

MARJORIE PEARSON TO SPEAK ON CASS GILBERT'S WEST STREET BUILDING ON  
APRIL 26

The Cass Gilbert Society will present Marjorie Pearson, Ph.D., on the topic **The Resurrection of Cass Gilbert's West Street Building and the Art and Science of Fireproof Architecture**. The West Street Building is located just south of the site of the World Trade Center in New York and was severely damaged when the Twin Towers collapsed. Although a New York City Landmark, the building was in jeopardy and the property changed hands several times. It is now undergoing a massive rehabilitation and restoration campaign while being converted to residential use. Dr. Pearson will describe the current restoration efforts, while relating the original design and construction of the building to early twentieth-century advances in fireproof architecture.

Marjorie Pearson, Ph.D., began serving as president of the Cass Gilbert Society in November 2002, after serving as vice president since November 1999. Professionally, she is the vice president of Hess, Roise and Company, a full-service historical consulting firm, based in Minneapolis, which she joined in 1999. Prior to joining Hess Roise, Dr. Pearson served as director of research at the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of New York for twenty-one years. She has an M.A. from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. from the City University of New York, both in architectural history. She is preservation officer for the Society of Architectural Historians and has edited the Society's *Newsletter* and has written book reviews and biographical and architectural entries for a variety of publications. Currently she is writing a history of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission with the support of a mid-career grant from the James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation of New York.

Join us at the University Club, 420 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, on Tuesday, April 26, 2005, at 7:00 P.M. in the second-floor Overlook Room. Admission is free to Society members. There is a nominal charge for nonmembers. Refreshments will be served after the lecture. Support for Cass Gilbert Society lectures is provided in part by the Minnesota Humanities Commission.

Mark Your Calendars

May 1-24, 2005      Part 2, Capitol Collections, Minnesota State Capitol  
May 8, 2005          Mother's Day Tea at Cedarhurst, Cottage Grove, Minnesota. See Page 3.  
May 21, 2005        Tour of University of Minnesota Campus, East Bank, sponsored by  
Minnesota Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians. For further information contact Lock  
Bounds, Lock.Bounds@thomson.com.  
June 26 – July 10, 2005      Part 3, Capitol Collections, Minnesota State Capitol  
September 11, 2005    Fall House Tour, Ramsey Hill Association and Cass Gilbert Society.  
Details to be announced.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Marjorie Pearson

The portraits of Cass Gilbert and Julia Finch Gilbert were unveiled in a noontime celebration in the vestibule of the Minnesota Supreme Court at the Capitol on Tuesday, February 22, 2005. Nina Archabal, director of the Minnesota Historical Society presided. Lt. Governor Carol Molnau and Bill Sands, Chair of the Governor's 2005 Capitol Centennial Commission, both spoke. Then Bill Sands and Marjorie Pearson unveiled Julia Finch Gilbert's portrait, and Dean Johnson, Senate Majority Leader; James Metzen, President of the Senate; and Steve Sviggum, Speaker of the House, unveiled Cass Gilbert's portrait. Helen Post Curry, Cass Gilbert's great-granddaughter, spoke on behalf of herself and her brother Charles Post who was also present. The following week, she was quoted in the *Star Tribune* (March 2, 2005): "The rule in the Gilbert family was, 'Do it right, or don't bother,' so that afterward, you could say, 'No effort was spared.'" Justice Paul H. Anderson of the Minnesota Supreme Court related his love of the building and his appreciation for working in Cass Gilbert's masterpiece. The Cass Gilbert Society contributed to the costs of the loan of the portraits from the Smithsonian Institution.

We note with sadness the death of Marilyn R. Vogel on February 23, 2005. In 1986, Marilyn and her husband Herb purchased the house of Elizabeth Gilbert, Cass Gilbert's mother, on Ashland Avenue. This is generally credited as Gilbert's first independent design. Marilyn and Herb lovingly restored the house and regularly made it available to interested visitors.

The Cass Gilbert Society received four proposals for the Interactive Media project announced in the last *Newsletter*. Negotiations are underway with the top-rated proposer, and we anticipate a successful project. We will keep the membership informed as the work progresses. Thanks to all who have contributed so far. You may continue to send contributions to the Cass Gilbert Society, P.O. Box 4066, St. Paul, Minnesota 55104. Indicate that your donation is for the Media Project. For each donor who contributes at least \$200, we are offering a copy of *Minnesota's Capitol: A Centennial Story* by Leigh Roethke.

We are pleased to have received more information on the restoration of the Essex County Courthouse, in Newark, New Jersey, designed by Cass Gilbert and built between 1904 and 1907. The December 29, 2004, rededication was reported in the January 2005 issue of the *Newsletter*. Photographs of the grand rotunda reveal the stylistic and spatial relationship between the courthouse and the Minnesota State Capitol.

Volunteers are still needed for fall house tour sponsored by the Ramsey Hill Association and the Cass Gilbert Society. The tour will be held on Sunday afternoon, September 11. Homes toured will be those designed by Cass Gilbert and his associates located in the historic area. Call Jean Velleu (651-298-1127) for more information.

## MOTHER'S DAY TEA AND TOUR: CASS GILBERT'S CEDARHURST MANSION

Due to the overwhelming success of last year's Mother's Day Tea, we are holding another tea this year. Join us on May 8, 2005, for our sixth annual Mother's Day event. We will meet at 3:00 P.M. at Cedarhurst Mansion, Historic Country House and Conference Center, 6940 Keats Avenue South, Cottage Grove, Minnesota.

Cedarhurst was the country home, for many years, of Cordenio and Mary Severance. The house was originally built in the 1860s by Mrs. Severance's maternal grandfather, Charles O. Fanning, then remodeled in 1886. In 1917, Cass Gilbert designed the ballroom wing, which doubled the size of the house while respecting its original design. During the Severances' time in the house, it served as a venue for visits and meetings by many important guests including four Presidents of the United States—Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Warren G. Harding, and Calvin Coolidge. Integral to Cedarhurst are the extensive landscaped grounds with the cedars that give the estate its name. After the property was acquired in 2000 by True Thao and Xoua Thao, they spent two-and-a-half years rehabilitating it to its historic grandeur.

We will be served a nine-course tea and tour the first floor of the house and the grounds. The cost, which includes tax and gratuities, is \$25.00 for members and \$30.00 for nonmembers. Please pre-register, using the enclosed response form.

To get there: Take I-94 East to Woodbury Drive – Keats Avenue (County Road 19) Exit. Go south 6.5 miles to the intersection with County Road 20 (Washington County). The entrance is on the right-hand side, just after the stop sign.

For additional information contact: Marjorie Pearson, 612-338-1987. For more details on Cedarhurst, see the website [www.cedarhurstmansion.com](http://www.cedarhurstmansion.com).

Have you renewed your membership? Would you like to join the Cass Gilbert Society?

See the Cass Gilbert Society website, [www.cassgilbertsociety.org](http://www.cassgilbertsociety.org), for more information and a membership form, or send a check for \$25.00 for an individual/household membership to the Cass Gilbert Society, P.O. Box 4066, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104.

Welcome to the following new members: Cathy Gilbert-Rogers, Laurel Watt.