

THOLOS

VOLUME 24

USBG HIGHLIGHT

Cultivate: Growing Food
in a Changing World

SENATE & HOUSE SPOTLIGHTS

In the Senate
Office Buildings,
Maintenance
Collaboration Is
a Clean Sweep

Q&A With the House
Floor Care Division

FEATURE

Restoring Freedom
From Historic
Separations



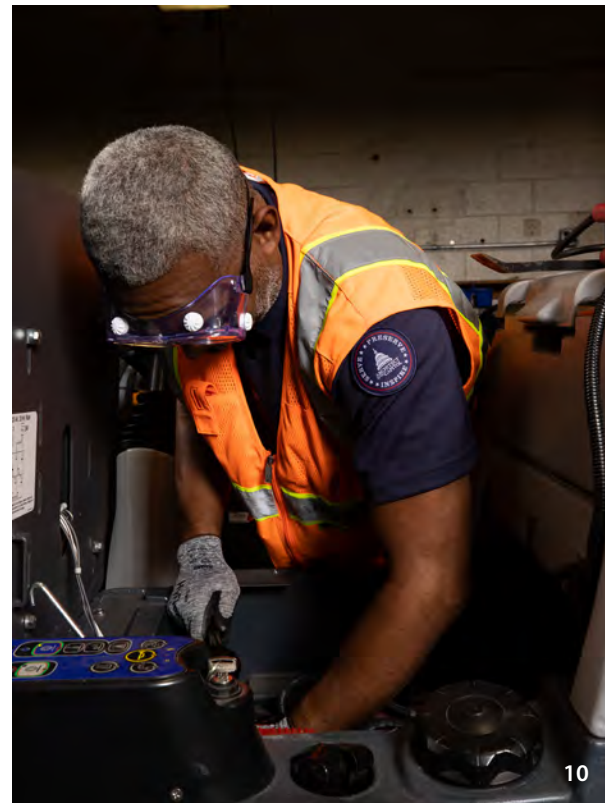
TABLE OF CONTENTS

USBG HIGHLIGHT



4 USBG HIGHLIGHT:
Cultivate: Growing Food
in a Changing World

SENATE AND HOUSE SPOTLIGHTS



10 SENATE SPOTLIGHT:
In the Senate Office Buildings,
Maintenance Collaboration
Is a Clean Sweep

14 HOUSE SPOTLIGHT:
Q&A With the House
Floor Care Division

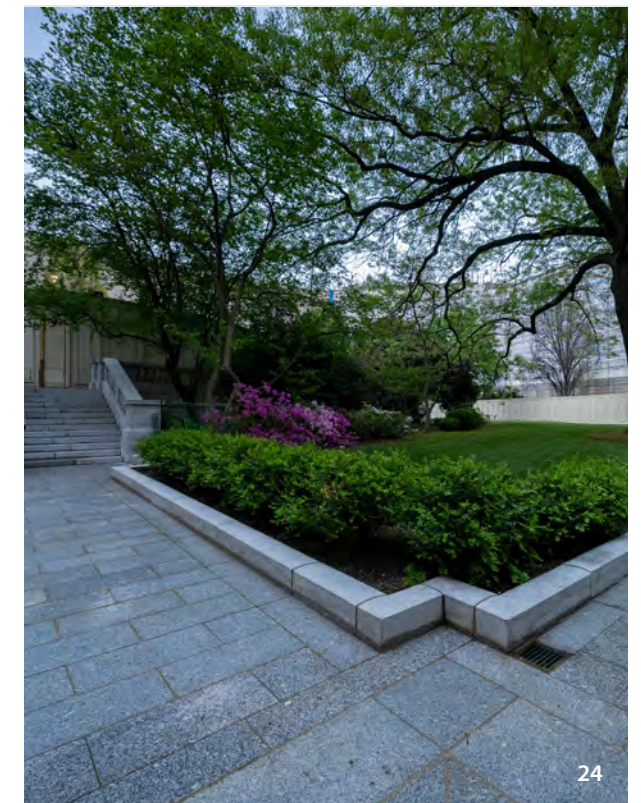
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE



18 FEATURE:
Restoring Freedom
From Historic Separations

PROJECT UPDATE



24 PROJECT UPDATE:
Group Project

28 AGENCY INITIATIVES:
A Fresh Vision



▼ This bed from the 2022 USBG summer Terrace display featured crop plants native to Central and South America, including multiple varieties of potatoes, purple and green vines spilling over the bed edge, and papaya, top right behind the sign.

USBG HIGHLIGHT

CULTIVATE

GROWING FOOD IN A CHANGING WORLD

WRITTEN BY DEVIN DOTSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS HATZENBUHLER



This spring through fall, the U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) showcased agricultural crops in a special Terrace display that was an outdoor extension of its “Cultivate: Growing Food in a Changing World” exhibit. The Terrace featured 14 raised beds that showed crops grouped by their global origins along with vibrant murals illustrating crops native to each area. The display began on the west side of the Terrace with North American native crops such as strawberries, pawpaws and blueberries, and then moved around the world to Central and South America, Africa, the Mediterranean Basin and across Asia. Visitors were able to see and learn about crops ranging from rice and okra to sweet potatoes and peppers. Many employees from the USBG’s Horticulture, Learning and Engagement, Operations and Administration teams helped bring the display to life, including Adam Pyle, Amanda Helin, Mark Moreno and Chibu Ariguzo. The display was so popular that the USBG is planning to install a version of it again next summer.



Top photo: Gardener Chibu Ariguzo pauses in front of North American crop plants including agaves (*Agave* spp.) and prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia* spp.). Bottom photo: The display on the USBG Terrace was just steps from the U.S. Capitol, seen over the trees.



▶ This bed of crops native to the Mediterranean Basin and Western Africa include many plants in the Brassica family such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower and kale.



Clockwise from top left: Gardener Amanda Helin shows rice (*Oryza glaberrima*), Horticulturalist Adam Pyle sits among Mediterranean Basin plants, multiple beds from the summer exhibit are shown with the Conservatory behind, and Gardener Mark Moreno looks over a banana (*Musa* sp.) leaf at variegated cotton (*Gossypium* sp.).



▼
This bed featured crop plants native to the Mediterranean Basin and North Africa, including curry plant (*Helichrysum italicum*) and aloe (*Aloe vera*).

▼
Kenneth Vereen,
Maintenance
Mechanic Leader
in the Senate
Office Buildings,
goes above and
beyond to support
the AOC's mission.



SENATE SPOTLIGHT

In the Senate Office Buildings,
Maintenance Collaboration Is a

CLEAN SWEEP

WRITTEN BY MADELEINE LUCCHETTI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN GREENE

Hours before the sun rises each morning, Zamboni-like scrubbing machines scuttle through the halls of the Senate office buildings. Each is operated by a dedicated team of Architect of the Capitol (AOC) specialists who spend hours ensuring the marble flooring sparkles — so when the city wakes and the doors open, thousands of visitors, staff and Members of Congress tread over clean walkways. After the sun sets and the halls clear, the process begins again.

These predawn, behind-the-scenes rituals are routine for the AOC's maintenance staff. Through snow and rain, dry summers and pollen-packed springs, maintenance teams tackle the care and cleaning of the floors as well as other interior structures and elements within Capitol campus facilities. Much of their work and equipment is sheltered far underground in the Senate office building garages and loading docks, places few visitors and only some staff ever see.

“No matter the hour of day, there are a lot of people down here working really hard — and many of us have been with the AOC for years, so there's a strong sense of camaraderie,” said Pete Ferentinos, a Maintenance Worker Supervisor in the Senate Office Buildings Garage Branch. A mechanic by trade, he's been in the industry for nearly 40 years and has worked at the AOC for 12 years — 10 of which have been spent in the Garage Branch. No two days are the same,

“No matter the hour of day, there are a lot of people down here working really hard — and many of us have been with the AOC for years, so there’s a strong sense of camaraderie.”

PETE FERENTINOS

Maintenance
Worker Supervisor,
Senate Office Buildings
Garage Branch



Left to right: Vernon Miller II, Kenneth Vereen and Pete Ferentinos provided invaluable guidance that helped restore 20 pieces of floor care machinery.

and he and his colleagues have grown especially close when working through particularly strenuous situations, like heavy overnight snow removal and high-profile event preparation. In the garage, their synergy is clear: the team navigates heavy, loud machinery with ease as they simultaneously call out to check in on one another. It’s a delicate ballet that relies upon the expertise and detail-oriented eye of each mechanic — and their individual commitment to the AOC’s overarching mission.

Back in August, this long-standing camaraderie propelled Ferentinos and his Garage Branch colleagues, Vernon Miller and Kenneth Vereen, to help Dennis Anthony and the Senate Office Buildings Floor Care team. Multiple scrubbing machines integral to the nightly cleaning process were broken. Even with busy summer schedules and tight deadlines, Ferentinos, Miller and Vereen volunteered to help Anthony examine all 20 pieces of equipment in the Advance ES4000 series. Ferentinos described their approach as puzzle-solving, working backwards to identify which pieces were missing or faulty: if one

of the brushes on a machine’s base wasn’t rotating, the team examined the apparatus rolling the brush.

After diagnosing and troubleshooting the equipment failures, the team quickly had two machines back up and running. From there, Ferentinos, Miller and Vereen helped Anthony identify which parts were required to get the rest of the machines online. Now, the Floor Care team is better prepared for their busiest season, winter — which brings colder, wetter weather and thus more slush and salt on passageways. Not only are the machines used daily, but they’re also cleaned daily, too. Anthony and Ferentinos are using the insights gleaned from these recent inspections to flag any future issues found during the nightly inspections. What was once a complex roadblock has transformed into a collaborative learning opportunity.

“Collaboration is second nature to us,” Anthony said. “It didn’t matter to the Garage Branch folks that fixing these machines wasn’t in their job description.”



Kenneth Vereen examines one of the Advance ES4000 machines.

“It’s all part of our trade,” Ferentinos affirmed. “My staff are amazing; they’re willing to help as much as they can.”

This willingness to lend a hand is something Ferentinos and his peers aim to instill in all their colleagues, and it typically leads to such mutually beneficial outcomes. Ferentinos and his team gained valuable on-the-job training, and Anthony and his team gained greater functionality of their machines. By embodying these values, these leaders guide their teams in meeting the AOC’s mission to serve, preserve and inspire.

Throughout their respective tenures at the agency, Ferentinos, Anthony, Miller and Vereen have witnessed

much change and growth, within the AOC and within themselves. One thing has remained constant: their dedication to the AOC’s mission.

“To be effective supervisors, we have to be willing to adapt and adjust to change — so that it’s easier for employees to digest,” Anthony agreed. “I try to encourage people to look around and ask questions, so that they’re more engaged with what’s going on around campus — even if most of our time is spent in one place.”

Thanks to the ongoing collaboration of all its maintenance teams, the AOC continues to operate as a well-oiled machine.

“I try to encourage people to look around and ask questions, so that they’re more engaged with what’s going on around campus — even if most of our time is spent in one place.”

DENNIS ANTHONY

Floor Maintenance
Technician Supervisor,
Senate Office Buildings
Floor Care Team

Q & A

With the House Floor Care Division

WRITTEN BY KIREN MARSHALL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN GREENE



The dedicated Architect of the Capitol (AOC) employees of the House Office Buildings Floor Care Division work tirelessly to ensure the Capitol campus is ready to welcome Members of Congress, staff and the visiting public.

Cedric Mosby, Night Superintendent for the House Office Buildings, explained the comprehensive process for servicing the buildings under his jurisdiction and ensuring that they meet AOC cleanliness standards. Floor care includes scrubbing the floors nightly, as well as routinely stripping and adding seven coats of wax throughout the House office buildings. Maintaining environmental standards is vital to the AOC, and all Floor Care team members use Green Seal-certified products whenever

possible. Mosby's team is also instrumental in the congressional office moves that happen every two years, ensuring that existing and incoming Members of Congress are well-situated in their new office spaces.

"Our team takes pride in ensuring Members, staffers and visitors enter into a clean and welcoming environment each day," said Mosby. First impressions are a big deal, and the Night Floor Care team plays a key role in giving the House office building interiors that "Wow!" look. A group of House Office Buildings Floor Care employees were kind enough to answer our questions about their work.



Q: ANY FUN FACTS THAT YOU CAN SHARE ABOUT YOUR POSITION OR THE TOOLS YOU USE?

A: "People don't realize how long it takes to clean the Rayburn! These are long hallways with lots of corners to clean."

BARRY DUNCAN
Night Shift, Rayburn House Office Building

Q: WHAT'S ONE THING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT WHAT YOU DO?

A: "I operate forklifts and use heavy equipment."

OSCAR BOLANOS-UMANA
Night Shift, Rayburn Building

A: "I take pride in what I do, and I show employees that are new to the agency how to do the right things at the AOC."

DARYL RILEY
Night Shift, Rayburn Building

Q: WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?

A: "Coming to work to perform my job at a high standard."

DARYL RILEY
Night Shift, Rayburn Building

A: "Coming into work and seeing the results of my effort every night."

PAUL ALEXANDER
Night Shift, Rayburn Building

BY THE NUMBERS

The House Office Buildings Floor Care Division cleans over 565,000 square feet of main corridors, subcorridors, main lobbies and rotunda space! That's equivalent to:

ALMOST **13** ACRES

120+ BASKETBALL COURTS

ALMOST **10** FOOTBALL FIELDS

OVER **10x** THE SIZE OF THE WHITE HOUSE

Q: HOW HAS YOUR JOB CHANGED SINCE YOU HAVE BEEN WITH THE AOC?

A: “Before we had the floor scrubbers and buffers, we did this all by hand with mops and buckets.”

—————
PEDRO FLORES
Night Shift, Cannon House Office Building



Q: WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT CARING FOR THE HOUSE OFFICE BUILDINGS?

A: “I like to watch a movie at my local theater and spend time with my family.”

—————
OSCAR BOLANOS-UMANA
Night Shift, Rayburn Building

Q: WHAT’S THE BEST THING ABOUT WORKING ON THE NIGHT SHIFT?

A: “I love working at nights cleaning the floors. It’s so peaceful and quiet and I get to see our buildings in a different way. During the day it’s so busy and loud that I can’t appreciate all the beauty.”

—————
CARLOS LOPEZ MIGUEL
Night Shift, Cannon Building

A: “I love taking care of my grandson.”

—————
PAUL ALEXANDER
Night Shift, Rayburn Building

FEATURE

Restoring Freedom From Historic Separations

WRITTEN BY FRANKLIN BRADLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE AOC
AND SMITHSONIAN ARCHIVES

The saw rasped through the towering plaster masterpiece cast in Rome and destined to be the centerpiece of the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center (CVC): the Statue of Freedom.

But on that day in 1967, the grating sound echoed through the Smithsonian rotunda, white dust drifted to the floor and the robed figure was separated into pieces — a crown, a hand, a wreath. Packed into crates, the statue was carried away, not to be seen for decades.

From the time all of its pieces arrived in America in 1859, the 15,000-pound plaster Statue of Freedom has relied on many skilled hands over many generations to preserve it. But before each restoration effort, the beautiful plaster figure had to be cut into pieces. Repeatedly.

American sculptor Thomas Crawford, working in his studio in Rome in the 1850s, cast the plaster model of Freedom from his original clay sculpture in five separate sections. When it arrived in Washington, D.C. — where skilled craftsmen and artisans were rare — an Italian sculptor assembled the plaster statue for display in National Statuary Hall.

However, when the plaster model of the Statue of Freedom had to be moved to the foundry for casting in bronze, no one knew how to separate the sections and the sculptor refused to help unless given a pay raise. Unfortunately for the sculptor, Philip Reid was there.

Reid was an enslaved laborer in the foundry. He determined that pulling up on the lifting ring at the top of the plaster model would reveal the seams between the sections. When this was done, the statue was successfully separated into its five sections and transported to the foundry.



After carefully disassembling the plaster Statue of Freedom, Smithsonian employees prepare it for storage in 1967.



The plaster model stands on display above busts in National Statuary Hall in 1860, after its delivery from Rome.



Plaster pieces of the model following a period of storage.

...in order to move and place safely in position the immense pieces of the statue which remained intact, it was found necessary to saw them carefully into smaller parts, which after being lifted into place were securely reunited.

Reid was instrumental in casting the bronze monument that was mounted atop the Capitol Dome on December 2, 1863, hundreds of feet above the next resting place of the plaster model that it was cast from.

With no suitable space for the assembled plaster statue in the U.S. Capitol Building, then-Architect of the Capitol Edward Clark had the disassembled model stored in crates in the basement. But Clark believed the plaster statue should be displayed, so he showed Joseph Henry, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution the sections of the statue in the U.S. Capitol basement and asked if the museum could display the reassembled original.

The Secretary was receptive to the proposal, but there was no space large enough in the Smithsonian. Yet. The sections of the statue remained in storage until the Smithsonian completed

construction of the Arts and Industries Building in 1881, where Crawford's work took center stage, standing tall over display cases for decades to come.

However, the years it waited in storage took a toll on the fragile plaster, as described in the 1891 report of the Smithsonian Board of Regents:

The model, which had remained for nearly thirty years in the basement of the capitol, was found to be so broken, many of the more delicate parts being entirely gone, that its complete restoration from the fragments seemed impossible. In addition to difficulties of this sort, in order to move and place safely in position the immense pieces of the statue which remained intact, it was found necessary to saw them carefully into smaller parts, which after being lifted into place were securely reunited.¹

¹Smithsonian Institution. Board of Regents & United States National Museum. (1846). Annual report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution (1891 Incl Rpt US Natl Mus). Smithsonian Institution. Retrieved from <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/annualreportofbo1891smitso>



Freedom stands over a model of the Mariner 4 spacecraft in the rotunda of the Smithsonian Arts and Industries building.

Painstakingly reassembled and placed in the Arts and Industries Building rotunda, the Statue of Freedom gazed out over the museum galleries as displays were moved in and out around it, including aviator Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis monoplane and a full-sized model of the Mariner 4 spacecraft.

Freedom stood in the museum from 1900 to 1967, when Smithsonian employees once again carefully sawed apart the statue. They removed smaller sections, then separated the top and bottom of the massive plaster model. Once all the parts were secured in protective crates, they were again put into storage.

▼
To preserve the fragile plaster model, Smithsonian employees carefully sawed off and lifted away smaller pieces, such as the hand holding the wreath, before moving the larger sections.



Because I'd worked on the restoration of the pedestal on top of the Capitol, I'd seen the bronze statue's shield up close with its beautiful concise straight lines. I knew that the plaster model must have at one time looked like that, so I ended up spending a lot of time working to correct the alignment of the 13 stripes on the shield.



After the Statue of Freedom model was placed in Emancipation Hall in the CVC, AOC craftsmen carefully rejoined the sections and replaced the pieces that had fallen off during moving and storage.

When the Statue of Freedom made a final return to Capitol Hill in 1992, an Architect of the Capitol (AOC) paint crew exfoliated the statue's leaded paint surface. AOC Paint Division General Supervisor Ken Riley spent many hours carefully scraping off the flaking paint. He remembered, "The biggest challenge was not damaging the brittle — and historic — plaster substrate."

Riley thought the plaster model's shield looked like it had been in a battle. "Because I'd worked on the restoration of the pedestal on top of the Capitol, I'd seen the bronze statue's shield up close with its beautiful concise straight lines. I knew that the plaster model must have at one time looked like that, so I ended up spending a lot of time working to correct the alignment of the 13 stripes on the shield."²

After restoration, the Statue of Freedom model was transported — with just inches to spare in some hallways — to the

basement rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building. In 2008, AOC employees once again expertly disassembled and moved Crawford's masterpiece to its current location as the centerpiece of Emancipation Hall. In the towering stone room at the center of the CVC, in the early morning quiet before its doors opened to the public, the only sound was the soft scrape of a plaster knife.

Skilled AOC artisans were once again sealing the cuts that had separated the figure into two large halves. They carefully reattached elements, such as the hand holding a wreath and all the decorations from her gown.

For 165 years, AOC employees have preserved the Statue of Freedom in her many forms, restored her when necessary and always inspired awe in those who experience the beauty and power of her presence.

² Architect of the Capitol. (n.d.). Statue of Freedom. Architect of the Capitol. Retrieved November 16, 2022, from <https://www.aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/art/statue-freedom>

PROJECT UPDATE

GROUP PROJECT

WRITTEN BY JUSTIN KIEFFER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KALEENA DWYER

Highlights of the Russell Building courtyard project include restored stone façades and terrace, landscape renewal, and a new storage shed.



▼
 Left: Scaffolding and construction site for the Russell Exterior Envelope Project. Right and Bottom Photos: Employees of the AOC Construction Division are shown building the Capitol Grounds and Arboretum storage shed.



Do you remember being part of a group project in school? Were you the person that had your portion completed early? Or were you the one everybody was waiting for right at the deadline because you started the night before it was due?

A recent project on Capitol Hill was not a group term paper on the History of Money (a real assignment I had in high school and still have nightmares about), but the Russell Senate Office Building courtyard restoration, which supplemented the Russell Exterior Envelope Project. This courtyard restoration effort became a group project of its own where different Architect of the Capitol (AOC) teams had to rely on and coordinate with one another to accomplish their individual tasks, ultimately leading to a final, comprehensive product.

The courtyard's original design was simple, sunny and symmetrical, but with years of building construction improvements, the courtyard had become more asymmetrical and less orderly. The project goal was to restore the courtyard to its original beauty, recovering its visual harmony and balance, while respecting historic and memorial features and providing a peaceful space for Members of Congress, staff and visitors.



The groups that tackled this project included employees from several divisions of the Office of the Chief Engineer (OCE), the Senate Office Buildings and the Capitol Grounds and Arboretum working on different, overlapping elements. Add a tight timeline to all of this and you have a situation that can be very stressful and would have any student wishing they could ask the teacher for an extension.

The work entailed replacing extremely damaged or cracked paving stones while cleaning, repointing and resetting other stones in the upper courtyard. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb cuts — two in the upper courtyard and two in the carriageway with one at each lobby door — were also installed.

Another team worked on removing and replanting overgrown shrubbery; retaining selected trees; incorporating an irrigation system with modifications and improvements; and designing, constructing and relocating a new, functional and aesthetically pleasing garden shed to complement the landscape and surrounding buildings.

Members from OCE developed the designs and OCE's Construction Division (CD) provided a fire alarm system for the courtyard, automatic door operators at the carriageway mezzanine lobby doors, and ADA-compliant drainage systems and ramps. The CD also removed joint filler and regouted the granite steps at the upper courtyard and carriageways, and created a curb cut access to the center grass of the lower courtyard.

These project teams were peppered full of the "A+" students everyone wanted in their group at school because their work was always shipshape, and they were cool under pressure. To minimize the stress and maximize the chance of success, the individual teams relied on strong coordination, close communication and solid collaboration. As a result, this group of dedicated employees met the AOC's Operate as One Team, Dedicated to One Mission goal with perfection.



▼
Project work also included updating stone curbs and ADA-compliant walkways as well as the design and construction of an aesthetically appealing garden shed.



AGENCY INITIATIVES

A FRESH VISION

WRITTEN BY DR. GANELLA SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS HATZENBUHLER

This summer, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) released a new agency vision statement, which speaks to our organizational focus:

Working together, we strengthen and showcase the foundation, facilities and functions supporting American democracy.

While our mission as an agency remains the same, the new vision statement clarifies how we will achieve our mission and better reflects the core values that allow us to RISE together.

To serve Congress and the Supreme Court, preserve America's Capitol and inspire memorable experiences.

“Working together” means that for AOC employees, regardless of their role or position, there is true, evident and time-tested collaboration. We can continue to elevate that collective spirit by relying on one another’s expertise and building on one another’s strengths. It is our spirit of teamwork that makes us so great!

“...we strengthen and showcase,” means that through the agency’s strategic initiatives (formerly known as the Big Rocks), and by doing the deep work that leads to transformational growth, we highlight and enhance recognition of the AOC as a world-class agency. These initiatives enable the agency to build a safer, more inclusive and more effective workplace while preserving the Capitol campus for the future.

“...the foundation, facilities and functions supporting American democracy,” means the AOC is rooted in a tradition of unique craftsmanship and ingenuity. Tracing our beginnings to the

laying of the U.S. Capitol cornerstone in 1793, we continue to serve Congress and the Supreme Court, as the builders and stewards of the iconic landmark buildings and grounds of Capitol Hill.

The work you do every day to achieve our critical mission is truly impressive and exemplifies your commitment to our vision. Every employee is encouraged to continue thinking about how to implement the vision, mission and values as both a personal and professional responsibility.

We will continue to share more about the meaning of this new vision and ways that we are making it actionable in our agency's strategy. If you have any questions about the agency’s vision, mission, values, initiatives or strategy, please feel free to reach out to Dr. Ganella Smith at ganella.smith@aoc.gov or Mr. Tom Fields at thomas.fields@aoc.gov.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL



What is our focus?

VISION

Working together, we strengthen and showcase the foundation, facilities and functions supporting American democracy.



Why do we exist?

MISSION

To serve Congress and the Supreme Court, preserve America's Capitol, and inspire memorable experiences.



How do we behave?

CORE VALUES = RISE

RESPECT

We treat one another with civility and kindness, so that we honor the value and dignity of all people.

INTEGRITY

We demonstrate honesty, ethics and reliability, so that we earn trust and do what is right.

SAFETY

We are governed by the foundation of safety always, so that we can feel safe, make safe and be safe.

EMPOWERMENT

We are one team seeking better ways to do our work, so that we all contribute to the success of the AOC.





Legislative and Public Affairs
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The Architect of the Capitol strives to meet its mission 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to **serve** Congress and the Supreme Court, **preserve** America's Capitol, and **inspire** memorable experiences for all who visit the buildings and grounds.

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