

CEREMONY
CELEBRATING THE REBUILDING
OF THE
MAX ROSEN U.S. COURTHOUSE
WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA



AUGUST 31, 1999



In 1933, Postmaster General

James Farley dedicated the construction of a facility on this site to serve as the City of Wilkes-Barre's new post office and federal building. It was a modest structure, typical of those

erected around the nation by the Federal government during the Great Depression era. It was primarily for the use of the Postal Service, with court facilities provided as an afterthought following appeals from the Luzerne County Bar. Not until 1948 was it designated by Congress as a site for United States District Court proceedings. Later, Chief Judge Michael Sheridan of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania maintained his chambers and a courtroom in this building until his death fifteen years later. The building also became Judge Max Rosenn's official station when he was appointed in 1970 to the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, and it was named the Max Rosenn United States Courthouse by Congressional enactment on March 5, 1996.

The ceremony today not only celebrates its redesign and rebuilding into a magnificent and stately facility, but for the first time in its proud history its commitment solely as a United States Courthouse.

Grateful Acknowledgements

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
MID-ATLANTIC REGION
PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE

KEATING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
Developer

KEATING BUILDING CORPORATION
General Contractor

KLING-LINDQUIST PARTNERSHIP
Architect

RICCI ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS
Courts Design

RITTER AND ASSOCIATES
Consulting Engineer

PROGRAM

Call to Order

"America the Beautiful"

Sung by Charles and Marianna Smith

Introduction and Welcome

Honorable Max Rosenn
Judge, United States Court of Appeals
for the Third Circuit

Remarks

Robert Hewell
Director of Portfolio Management
General Services Administration

Honorable Thomas D. McGroarty
Mayor, City of Wilkes-Barre

Honorable Paul E. Kanjorski
Member, United States House of Representatives

Charles A. Shaffer, Esquire
President, Luzerne County Bar Association

James J. West, Esquire
President, Middle District of Pennsylvania Chapter
Federal Bar Association

Honorable Sylvia H. Rambo
Chief Judge, United States District Court
Middle District of Pennsylvania

Honorable Edward R. Becker
Chief Judge, United States Court of Appeals
for the Third Circuit

Adjournment
Honorable Max Rosenn

America the Beautiful

Katharine Lee Bates

Samuel A. Ward

*O beautiful for spacious skies, For amber waves of grain,
for purple mountain majesties Above the fruited plain,
America! America! God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea!*

*O beautiful for pilgrim feet, Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat Across the wilderness,
America! America! God end thy every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law.*

*O beautiful for patriot dream That sees beyond the years
Shine alabaster cities gleam Undimmed by human tears.
America! America! God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!*



Reception After the Ceremony by Courtesy of

Honorable Max Rosenn

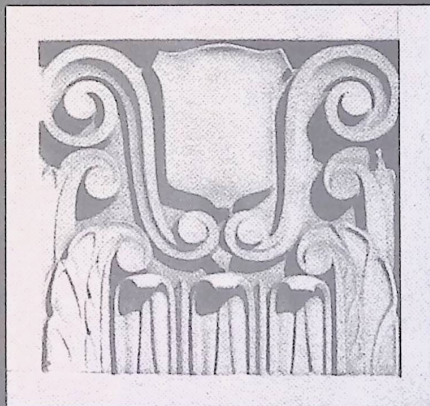
Honorable John J. Thomas

Honorable Raymond J. Durkin

MAX ROSENN
UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

UNITED STATES GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION



In the midst of the Great Depression, a new post office and Federal building rose at the corner of South Main and South Streets in the City of Wilkes-Barre. Among those impressed by the new edifice was a young attorney, a native of the Wyoming Valley, who had recently returned to his hometown to begin his legal career. At the time, Attorney Max Rosenn little realized that, sixty-three years later, he would see the same building renewed for a new century of service as the Max Rosenn United States Courthouse.



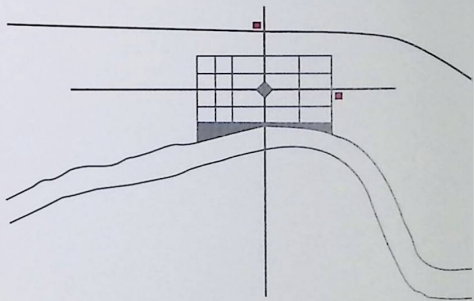
"It is eminently appropriate," says Congressman Paul Kanjorski, "that the first Federal courthouse in Wilkes-Barre's history be named after Judge Rosenn, a man who has enriched our community with his time, energy, intellect, and love. Our region has benefited greatly from his career and will continue to benefit from this newly-renovated courthouse named in his honor."

For decades, this structure has served as the primary embodiment of the Federal presence in the City of Wilkes-Barre. It typifies the elegant, durable public buildings constructed in cities and towns across the nation by the Federal government during the 1930's. From the street, the new Courthouse appears essentially the same as it did when it was first constructed. This external continuity with the past, however, makes the internal transformation of this Art Moderne treasure all the more dramatic.

Wilkes-Barre's 1934 Federal building was constructed primarily for use as the city's post office, with court facilities provided essentially as an afterthought. The Federal judiciary, however, soon asserted its presence. In 1948, Wilkes-Barre

was designated by Congress as a site for United States District Court proceedings, and the building's judicial uses continued to grow. Space in the Federal building was at a premium: although the post office moved one block away to a new and larger facility in the 1960's, its former home was filled by the Postal Service's Information Systems Service Center.

At the same time, the Federal court system was rapidly expanding, driven by increased dockets, new court technologies, and revised security requirements. By the early 1990's, the courts in Wilkes-Barre, confined to the second floor of the building and operating in inadequate facilities, needed more space to conduct their business. *That conclusion led to a remarkable effort involving the redevelopment of two buildings, made possible by extensive cooperation between the General Services Administration, the United States Postal Service, Congressman Paul Kanjorski, local government, and Keating Development Company.*



From the beginning, GSA faced a challenge in Wilkes-Barre. It was clear that court functions had expanded to the point that a new facility was necessary. First, though, GSA needed to determine just how this expansion would occur. An alternatives analysis revealed that the Federal court program



could best be accommodated by a thorough rehabilitation of the existing building, turning it over completely to court functions. However, the Federal building was owned by the Postal Service, which continued to house its data processing center there.

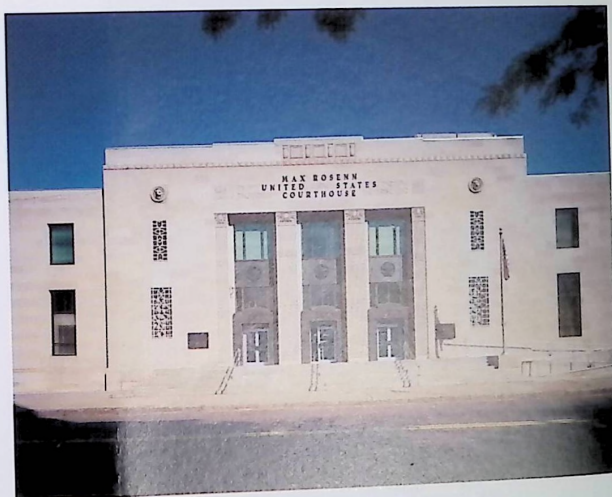
To solve the problem, GSA approached the Postal Service with an offer to move the data processing operation. The Postal Service agreed, retaining Keating Development Company to develop the new facility. The team was evaluating possible sites for the Postal Service when Congressman Paul Kanjorski raised the possibility of utilizing the former Stegmaier Brewery, a National Register-listed landmark which had sat abandoned on the edge of downtown Wilkes-Barre for two decades.

Keating began to investigate the vacant brewery and, working with GSA, the facilities puzzle began to fall into place.



Keating found that the Stegmaier option was feasible, but it was simply too large a project to justify accommodating the USPS operations on their own. However, the other Federal agencies in Wilkes-Barre were housed in leased space that was no longer suitable for their needs. By combining the data processing center and the other agencies, all of the non-court Federal functions in Wilkes-Barre could be housed under one roof, and the court family would be able to claim the South Main Street facility as its own. GSA decided to pursue this dual strategy, dovetailing building programs and completing two complicated rehabilitations in the space of three years. *Two separate historic structures were saved: a classic Federal building was rebuilt so that it could continue as a civic anchor, while a ruined local landmark was transformed into a state-of-the-art office building at the gateway to Wilkes-Barre's downtown.*

The Wilkes-Barre story illustrates the extent of GSA's dedication to finding the correct solution for both clients and community. In this way, it epitomizes GSA's Good Neighbor Program, in which Federal building initiatives are used to support the creation of stronger neighborhoods, cities, and towns. This national commitment to community revitalization, set forth by Executive Order 12072, has been made concrete in the Wyoming Valley.



In Wilkes-Barre, GSA worked with a diverse group of partners to craft a creative solution which preserved two local landmarks as it fulfilled its mandate to its clients. While the creation of the Max Rosenn United States Courthouse allows the Federal judiciary to continue as a pillar of its central city neighborhood, this historic structure now contains a set of interior spaces which are the qualitative equal of the building's urbane exterior.

The interior spaces of the Max Rosenn United States Courthouse celebrate the civic nature of this building and its special role in our society. Treasury

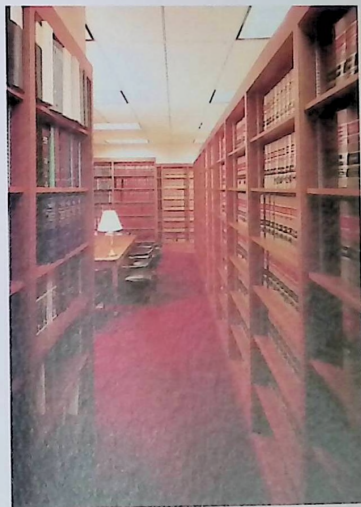
Department architect Louis A. Simon was the designer of the original Federal building, which epitomizes the qualities of the Art Moderne style. The new interior design honors Simon's earlier work and integrates the best details of old and new. From the restored vestibule, with its elegant pendant lights and

marble door surrounds, the public passes through a set of leaded glass doors and into the main lobby. The lobby's lofty, gently curving ceiling provides an appropriate canopy for this newly-created public room. A massive limestone propylaeum centers the space, echoing the courthouse exterior, and focusing visitors on the route to the courtrooms. Public art fills the interior: 1930's etchings from the GSA Fine Arts Collection adorn the lobby, while "Grille #7," an elegant work in iron by Philadelphia artist Stephen Robin, serves as a powerful termination for the main corridor.

The Max Rosenn United States Courthouse provides the U.S. Court of Appeals, the U.S. District Court, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, the U.S. Probation Office, and the U.S. Marshals Service with a variety of newly crafted interiors which have been carefully fitted to their users. The Federal court system, always integral to the life of the Republic, plays an increasingly visible role on the national stage. Now, in Wilkes-Barre, the administration of justice by those courts will be conducted in gracious spaces reflecting the significance and solemnity of the judicial process.



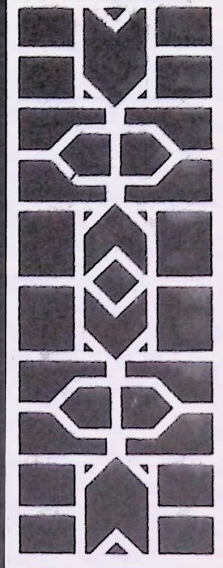
"This majestic building, with its elegant lobby to welcome those who enter, its impressive courtrooms and spacious offices, demonstrates that the old can be renewed and downtown Wilkes-Barre can be revitalized," states Judge Rosemm. "I hope that this will stimulate others to do likewise. It is cleverly redesigned and beautifully rebuilt, truly a United States Courthouse resplendent."



MAX ROSENN
UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

The United States General Services Administration has a very simple mission: "to improve the effectiveness of the Federal Government by ensuring quality work environments for its employees." GSA Administrator David Barram states, "We provide expertly managed space, products, services, and solutions that our customers – Federal employees – need to do their jobs." GSA's largest component, the Public Buildings Service, is responsible for the Federal workspace, offering a range of services including building design, construction, space acquisition, property management, and related services.



**GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
MID-ATLANTIC REGION
PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE**

**SOUTH MAIN STREET ASSOCIATES:
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
KEATING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY**
Owner

KEATING BUILDING CORPORATION
General Contractor

KLING-LINDQUIST PARTNERSHIP
Architect

RIGGI ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS
Courts Design

RITTER AND ASSOCIATES
Consulting Engineer

Architectural Photography:
Michael Thomas

Historic Photo:
Wyoming Historical
and Geological Society

For further information, contact:
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Business Development Division
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