



# CASS GILBERT SOCIETY

*Organized to preserve the work of Minnesota's most important architect.*

## CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE WOOLWORTH BUILDING



Photo: The Skyscraper Museum



The Skyscraper Museum, [www.skyscraper.org](http://www.skyscraper.org), is presenting **The Woolworth Building @ 100**, between February 27 and July 14, 2013. The Skyscraper Museum celebrates the Woolworth Building in its centennial year with an exhibition that honors both its artistry and ambitions. Protected as a New York City landmark and still radiant on the lower Manhattan skyline, the Woolworth Building bespeaks the past and future of New York.

The Woolworth Centennial Celebration Committee has organized **Woolworth Week**, April 22-25, 2013. The kick-off on Monday evening, April 22, will be a lecture by Gail Fenske at AIA-NY. Special tours of the Woolworth Building lobby will be available on Tuesday, April 23, along with a walking tour of Gilbert buildings in Lower Manhattan. That evening there will be a reception and curators' talk by Gail Fenske and Susan Tunick at the Skyscraper Museum for the exhibition, **The Woolworth Building @ 100**.

On Wednesday, April 24, there will be a bus tour to the Essex County Courthouse in Newark, N.J., and in the afternoon there will be an opportunity to view selected drawings from the Cass Gilbert Collection at the New-York Historical Society. The Centennial Celebration Dinner will be held that evening at the Century Association.

On Thursday, April 25, a bus tour from New York to Connecticut and return will offer the opportunity to see the beautifully restored Waterbury City Hall and the four other Gilbert buildings there. After lunch a panel will discuss the preservation and repurposing of Gilbert buildings nationwide. The tour will continue in Ridgefield with a visit to Gilbert's summer home, the Keeler Tavern Museum, and dinner in his Garden House.

For more information, visit [www.woolworth100.com](http://www.woolworth100.com) which outlines all of the plans for **Woolworth Week** and provides registration for each of the individual events and the two Early Bird discount packages.

### **Cass Gilbert Star Architect: From St. Paul to Manhattan** **Minnesota History Center Auditorium, Tuesday, April 2, 2013, 7 p.m.**

The Cass Gilbert Society is partnering with the Minnesota Historical Society to present Dr. Katherine Solomonson, Associate Professor, University of Minnesota School of Architecture, College of Design. One of America's first celebrity architects, Cass Gilbert designed homes along Summit Avenue, the St. Paul Seminary complex (now part of the University of St. Thomas), and the Minnesota State Capitol, but he is best known as the architect of the Woolworth Building in New York City. Completed in 1913, it was the tallest skyscraper in the world, and it quickly became the most famous. Gilbert might not have received this plum commission, however, were it not for one of his earlier works right here in St. Paul. Help mark the Woolworth Building's centennial as Kate Solomonson explores how Cass Gilbert, St. Paul boy-made-good, transformed a local career into international fame. Reserve free lecture tickets at 651-259-3015 or [www.minnesotahistoricalsociety.org/gilbert](http://www.minnesotahistoricalsociety.org/gilbert).

## CASS GILBERT BUILDING NEWS

The past year has been an interesting one for Cass Gilbert-designed buildings. Work continues on the renovation of the **Minnesota State Capitol**. The 6-foot diameter crystal chandelier, which hangs in the dome over the rotunda, had been lowered in 2010 for cleaning while work was done on the dome. The chandelier was raised back into position and relit in a ceremony on January 17, 2013. Work is about to begin on the restoration of the exterior stonework with scaffolding to be installed within the next month. The Minnesota State legislature will be voting on bonding requests for the ongoing work at the Capitol during this legislative session. To see the Minnesota State Capitol, log onto [www.tpt.org](http://www.tpt.org), the Twin Cities Public Television website, and choose the programs tab for *Almanac* and *Almanac at the Capitol*. Every program during the legislative session will offer some views of the building.

The January 11, 2013, *Almanac* program offered a “Hidden History” segment, featuring Paul Clifford Larson on the **White Bear Town Hall**, an early Gilbert design. The White Bear Lake Historical Society is interested in restoring the building and has offered a reward for early photographs. To see the interview, log onto *Almanac*, January 11, at the tpt website and go to minute 13.

The **Realty Company Warehouse** in the Minneapolis Warehouse District, better known as the Theater de la Jeune Lune Building, has become an event space called Aria, owned by First & First LLC. It was the site of *Playing the Building*, an interactive art and sound installation by David Byrne, between November 5 and December 4, 2012. Byrne had previously installed the work in factory and warehouse spaces in Stockholm, New York, and London. Visitors to the space were able to experience a very different kind of building from the Minnesota State Capitol or the Woolworth Building, but still one that Gilbert valued for its functionality.

The former **R. C. Williams Company Warehouse** (1928), 259 Tenth Avenue, in New York’s Chelsea neighborhood and adjacent to the much touted High Line, reopened in the fall of 2012 after a two-year restoration project as the home of Avenues The World School, a private primary and secondary school. The work was undertaken by architects Perkins Eastman and Bonetti/Korserski Studios for the interior design. Visit <http://www.avenues.org/environment-sensitive-school-building> for more information.

A number of Cass Gilbert buildings in New York City felt the effects of Superstorm Sandy, particularly those adjacent to the city’s many waterfront locations. Most affected was the West Street Building with flooded basements and lobby. West Street was the original shoreline along the Hudson River so it is vulnerable to flooding. The New York Custom House on Bowling Green had some minor basement flooding. No damage was sustained by the Woolworth Building or the New York County Lawyers Association. Mayor Michael Bloomberg made space available in the Brooklyn Army Terminal to displaced businesses. Although right on the waterfront, the Army Terminal was designed to withstand storms and flooding. On a very happy note, the Thurgood Marshall U.S. Courthouse, the home of the Second District U. S. Court of Appeals and Cass Gilbert’s last design, reopened after six years of renovation in January 2013.



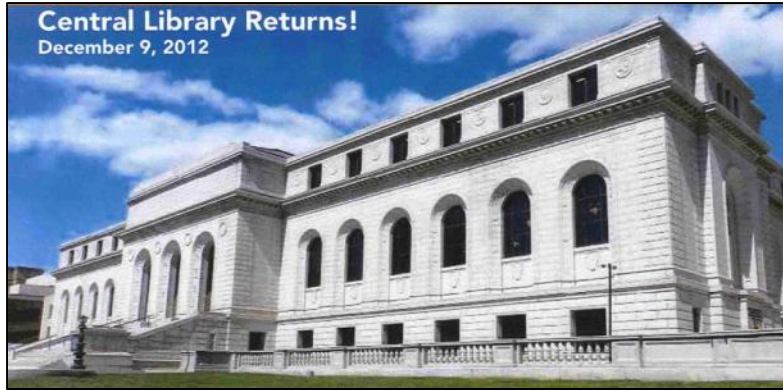
Photo: Marjorie Pearson



Historic view of R.C. Williams Company Warehouse.  
Source: Building Conservation Associates

## MEET US IN ST. LOUIS

The Cass Gilbert Society is planning a fall trip to St. Louis to visit the newly renovated and restored St. Louis Public Library and the St. Louis Art Museum, which will complete its expansion campaign in June 2013. The work on the library was completed in December 2012, to coincide with the building's one hundredth anniversary. Visit [www.slpl.org](http://www.slpl.org) for more information about the library and <http://central.slpl.org/> for a video. The art museum began its life as the Palace of Fine Arts at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. Located in Forest Park, the site of the fair, it became the home of the art museum after the fair closed. See [www.slam.org/aboutus](http://www.slam.org/aboutus). Tour dates and details will be announced in the spring.



## REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING, DECEMBER 16, 2012

Members of the board of the Cass Gilbert Society held their annual meeting, following dinner at Dixie's Restaurant. As required by the by-laws, the following officers were elected: Ted Lentz, AIA, president (serving a second term); John Yust, vice president; Timara Harney, secretary; Carolyn Nayematsu and Vincent Platt, co-treasurers. Cindy Stephani completed two terms as vice president and will remain on the board. Barbara Christen and Helen Post Curry served for part of 2012 as non-local board members. Both resigned because of other commitments. Other board members remain in place.

### Meet the New Board Officers

**John Yust**, architect and metal sculptor, lives and works in the West Seventh Street/Fort Road neighborhood of St. Paul. His work was featured in the *Star Tribune*, September 22, 2012, "Artisans Forge Poetry in Metal," <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/homegarden/170740816.html>. John continues to work on what may be the oldest surviving commercial building in St. Paul on North Smith Avenue off West Seventh Street; see <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/homegarden/110995824.html?page=1&c=y>.

**Timara Harney** recently received a degree in interior design from the University of Minnesota College of Design. She works for David Heide Studio. Thanks to Timara, we were able to visit the interior of a Cass Gilbert-designed house on our October tour. Timara has also designed the Cass Gilbert Society Facebook page. *Like us on Facebook!*

## MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL PRESERVATION COMMISSION

In his role as Cass Gilbert Society president, Ted Lentz is continuing to serve as one of four of Governor Mark Dayton's appointees to the Minnesota State Capitol Preservation Commission. The Commission is examining solutions for the preservation, restoration, and future of the Minnesota State Capitol. For more information on the Commission, see: <http://www.admin.state.mn.us/recs/capitol/capbldg.html>. It contains links to various reports and background studies, as well as presentation materials and meeting agendas.

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Stamp  
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**Our Mission**

To preserve our cultural heritage through advancing scholarship in and appreciation of Cass Gilbert's influence on American architecture.

The Cass Gilbert Society, Inc., is a non-profit tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

**Officers and Board**

Ted Lentz, *President*  
John Yust, *Vice President*  
Timara Harney, *Secretary*  
Carolyn Nayematsu, *Co-Treasurer*  
Vincent Platt, *Co-Treasurer*  
Nicholas Marcucci  
Sonja Mason  
Marjorie Pearson, *President Emerita/Newsletter*  
Cindy Stephani  
Jean Velleu, *President Emerita*  
Art Weeks  
Wendy Weimer, *President Emerita*  
Linda Bjorklund, *Fundraising*  
James G. Hirsh, *General Counsel*  
Nathan Stone Buttleman, *Associate Counsel*



On March 3, 2013, the Skinner auction house, based in Boston, is offering the commemorative Woolworth Building bowl fabricated by Tiffany and Company and given to Cass Gilbert on April 24, 1913. Photo: Skinner

**RENEW YOUR SUPPORT FOR 2013**

Please use the enclosed form to renew your Cass Gilbert Society support in 2013. Our records are maintained on a calendar year basis, with the expiration date noted on your address label. We encourage you to provide your email address if you have one. It will only be used to send out announcements between the publication dates of the Newsletters.

You can show your support at various levels and any contributions above the basic level are much appreciated. Your support ensures that you will receive our quarterly Newsletter via U.S. mail, free admission to lectures, reduced fees for local tours, and eligibility to participate in regional tours. Your contributions are the major source of funding for operating expenses for our all-volunteer organization. You may also support us through **GiveMN.org**.