# BONEY COURTHOUSE ARTWORK

Anchorage, Alaska

**Boney Courthouse Main Entry – 2015**

PUB-29 (9/15)(white)

## FORWARD

The Boney Memorial Courthouse was named after Justice George F. Boney, who was appointed to the Alaska Supreme Court in 1968 by Governor William Egan. He began serving as Chief Justice May of 1970, where he served until his death on August 30, 1972. At the memorial service for Justice Boney, Governor Egan said "This afternoon I noted the fine construction progress on the new state court building downtown and I couldn't help but think of the great enthusiasm and the work that Chief Justice Boney put in toward that day when the first earth was turned to begin the construction of that building. I think that it is fitting tonight for me to tell you that when that construction is finished that the dedicated building will be known as the Justice Boney Building."

The Courthouse was completed in 1973 and was the first public building in the state to include within its planning and design the acquisition of works of art. In 1975, the Alaska State Legislature enacted a requirement that all future public buildings constructed by the state would contain works of art. That program is known as the Alaska 1% for Public Art Program.

The cultural history of the Eskimo, Athabascan, Aleut, and Tlingit people of Alaska is represented in many of the works of art displayed in this building. Some art pieces use traditional art forms, and others use contemporary techniques and materials.

## "THUNDERBIRD - KILLER WHALE POLE"

By Leo Jacobs, Sr., Edwin Kasko,
Clifford Thomas, and John Hagen

This is a two figure totem pole representing the two mythological beings who guided the ancestors of the present Tlingit Indians to Alaska from their homeland in Hokkaido.

This migration is believed to have occurred about 5,000 years ago after the disappearance of the land bridge that once connected Alaska with Siberia.

The people departed from Hokkaido in their great canoes and were guided across the ocean by the Black Eagle which flew before them making lightning with his wings. This also caused thunder, for which he was called the "Thunderbird." But, as days went by, fog closed in and the people could no longer see the Thunderbird and they became lost.

Finally a killer whale appeared with the mystic figure of Gunara riding on its back. Gunara told the people to follow the killer whale which led them to the Stikine Valley near the present day city of Wrangell in Southeastern Alaska.

**Location:** Main Lobby

## THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

In 1884 Congress provided for a civil government for Alaska, and the first governor "on his own motion" designed and had a seal made for the District of Alaska. The seal highlighted Alaska's icebergs, northern lights, and native people. In 1910 Governor Walter E. Clark had a draftsman in Juneau draw a rough draft of a new seal, which incorporated the original features plus symbols for mining, agriculture, fisheries, fur seal rookeries, and a railroad.

The design was approved by the Acting Attorney General of the United States. A "more refined" drawing was made by an unknown person in the Department of the Interior and the new seal was ready for use early in 1911.

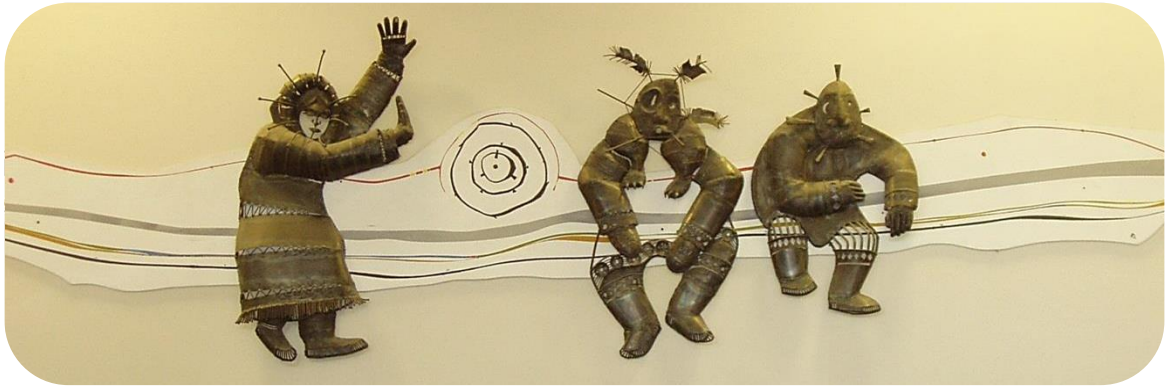
After Alaska was changed from a District to a Territory in 1912, the new designation was substituted on the seal. The Constitution for the State of Alaska provides that the Territorial Seal shall be the Seal for the State of Alaska, with the word "Territory" changed to that of "State."

At the time it was cast in 1973, it was the largest cast seal in the United States.

**Location:** Main Lobby

## CEREMONIAL DANCE WALL PANEL

By Larry Ahvakana



This sculpture of three welded steel figures reflects the ageless ceremonial dance of the Barrow Eskimos. The dancing masks are styled from 19th century masks. The dress of the figures is contemporary. The background is acrylic paint on canvas, suggesting the skyline above the arctic tundra. It also includes an etching designed from Eskimo pre-historic art objects.

**Location:** Main Lobby

## WALL PANEL

By Alaska Indian Arts, Inc.

This Tlingit design, hand carved and painted wood panel, is derived from a Ceremonial House of a Raven Chief. It is a split design of the Raven, as though the Raven was split in half and laid flat. The eyes of the raven, the body, and the joint of the tail are faces. The wings and the feet are eyes.

**Location:** Supreme Court Courtroom

**WALL PANEL**

By Ronald W. Senungetuk

This teak wood panel consists of short individual planks in vertical alignment to characterize the interior wall planking of an Eskimo sod house. The notches on the surface form designs which are stylized versions of 19th century engravings on walrus ivory.

The placement of motifs are asymmetrical, unrelated in size to each other, and some are upside-down, to follow characteristics of pre-historic art. Very subtle stains were applied in the notches using conventional colors seen on 19th century dance masks.

**Location:** Supreme Court Lobby

## WOOD PANELS

By Leo Jacobs Sr., Edwin Kasko, Clifford Thomas, and John Hagen

**Panel 1**

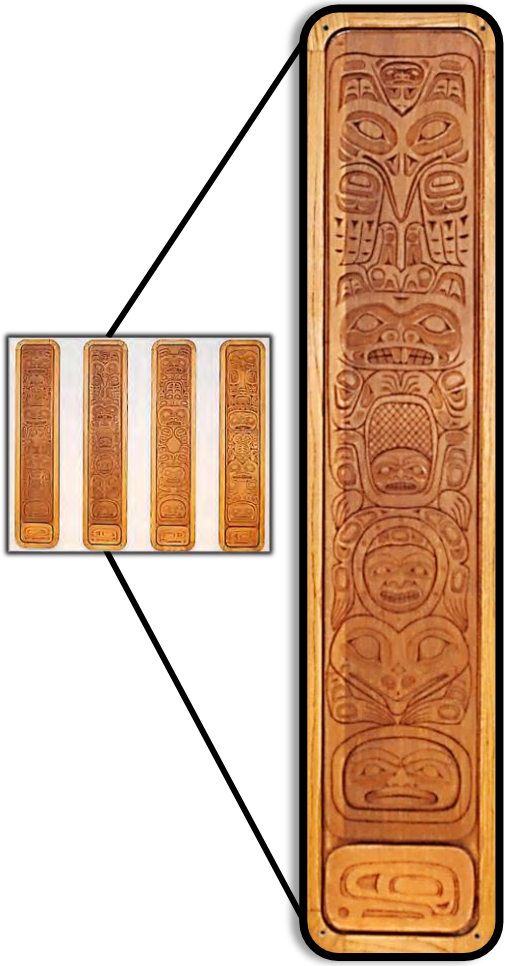
**Under the Eagle Crest**

1. Grizzly bear - brave and of great strength
2. Wolf - a sub clan; great cunning and wisdom, known to have led the Tlingit people to a high mountain during the 40 day flood of the world
3. Killer whale - the tail is turned up and held in the mouth, the grizzly bear of the sea, guided their ancestors from their homeland on the Japanese island of Hokkaido to a place now known as Wrangell
4. Sometimes can be the sun, sometimes the moon. The Raven placed this in the skies for the benefit of all mankind

**Location:** The Mezzanine

These panels were originally displayed on the main entry doors to the Boney Courthouse.

**Panel 2**

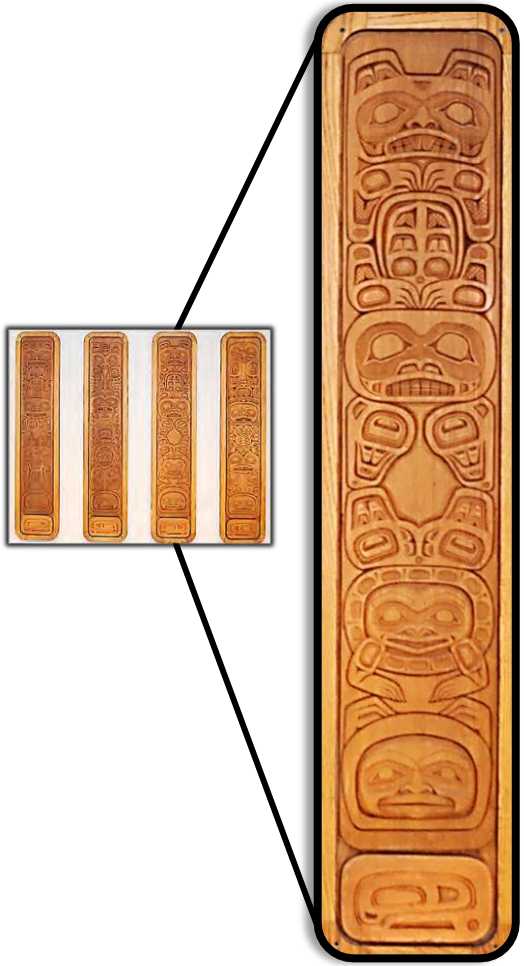


**Raven**

1. Raven - equal status to eagle
2. Beaver - a sub clan of the Raven Clan
3. Frog - perpetual life (frog that never dies)
4. Face - sun or moon

Raven is a top Tribal clan symbol of the Tlingit tribe of Southeast Alaska

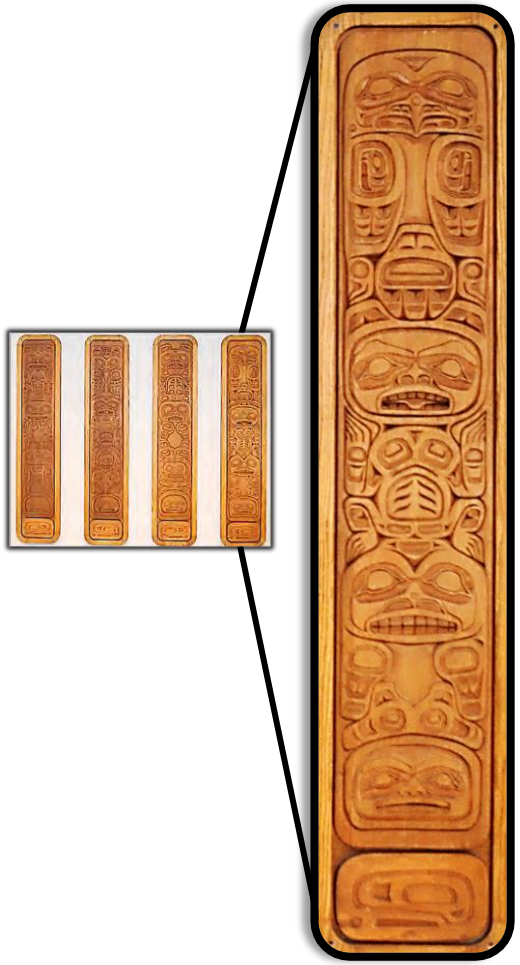
**Panel 3**



**Sub Clans of the Raven Clan**

1. Beaver - denotes hard work and purpose
2. Whale - tremendous size, like the State of Alaska
3. Frog - perpetual life (frog that never dies)
4. Face - sun or moon

**Panel 4**



**Eagle**

1. Of equal status of the Raven Clan
2. Brown bear - great strength
3. Sea bear, or Wasco, a mythical half bear, half whale which rules the sea
4. Face - sun or moon

## CERAMIC TILES

"Treaty of Cession" (1867)

Prior to demolishing the original courthouse located at 845 W. Fourth Avenue, the three ceramic mosaics were removed and restored by Dave and Rich Welsh of W & W Company of Alaska. The restoration project took 250 man hours to complete. The original design was conceived by Buell Nesbett, the court's first Chief Justice.

Scenes of native whale hunting, the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867, and statehood commemorate Alaska's past. The Venetian glass tiles were designed by Armond Kirschbaum and produced by Alaska Art Tile in 1963.

**Location:** Supreme Court Lobby

## SUPREME COURT JUSTICES
## PHOTO DISPLAY

The photo display provides a historic time line of each Chief Justices' term and the panel of Justices that served during each term. The role of Chief Justice of the Alaska State Supreme Court rotates every three years.

**Location:** Supreme Court Lobby

## SUPREME COURT DOOR HANDLES

By Ronald W. Senungetuk

The handles are made of rosewood and fossilized walrus ivory.

## DOOR PANELS

By James Schrock

The two 2' x 6-1/3' panels are made of joined 1 x 12" Honduras mahogany planks. The motifs in taglio form a genre composition which is derived from 19th century Eskimo graphic art on ivory and wood objects. Part of the composition is free interpretation of Northwest Coast Indian art and Athabascan graphic motifs on moose hide garments.

**Location:** Supreme Court Lobby

## STATE SEAL

By Alaska Indian Arts, Inc.

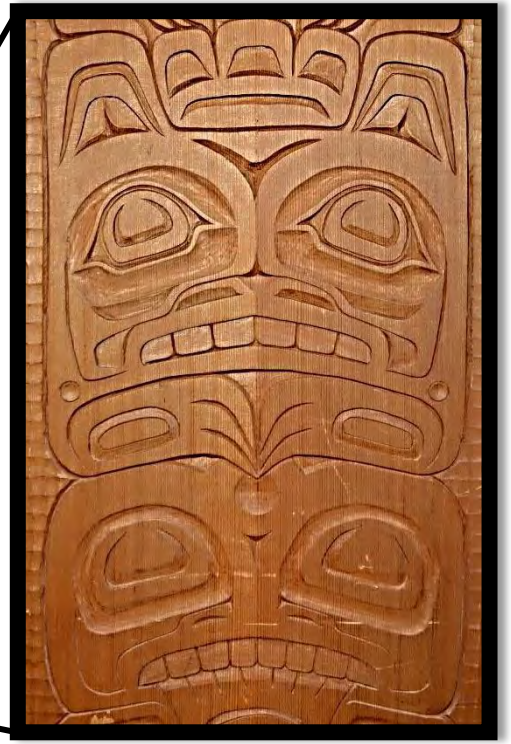
This 10' hand-carved seal of the State of Alaska was developed under the direction of Carl W. Heinmiller, the founder of Alaska Indian Arts, Inc. located in Haines, Alaska. The seal consists of four pieces of 6' red cedar held together with three 10-inch bolts.

**Location:** Supreme Court Courtroom

**"ALASKA SKIES"**
by Suzanne Donazetti

The series of seven copper tapestries depicts the interaction of the colors of Alaskan landscape and the unique light conditions. The artist created a complex abstract design flowing across the wall with gentle harmonious curves, expecting that it would provide a visual focal point for the justices as they contemplate weighty matters brought before the court. The artist used sheet copper, "painted" with gold leaf, transparent inks and powders, to weave a design, enhancing the experience, while honoring the serious nature of the business conducted within the room.

**Location:** Supreme Court Courtroom



## EAGLE CHIEF'S PANEL

By Alaska Indian Arts, Inc.

Ceremonial tribal houses used these panels on the four support posts which held up the main roof. This panel or house post is from an Eagle Chief's house:

From top to bottom:

1. Eagle denotes the clan
2. Brown Bear - his great size and strength are a symbol of Alaska and its strength and greatness.
3. Sea bear or Wasco - mythical creature, half whale, half bear is holding a halibut in his mouth. He brought the halibut from the sea for the Tlingit people as before that time they had only fished the rivers for salmon.

**Location:** Supreme Court Library

## GRIZZLY SOW WITH CUB

By Mike Sirl

This sculpture, fabricated from Corten steel, celebrates the essence of family, love, and protection. The artist states that it examines the complexity and paradox of "man in nature" and is an example of hand crafted art in an impersonal, high-tech world. The life size animals are not sited on a traditional base, but in a landscape setting. The bears invite touching, learning, conversation, and photography.

**Location:** Exterior Plaza

**For more information about this publication,**
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