

ROLL CALL

Lincoln Statue Stands Tall

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The statue of Abraham Lincoln has been returned to its rightful place in front of Washington, D.C.'s Historic Courthouse after three years of sitting in storage.

In 2006, the oldest Lincoln statue in the District was removed in preparation for the expansion and renovation of the courthouse in Judiciary Square. With construction finished and the statue newly restored, it was rededicated last week, 141 years after the original dedication and in the bicentennial year of Lincoln's birth.

After Lincoln's death, D.C. residents raised money for the Lincoln statue. John T. Ford, manager of Ford's Theatre, raised the largest amount, \$1,800 from a benefit performance at his theater. Only three years after Lincoln's death, hundreds of Washington residents attended the ceremony, including President Andrew Johnson and Gens. Ulysses Grant and William Sherman.

The white marble statue, which now stands on a low base, was originally displayed on a marble column more than 30 feet high. Despite the statue's great distance from viewers, sculptor Lott Flannery, who had been the owner of a stone-carving company, made Lincoln's sharp features and deep-set eyes recognizable at any distance.

The statue was placed on a low pedestal when it was re-erected in 1923 after a renovation to the courthouse, and it has faced vandalism. Lincoln's right hand, which lies to his side, had its fingers repeatedly broken off before his entire right hand fell off, according to Hany Hassan, the architect who helped renovate the courthouse. The hand was reconstructed; however, it is slightly off-scale, Hassan said. Although not dramatically noticeable, the discerning eye may see that the right hand is bigger than the left.

Even without its high base, Hassan, a partner at Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners, says people will see the statue and courthouse high up on the hill from as far away as the National Mall.

"The building has a sense of monumentality and has the other quality of networking with the courts," Hassan said. He explained that they completely reoriented the building toward Judiciary Square to be fully accessible to the public, while also connecting it to the adjacent courts.

Despite all of the changes to the building, Hassan said they still "preserved the grandeur of the image of the building from the south." Now Lincoln stands in front of a building that appears almost as regal as the man himself.

The grandiosity does not end there. The courthouse has recently become the new home of the D.C. Court of Appeals, the highest court in the District. The courthouse, which has been expanded to include larger courtrooms, a ceremonial court and a portico, will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Law Day, May 1. "It's a pretty impressive expansion," Hassan said.