

Western District of Missouri  
Historical Society

2013 marked the opening of the Western District of Missouri's Historical Gallery in the Charles Evans Whittaker Courthouse. Inspired in part by the history the Historical Society commissioned Professor Lawrence H. Larsen to write in 1990, the Gallery is housed in the "Bell Room", a grand, two-story high open space on the second floor of the Courthouse. The Gallery was designed to reach not only the different audiences that will walk through it but to address the many aspects of what the Court does within this greater community. Among other things, it features sophisticated but highly functional audio/visual displays that take a viewer through a host of topics ranging from the path to citizenship to an understanding of the judicial process. Another section of the Gallery focuses on the Judges of the Western District from statehood to the present, providing revealing glimpses into their lives before and after their time on the bench. For context, the Gallery also features a timeline display of those significant events transpiring nationally as the Court went about its business locally. Still another section, to which an entire wall of the project has been dedicated, depicts the most significant and the most notorious cases in the District's rich history. These case histories include detailed overviews of the indictment and sentencing of Kansas City's powerful political boss, T.J. Pendergast, in the 1930's, the nationally-followed Robert Greenlease kidnapping trial in the early 1950's, the Skywalk Collapse case, the *IFFA v. TWA* labor cases arising from the flight attendants' strike of the airline in the mid-1980's and the massive, controversial desegregation case of *Jenkins v. State of Missouri*, an action that lasted for nearly four decades.

The Gallery was the shared vision of a number of individuals but special mention is due to Senior Judges Howard Sachs, Scott O. Wright and Ortrie Smith, Chief Judge Fernando Gaitan,

Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Larsen (of the Historical Society) and the unflagging efforts of the Court's Chief Executive and Clerk, Ann Thompson.

On June 3, 2013, the Historical Society, in partnership with the Truman Library Institute, co-hosted a formal reception at the Gallery at which retired Justice Sandra Day O'Connor spoke. This fall, the Historical Society will resume its speaker series that reaches out to legal historians and scholars, both locally and nationally.

As of June 30, 2013, the Historical Society maintained \$10,172 in its account.

The Officers of the Federal Historical Society  
Western District of Missouri

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