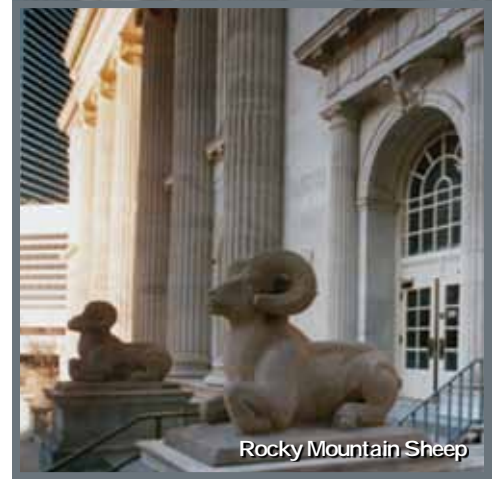


# Byron White U.S. Courthouse

The Byron R. White U.S. Courthouse is an excellent example of the Neo-Classical architecture that dominated federal building design at the turn of the twentieth century. Completed between 1910 and 1916, the basement and first floor were reserved for the postal service. The second floor housed the federal judiciary, the third and fourth floors served as offices for other federal agencies serving the Rocky Mountain Region.

Originally a U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, it has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1973. The frieze above the main entrance has city names, with cities located east of Denver inscribed to the east of the central bay and those located to the city's west inscribed to the bay's west, symbolizing the flow of mail across the country. The solid marble walls on either side of the colonnade are inscribed with the names of former U.S. Postmaster Generals.



# Things To See

**T**he main entry lobby spans the width of the building, with windows opening out through the portico. It has a terrazzo floor and vaulted ceiling with arches springing from the pilasters. **Inscribed names** on marble-faced walls are the best-known Pony Express riders, including Buffalo Bill Cody, an important part of the history of the postal service in the American West.

**Justice White Museum and Judge's Chambers** are located on the first floor. Just prior to his death in 2002, he gave the Circuit a collection of personal memorabilia, part of which is housed in the exhibit. There are nine cases of Justice White's artifacts ranging from his collegiate years, his military service, and his years in the legal profession. Included is a display case with his University of Colorado football jersey, a football signed by the 1941 Detroit Lions (a team he played with for three NFL seasons), and a photo of Byron White in his naval uniform.

The **main staircase** is a marble stairway that spans the front of the building and rises up to the main entrance colonnade.

The **Grand Corridor** spans the building and was originally utilized as the post office main lobby. The post office boxes were preserved in their original form to demonstrate how the building was used. The 28-foot barrel-vaulted ceilings create dramatic volume. It was restored in the early 1990s and houses the original wall sconces and wall-mounted glass writing tables.

**Four murals** by artist Herman T. Schladermundt are located on the first floor. The murals, *Fortune Turns on Her Wheel* — *The Fate of Kings*, *Postal Service*, *Labor is Great Producer of Wealth*, and *Nil Sine Numine* (Nothing Without Power), were completed in 1918

and shipped from New York. These murals were recently restored through the General Services Administration (GSA) Fine Arts Program.

**Public artwork** is a critical component of the complex. GSA allotted \$50,000 of the original construction budget for works of art. Pieces include the large bronze Great Seal of the United States and a stylized mahogany carving *Justice, Freedom, and the Release from Bondage* — both by Denver sculptor William Joseph. A bronze bas-relief art column entitled *Federal Services* by Edgar Britton is located within the landscaped plaza.

The **Ceremonial en Banc Courtroom** (Courtroom 1) on the first floor can seat all 20–25 active Tenth Circuit judges and was once the main post office workroom. This space was renovated and restored in the early 1990s after the GSA bought the building from the Post Office to make it a U.S. Court of Appeals. The ceiling contains faux-onyx inserts, a case iron medallion, and steel under wood detail. The Great Seal of the United States is etched in the center of the medallion.



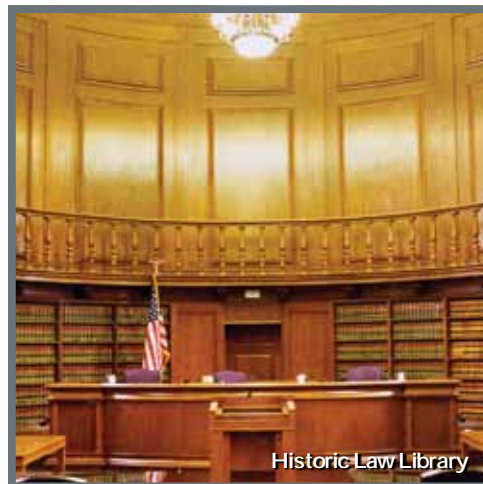
Historic District Courtroom

**C**ourtroom 2, located on the first floor, was originally used as a mail sorting area by the U.S. Postal Service. There were no courtrooms on the first floor in the original construction. Courtroom 2 did not exist until the building was renovated in 1994. The ceiling grid work replicates early 1900s decorative glass. Each of the Tenth Circuit's six states are represented by state seals etched into the glass ceiling panels.

**Historic writing tables** are located on the first floor and are original to the building when it was opened in 1916. When the building was renovated in 1994, the writing tables were brought out of storage for restoration. The project used original blueprints, photographs, the remaining pedestals and a piece of the black glass tabletop to restore the tables to their original condition.

The **second floor main corridor** features natural light from the interior courtyard and recreations of original cast-bronze sconces. The Hall of Judges includes portraits of Tenth Circuit judges who have or currently serve in the White Courthouse.

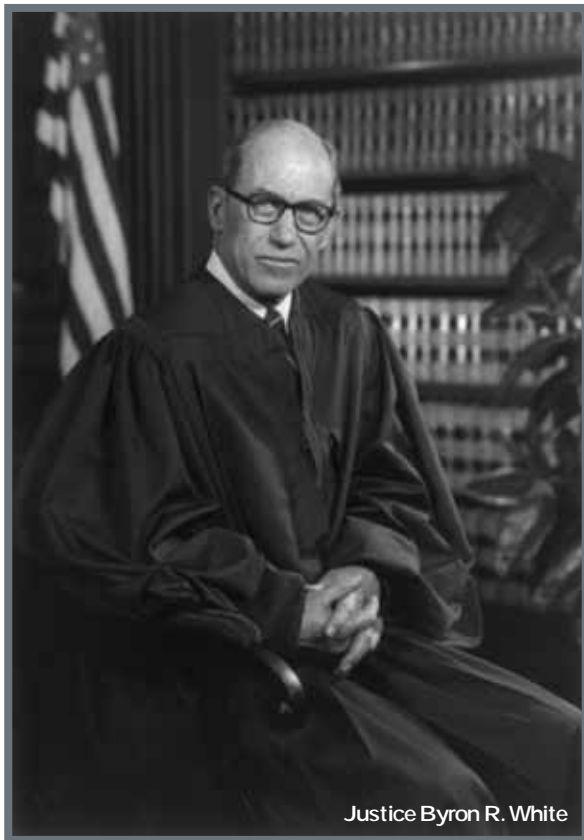
**Courtroom 3** is a recreation of the original Court of Appeals Courtroom that was completely demolished to make way for more office space. Fortunately, both excellent photographs from early years and the original drawings were available to aid in the recreation. The names, which are inscribed with the original gold leaf, are those of noted American judges and advocates of the law. This building was one of the first to benefit from the science of acoustics, new in 1913. The "windows" on the east side of the room are false, the drapery hides acoustical panels, originally woven of horse hair. The original floor was thick cork with a border of marble. The new custom carpet with its lighter border follows the original pattern. The judge's bench is a copy of the original as is the railing (or bar) separating the public seating from the theater of the court.



The **Historic District Courtroom** (Courtroom A) is on the second floor. It was the district courtroom from 1916 until 1966, and again from 1983 to the present. It was recreated in 1994 during the courthouse's renovation. The original courtroom was largely destroyed in the 1960s. It is the most historically accurate courtroom in the entire courthouse and features the jury box and witness stand on wheels, as originally designed. The ceiling decoration behind the judge's bench is also original.

The **Historic Law Library** (Courtroom 4) is clad with carved oak panels. The books lining the lower level are not part of the circuit's working collection but are used to improve the room's acoustics. The names inscribed on the perimeter are great legal authorities and writers from various nations. An eagle and the inscription, "Lux et Veritas" (light and truth) crown the exit.

# Justice Byron R. White



Justice Byron R. White

**B**yron Raymond White was born June 18, 1917, in Fort Collins and raised in Wellington, Colorado. A gifted athlete, Byron White led the University of Colorado to its first-ever football bowl appearance in 1937 following an undefeated season. He played offense, defense, and as a kicker and several CU football records are still held by White. He was drafted fourth overall after graduating in 1938 and played for the Pittsburgh Pirates, leading the league in rushing yards and becoming the game's highest-paid player. White played for the Detroit Lions from 1940 to 1941, again leading the league in rushing yards, becoming the first-ever "big money" player at \$15,000 a year. He left football when he entered the U.S. Army during World War II, serving as an intelligence officer and was awarded two Bronze Stars for his service.

After the war, White attended Yale Law School instead of returning to football and graduated magna cum laude in 1946. After serving as a law clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Fred Vinson, he returned to Denver in 1947 and practiced law for 15 years. During the presidential election in 1960, White was the chair of John F. Kennedy's campaign in Colorado. In 1961, he was appointed Deputy Attorney General of the U.S. by President Kennedy. In 1961, President Kennedy appointed White to the Supreme Court, where he served until he retired in 1993. A legend in his own time, Justice White was a caring, humble, fair and personable man. He was extremely generous, had a great sense of humor, and was a friend to all. In 1994, the Byron R. White U.S. Courthouse was dedicated in Denver, Colorado, named after an extraordinary man whose contributions as a justice of the Supreme Court made a lasting impression.