

**NESBETT COURTHOUSE ARTWORK**  
**Anchorage, Alaska**  
**Alaska Court System**



PUB-35 (Ivory)  
June 2006

## Stained Glass Windows

“Consider Truth” (3rd Floor) “Consider Freedom” (4th Floor)  
“Consider Justice” (5th Floor) “Consider Truth” (6th Floor)



### “Consider Justice”

These stained glass windows located in lobbies of floors three through six, were created by Vivienne McConnell of Chugiak, Alaska, in collaboration with Valerie Collins of Schuylerville, New York. Upper “transom like” windows were selected for artwork to create an ornamental band in lobby areas that create patterns of light and color on the floor and



walls of the space while remaining safely out of the public’s reach. The designs capture the architectural themes

of the building and echo the ribbon shapes in the sidewalk to create movement through the spaces. Each floor has its own color palette and the colors used from floor to floor share hues that are used throughout the building. The intensity of the bold, deep and vibrant colors is offset by the architectural clear glass in each of the designs.

Most artworks in the Nesbett Courthouse were funded through the Anchorage 1% for Public Art program.

## 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. The triptych is located in the basement of the Nesbett Courthouse.



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.

## Courthouse Exterior Clock

“On and On”

The exterior clock was designed and constructed by local artist D. Lowell Zercher. The artist states “the design was achieved by playing with a traditional clock face and developing an interesting geometric interplay to denote the hours. The ring is the unifying feature of the clock and alludes to the continuity of time. The color scheme complements the building with the granite face used to unite the clock to the facade and the color black chosen to mimic the flecks in the surrounding granite. Bronze used for the triangles and hands give the verdigris color. The point colors for the ring tie the other colors together and give the clock a contemporary feel.”



## Main Lobby “In Search of Truth”

This major focal artwork was designed and produced by local artist Susie Qimmiqsak Bevins-Ericsen, an Alaskan Inupiaq Eskimo. The theme of this suspended, ethereal sculpture is derived from Alaska native legends and imagery of the power of spiritual forces. The design suggests Man’s spiritual journey in search of truth.



The artist states “The Kayaks signify the Elders’ journey in search of wisdom to pass down to the people. The Mask forms express the Inua, or spirit, of the ancient cultures. The central core of the work evokes the wonder of the Northern Lights.” The work is constructed of aluminum extrusions, perforated aluminum strips, Lexan plastic and aluminum sheet metal. The pieces are suspended from the ceiling using high strength aircraft cable.

## Jury Assembly “Tied to Time”

D. Lowell Zercher created this clock to personify the “Alaskan Sourdough” in the big city. The log cabin symbolized the origin of the person and the “zippy” tie depicts the sourdough’s personal sense of style.



## “Rain Coming”



Bill Brody’s 1992 painting “Rain Coming” depicts the landscape of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Desiring to share the beauty of this vibrant painting with the public, Justice Dana Fabe graciously donated it to the Alaska Court System while serving as Chief Justice.

## Lobby Clocks

D. Lowell Zercher has created an assortment of clocks located near the elevators on all but the first floor. Using combinations of mixed media (i.e., woods, metals, plastics and paints) the artist has produced both whimsical and stately pieces. Using interesting shapes, texture, and color the artist engages the viewer with these beautifully crafted, “friendly” clocks that puzzle and amuse.

### Basement

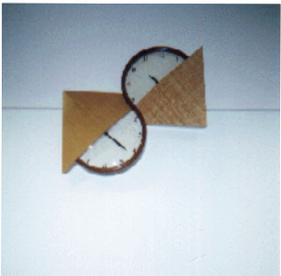
“Tay Unit”



This clock is designed to depict a child holding up his or her arms in an expression of happiness or searching. The child is stylized with primary and secondary colors to make it lively and remind the viewer of those early years of childhood innocence.

### Second Floor

“Does Anybody Really Care”



This is a traditional clock face in a very untraditional design. By shifting the split face it forces you to look at the clock in a different way, if for nothing else than to tell time. The artwork explores the interplay between hard crisp lines with smooth wavy lines and uses contrasting woods to create rhythm.

## Main Lobby



Five bronze plaques with the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights inscribed on them enhance the stately space below the ascending staircase in the lobby. The plaques were created by the American Spirit Foundation and generously donated by Jon C. Conner in honor of Superior Court Judge Karl Johnstone.



Located west of the lobby elevators, this cabinet highlights the career and accomplishments of Alaska's first Chief Justice, Buell A. Nesbett. The courthouse was named after Chief Justice Nesbett in honor of his contributions and service to the Alaska Court System.

## Jury Assembly Room

### Display Cases

Three cherry wood display cabinets adorn the jury assembly space enhancing the public's knowledge of the history of the justice system in Alaska. One exhibit is dedicated to the pioneering women lawyers of our state and introduces several of the first women to be sworn into the Alaska Bar Association. Another display honors 40 years of service by Honorable James M. Fitzgerald and Honorable James A. Von Der Heydt, two of Alaska's first judges. The remaining cabinet contains artifacts portraying the



development of the courts, judicial districts, and organization of the courts. Photos of all judges and magistrates currently serving from all districts are showcased. Recognition of programs such as the wellness court and mental health court, implemented by our justice system, are commended for being creative solutions toward reducing recidivism.

### Display Boards



The Alaska Bar Association's 100th anniversary, 1896 - 1996, is celebrated in 3 display boards which cover the early days of justice in Alaska. Settlement of the state, creation of the Alaska Bar Association, and the growth of the Alaska Court System are historically illustrated by this project produced by the Bar's Historians' Committee.

## Third Floor "Mover/Shaker"

The personas behind this clock are those people who do business in the city in areas that are often nicely furnished, traditional and "uptown". This "uptown" part is shown by the curly walnut and brass. These movers and shakers make things happen. This is symbolized by the wavy lines on the brass body. At the same time they have personal lives and styles which are referred to by the painted parts.



## Fourth Floor "Yesterday & Today"

The purpose of this clock is to reinforce the formality of the courthouse. It combines traditional architectural elements of stone, columns, and a crowning capital to leave the impression of a stately courthouse.



**Fifth Floor**  
“Pacesetter”



This is a contemporary remake of a traditional style clock that would have been found historically in courthouses. The contemporary influence gives it a stronger presence by incorporating the rich Sopele Pomele wood of the body with accents of brass and ebony. It still has the comforting feeling of the swinging pendulum although in this case it does not actually regulate the time.

**Sixth Floor**  
“About Time”

This clock is a display of luxurious materials: Australian lace-wood and gold in a pleasing arrangement with the bisecting V-shaped design layout to denote the hours on the clock face. It is an original shape clearly indicating that it is “About Time”.



**NESBETT COURTHOUSE**  
Description of Artworks



The Nesbett Courthouse, designed by local architectural firm McCool Carlson Green, reflects the dynamic relationship between the formal structure of the law and the humanity with which it is administered. According to the architect, “The architectural expression of the courthouse reflects and illuminates this complex interaction through contrasting and integrating formal architectural patterns, natural flowing textures, and indigenous cultural expressions. Echoes of classical form and organization in the facade and interiors, in concern with traditional materials, creates an appropriate sense of dignity and fairness linking this facility with the grand traditions of courthouse design in the United States”.

## Front Entry Totem Poles

“Attaining Balance Within”

These twelve and one-half foot, red cedar totems were created by Lee Wallace, a Haida Alaskan Native from Ketchikan, and his Tlingit apprentice carver, Edwin De Witt.



The totems are classic Haida style carvings of an Eagle and a Raven in full circular 360 degrees. The artist states these carvings “...are a resplendent reminder of the convictions and power of the people responsible for their own destinies and compliment the architect’s vision of dignity, authority and permanence. In Haida tradition, from childhood to adulthood, heirs understand related consequences for actions and behaviors. If an individual

tilts the equilibrium, the offset affects society. The judicial system helps individuals and determines arrangements closely resembling a satisfying or harmonious position between extremes.”

The Eagle and Raven represent the refined sense of balance which governs the clans, denotes integrity and adheres to the laws of reciprocity. In Haida tradition, ancient stories have echoed through generations to the most present times. These stories are retold to heirs needing understanding of natural and societal rules. The Eagle and Raven carvings offer a sense of balance because they are equally powerful clan emblems of greatness, perpetuation, edification, and cultural significance.





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