. At each end of the room, Batesville, Arkansas, limestone mantels and figured marble inserts surround ornamental fireplaces. The east mantel features carved heads representing the state's historic Native American populations; the west mantel's carvings call to mind the early European explorers and settlers.



The silverplate chandelier, candelabras and sconces, as well as the rich quarter sawn oak paneling, are original to the room. The wall and ceiling finishes duplicate the 1914-vintage decorative painting.

Two portraits hang above the room's fireplaces. The space above the east fireplace holds the portrait of the governor immediately preceding the incumbent. Above the west mantel, in the position of highest honor, hangs the

likeness of Governor George Washington Donaghey (1909-1913). Because of his leading role in completing the Capitol, after political scandals and infighting led to the project being defunded, Donaghey is sometimes dubbed "the father of the Capitol."

The room's central conference table was crafted of walnut from a tree planted by Donaghey's father on the family's farm in Conway, Arkansas. In 1935, Donaghey presented the table to the Capitol to commemorate the state's 100th birthday.

The windows offer views of the Little Rock Nine Monument, the Bicentennial Monument as well as the Arkansas River in the distance.



*Governor George Donaghey*

## The Rotunda

This grand central space hosts public meetings, speeches, hearings and rallies. Portraits of the four past governors featured in the rotunda include one of former Governor Bill Clinton, Arkansas's native son, elected 42nd President of the United States.

In 2013, the interior dome underwent a major project to repair plasterwork and return the dome to its original 1914 appearance. The first layers of paint were chemically analyzed in order to re-create the original colors. In all, 16 shades of paint and decorative glazing were used to highlight ornate carvings and finishes that had been lost under a century's worth of layers.



### *Decorative Elements*

Suspended from the ceiling by a 73-foot chain, the rotunda chandelier weighs more than 4,000 pounds and is approximately 12 feet in diameter and 18 feet in height. One of several light fixtures fashioned for the Capitol by the Mitchell-Vance Company of New York, this grand, intricate chandelier is assembled using thousands of brass, copper, zinc, iron and glass parts.

The six 10-foot-tall bronze doors, located on the eastern side of the rotunda, were purchased from Tiffany's of New York in 1910 for \$10,000. Today, those same doors are valued at \$250,000. In order to keep the uncoated bronze surfaces shining as the architect envisioned, the doors are polished by hand, inside and out, each week.

The bronze doors served as the main public entrance for much of the Capitol's first century. However, since September 11, 2001, visitors have entered via the ground-level tunnel doors through security stations operated by the State Capitol Police.



## The State Treasurer's Office

### *The Vault*

The office of the State Treasurer, located on the left side of the Rotunda, contains a vault secured by a series of four doors and three time locks. The 11-ton main vault door presented a stiff challenge to construction crews. Loaded onto conventional animal-drawn wagons, it sunk axle-deep. Ultimately, a rail spur track was laid to the west side of the building to carry the door. It was then hoisted through a hole in the west wall, using blocks, tackle and a steam winch. The vault holds only small amounts of cash, and its present function is mainly decorative and symbolic.



## Old Supreme Court Chamber

Located at the south end of the building, the Arkansas Supreme Court met in this chamber from 1912 through 1958. Because of increased caseloads and other considerations, the Supreme Court moved to the Justice Building on the southwest corner of the property surrounding the Capitol complex. The chamber is now used for legislative committee meetings, lectures and press conferences. The public sits in the chairs outside of the mahogany rail, while committee members, staff and the press are seated inside the railing.



### *Restoration*

Original furnishings in the room include its brass handrails, the mahogany rail, light fixtures, ornamental plaster, the judicial bench (enlarged in the 1920s to accommodate the court's addition of two justices) and the seven high-backed chairs. In 2000, the chamber was restored to its early appearance, which included restoring decorative paint finishes to the 1914 scheme. Period-appropriate furnishings — including the oak tables, armchairs and lectern — are re-creations.

The carpet and drapes closely mimic those originally installed in the chamber.

Shapes and symbols drawn from classical architectural ornamentation decorate the chamber's ceiling and cornices. The latter feature a recurring pattern of three metopes, or decorative panels, bearing symbols believed to illustrate principles of justice or the law.



- Green Shield
  - A symbol of defense or watchfulness; this may stand for law and justice's role of protecting society.



- Gray Shield
  - The anchor is a traditional symbol of safety or sureness, while the dolphin is variously described as symbolizing truth, intelligence, amity, purity; it was also regarded as the fastest animal in the seas. The two symbols intertwined enjoy an oxymoronic traditional meaning: an exhortation of "more haste, less speed," implying that good law must balance timeliness and diligence.

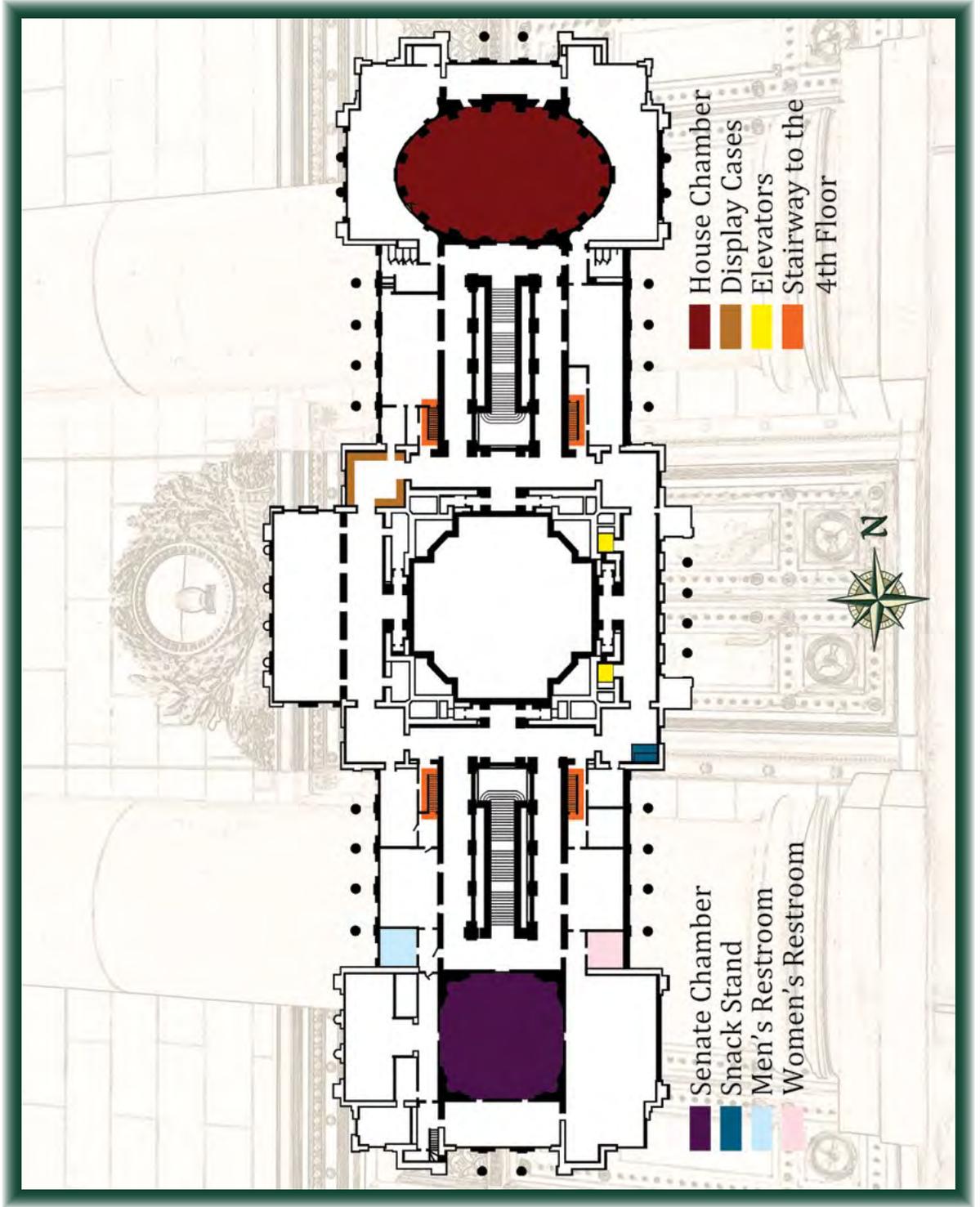


- Terra Cotta Oil Lamp
  - The lamp is a traditional symbol of wisdom or enlightenment, the guiding principle of true justice and good law.

From the windows, you can look out on the south Capitol grounds with views of the Eternal Flame, War of 1812 Memorial, and the Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial.



# Third Floor



# The Third Floor

## Heerwagen Murals

Above the grand staircases leading up to both the House and Senate chambers are four handpainted murals at the ends of the vaulted skylights. They remain the only public artworks commissioned for the building. The themes represented over the south Senate staircase are Education and Justice; over the north House staircase are War and Religion. These murals came from the studio of Paul Martin Heerwagen, a Bavarian-born artist and interior decorator from Fayetteville, Arkansas. His commission for the work was \$10,000. Completed in October 1914, the painted canvases were originally glued directly to the plaster walls below the skylights. The murals were restored in 2000. Currently, War and Religion are replicas. The originals are in storage awaiting complete restoration.



Education



Justice



War



Religion

## The State Senate

The state's legislative body, called the General Assembly, is composed of the State Senate and the House of Representatives. The Arkansas State Senate meets in the chamber located at the south end of the Capitol's third floor. ***(If the chamber doors are closed, you can visit the public galleries, located on the Fourth Floor.)*** The Senate consists of thirty-five members, each of whom represents a district of approximately 87,000 people.

Arkansas senators may serve a combined amount of time in both the Senate and the House of 16 years. The seating arrangement in the Senate is determined by seniority. The Lieutenant Governor serves as the President of the Senate and sits at the marble desk at the front of the room. The President Pro Tempore is elected by fellow senators to preside over the Senate on occasions when the Lieutenant Governor is absent.

Senate votes are taken by roll call. When a senator's name is called, he or she responds with a yea or nay vote; then, the votes are tallied and the result is read aloud.

### ***Meeting Times***

The General Assembly meets in regular session beginning the second Monday in January, in each odd-numbered year (2015, 2017, 2019...). The regular session lasts for a minimum of 60 days, but can be extended by a two-thirds vote of both chambers.

The General Assembly also convenes for a fiscal session beginning the second Monday of February, in each even-numbered year (2016, 2018, 2020 etc.). This session lasts for a minimum of 30 days and may be extended up to 15 days by a three-fourths vote of both chambers. The governor may also call a special session if specific issues need to be addressed in the interim.

### ***Decorative Features***

The Senate chamber was restored in 2001-2002. The decorative painting replicates the original décor applied by artist Paul Martin Heerwagen in 1914. The Senate President's marble desk is original, as is the 1,200-pound chandelier, the smallest of the Mitchell-Vance chandeliers in the building. In 1914, stained glass replaced the original crystal glass of the skylight in order to reduce the sun's glare; at about the same time, the first of several generations of draperies in the dome was installed to improve the room's acoustical properties. Outside the chamber and in adjacent galleries hang composite portraits of past Arkansas legislatures. The public viewing galleries are located in the balcony (fourth floor).



# House Chamber

## *Legislative Body*

Arkansas has 100 representatives, each representing approximately 29,000 people. The representatives may serve a combined amount of time in both the House and the Senate of 16 years. Ninety-nine of the representatives sit on the chamber floor. The seating, as in the Senate, is determined by seniority. The 100th representative serves as the Speaker of the House and is seated by the U.S. flag at the tall rostrum in the front of the room. One representative, chosen by his or her peers, serves as Speaker of the House and sits on the upper level of the rostrum. Next to the Speaker sits the Parliamentarian, who interprets and enforces the rules of debate during each session. The lower rostrum places are reserved for House clerks; reporters who once sat at this level are now assigned space in the press box of the West Gallery.

## *Architectural Elements*

The columns and pilasters in the House chamber are finished in scagliola, a technique which uses a mix of gypsum plaster, glue, pigments and marble dust applied over a base surface to simulate the look of marble. The scagliola, as well as the columns' gilded capitals and other features, were restored in 2009. The skylights and ceiling details were restored in 2014.

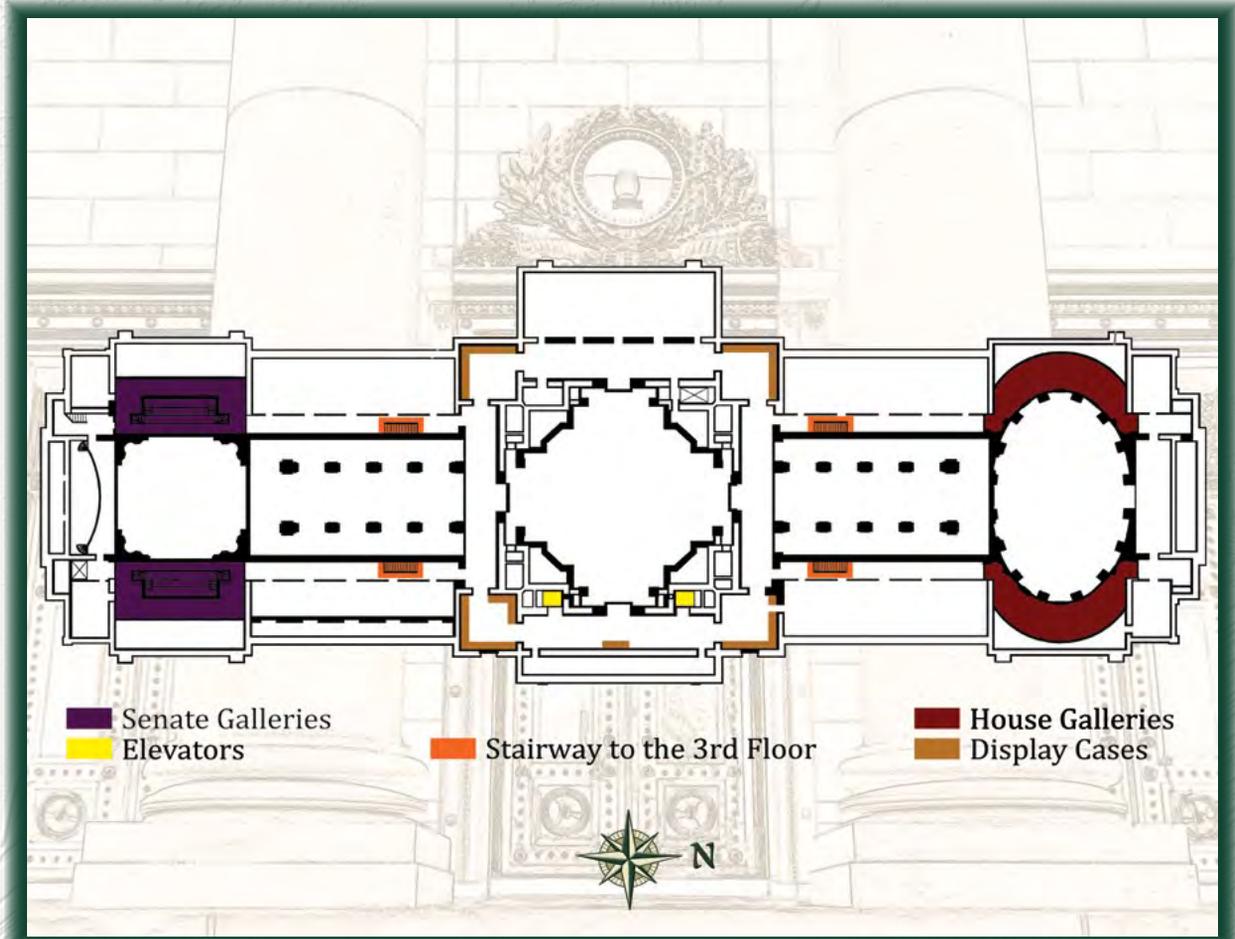
The chamber's original individual wooden writing desks have been replaced several times; the 2,000-pound Mitchell-Vance chandelier is original to the room. The stained glass skylight was installed in 1914 to reduce glare. The glasswork and fittings of the outer dome were restored in 2012, and the interior dome and ceiling underwent restoration in Summer, 2014.

## *Voting Procedure*

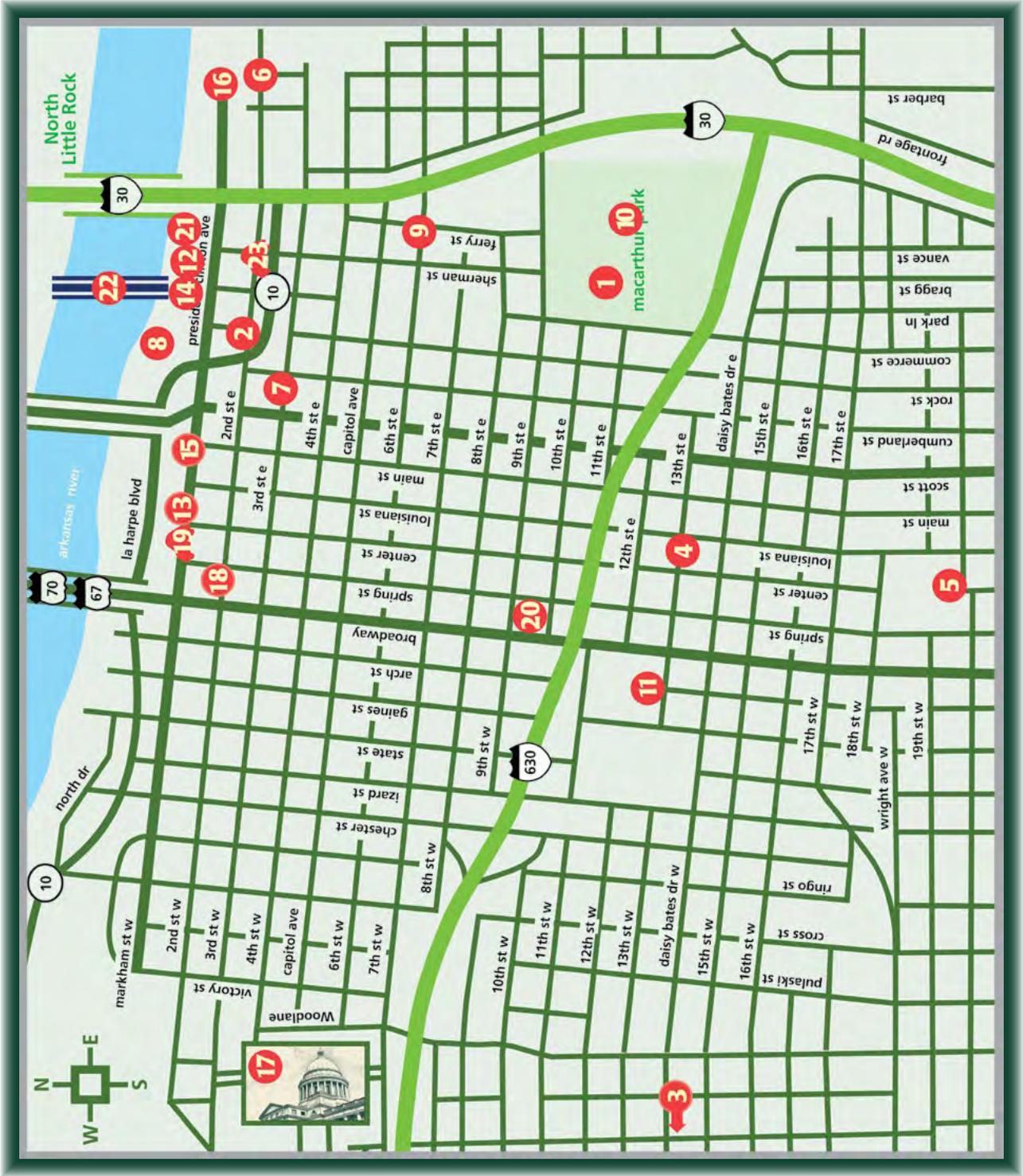
Representatives use the buttons at their desks to transmit votes to the chamber's electronic voting system. The green button transmits a "yea" vote; the red a "nay" vote; and the yellow signals the member is present, but not voting; and the white to request a page. Votes are displayed on the screens at the front of the chamber, and then tallied electronically to show the final vote totals.



# Fourth Floor



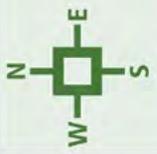
We hope you have enjoyed exploring the Arkansas State Capitol. As you make your way back down to the first floor, please take time to view the permanent exhibits on the third and fourth floors (see maps on pages 11 and above). Also notice the framed composites — or “class photos” — of each General Assembly that has convened here. Don’t forget to pick up a memento of your visit at the Capitol Gift Shop, open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays in the first-floor rotunda.



North Little Rock

arkansas river

macarthur park



22  
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5

17

la harpe blvd

presidential blvd

2nd st e

3rd st e

4th st e

capitol ave

6th st e

7th st e

8th st e

9th st e

10th st e

11th st e

13th st e

daisy bates dr e

15th st e

16th st e

17th st e

main st

louisiana st

center st

spring st

broadway

arch st

gaines st

state st

lizard st

chester st

8th st w

9th st w

10th st w

11th st w

12th st w

13th st w

daisy bates dr w

15th st w

16th st w

cross st

pulaski st

17th st w

18th st w

19th st w

wright ave w

17th st w

18th st w

19th st w

center st

spring st

louisiana st

main st

scott st

cumberland st

rock st

commer st

park in

bragg st

vance st

barber st

frontage rd

markham st w

2nd st w

3rd st w

4th st w

capitol ave

6th st w

7th st w

victory st

Woodlane

10

north dr

70

67

30

10

630

30

# Downtown Little Rock Attractions



1. **Arkansas Arts Center**, 10th & Commerce
2. **Central Arkansas Library System, Cox Creative Center**, 120 Commerce
3. **Central High School Historic Site & Museum**, 2125 Daisy Bates Drive
4. **EMOBA: The Black Museum of Arkansas and Performing Arts**, 1208 Louisiana
5. **Governor's Mansion**, 17th & Center
6. **Heifer International**, One World Ave.
7. **Historic Arkansas Museum**, 200 E. 3rd
8. **Little Rock Marker, La Petit Roche**, North end of Rock Street in Riverfront Park
9. **Little Rock Visitor Information Center at Curran Hall**, 615 E. Capitol
10. **MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History**, 503 E. 9th Street
11. **Mt. Holly Cemetery**, 12th & Broadway
12. **Museum of Discovery**, 500 President Clinton Avenue
13. **Old State House Museum**, 300 W. Markham
14. **River Market, Dining, Arts & Entertainment District**, President Clinton Ave.
15. **Statehouse Convention Center**, Markham & Main
16. **William J. Clinton Presidential Center & Park**, 1200 President Clinton Ave.
17. **Arkansas State Capitol**, Capitol & Woodlane
18. **Pulaski County Court House**, Markham & Spring
19. **Municipal Parking Garage**, Markham & Spring
20. **Mosaic Templars Cultural Center**, Broadway and 9th Street
21. **Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center**, 602 President Clinton Avenue
22. **Junction Pedestrian Bridge**
23. **River Market Parking Garage**, 2nd and Commerce

Compliments of

**Office of the Arkansas Secretary of State**

Map courtesy of Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau



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