Capitol Muses

The rotunda of the Michigan State Capitol contains eight monumental female figures, or muses, designed to represent eight priorities of the state in the late 19th Century. Their artists, Italian Tommaso Juglaris, lived and worked in Boston in the 1880s, when he painted three figures in his studio. They were mounted in the dome in 1886.

Juglaris’s work may have been influenced by Constantino Brumidi, the Italian-born artist of the historical allegories painted inside the dome of the U.S. Capitol in 1865. Over a twenty-five-year period, Brumidi created several works of art for the nation’s capital, including the "Apollo Belvedere," which features both allegorical and historical figures. Juglaris, as another respected and talented Italian decorative artist, may have been seen as Brumidi’s worthy successor.

It is believed that Juglaris may have received the commission for the muses from William Wright, owner of the decorative paint firm responsible for decorating the walls and ceilings throughout the Capitol. He did not receive credit for his work because of his status as a non-citizen, and was not identified as the artist until 1992 when a visiting scholar, in conjunction with the Capitol historian, correctly attributed the paintings to Juglaris. The key to unlocking the mystery was the discovery that a symbol used to sign the works - previously thought to resemble a human figure - was actually Juglaris’s initials imprinted over another symbol. This symbol can be seen below.

Murray D. Van Wagoner
Michigan's 38th Governor, 1941-1943 Democrat
A former Michigan Highway Commissioner, Murray Van Wagoner oversaw a large expansion of the state’s highway system during his time in the executive office. Upon America’s entry into World War II, Van Wagoner encouraged Michigan manufacturers to remodel their businesses for the production of wartime goods, earning Michigan the title "The Arsenal of Democracy.

Loren D. Dickinson
Michigan's 57th Governor, 1930-1940 Republican
Loren Dickinson, a seven-term lieutenant governor of Michigan, became governor unexpectedly in 1939 when his predecessor, Governor Frank Fitzgerald, died in office. At a time when Michigan was facing the Great Depression, Dickinson took office. He appointed Fred Clearwater as his secretary of state, and appointed Ben Backhouse as his attorney general.

Frank Murphy
Michigan's 35th Governor, 1937-1939 Democrat
Frank Murphy is today remembered as Michigan’s “Labor Governor,” since one of his first acts in office was to mediate the end of the Strike with General Motors. Prior to his term as governor, Murphy served as a U.S. District Attorney in Detroit and as a judge in Detroit Recorder's Court where he presided over a 1936 landmark civil rights case. After serving as Mayor of Detroit, President Roosevelt named him governor-general of the Philippines in 1933 and, later, high commissioner. After his term as governor, Roosevelt named him United States Attorney General, and then, in 1940, he was appointed to the United States Supreme Court, where he served until his death in 1949.

Frank D. Fitzgerald
Michigan's 34th and 36th Governor, 1935-1937, 1939 Republican
Frank Fitzgerald was a lifelong public servant and the only Michigan governor to begin his career at the very bottom of the state bureaucracy and rise to the very top. He was also the only Michigan executive to replace his governor's office from a man (Frank Murphy) who had been in the previous decade, and the only governor to die in office. Upon his death, Fitzgerald laid in state in the Michigan State Capitol rotunda, the first governor to do so.

Willard M. Brucker
Michigan's 32nd Governor, 1931-1932 Republican
When Willard Brucker took office at age 56, neither his experience as a soldier in World War I nor his election as state attorney general prepared him for the challenges facing Michigan during the Great Depression. Overwhelmed by a dwindling state budget and chaotic high unemployment, Brucker was defeated after one term in office. His career was not yet finished, however, after his term as governor, President Eisenhower appointed him Secretary of the Army.

Capitol Muse Diagram

To view the muses, proceed to the first floor rounds, or the third floor rounds gallery.

Michigan Capitol Commission
Capitol Building, Michigan State Capitol
P.O. Box 30014 • Lansing, MI 48909-7514 • (517) 339-2200

Art Guide

Begin on the western side of the building with the muse for The Fine Arts, and continue clockwise.

Law (or Philosophy)

Justice

Trade and Commerce

Agriculture

The Sciences

Education

The Fine Arts
House Chamber

To view these portraits, visit the House Gallery located on the Capitol's third floor in the west wing. As you face the rotunda, begin with the first portrait on your left and move clockwise.

Steven M. L. McTavish
Governor of Michigan, 1835-1839

McTavish became the territorial secretary and frequently served as the acting territorial governor of Michigan beginning at age 19. He was elected Michigan's first state governor at age 24. He remains the youngest governor in American history. Only 31 when he died, he is interred in Detroit at the site of Michigan's first capital.

Dwight H. Flowton
Governor of Michigan, 1837-1838

Although too a governor, Flowton was a second explorer, medical doctor, and University of Michigan professor. He is best remembered for his work exploring the vast copper deposits in the Keweenaw region of the Upper Peninsula.

Lester Clegg
Governor of Michigan, 1817-1818, 1820-1823

Called the "Father of Michigan," Clegg served as territorial governor and helped steer Michigan to statehood. He negotiated treaties with Native Americans, served in the U.S. Senate, was Secretary of War and Minister to France under President Jackson, and Secretary of State under President Buchanan.

Rutland Portraits, Gallery of the Governors

Jennifer M. Granholm
Michigan's 47th Governor, 2003-2010

Democrat

Granholm, Michigan's first female governor, was depicted gazing into the future. A wind turbine, a model of a Chevrolet Volt electric car, a shovel (used for groundbreaking ceremony for a new battery plant), and an image of the Ford River Rouge assembly plant represent her interest in renewable energy and manufacturing. Carcassonne Selections featured a book cover that filled the background, which also bears a picture of her husband and children and the sculpture: The Spirit of Detroit. A heart has been inscribed in the portrait, symbolizing her faith. The governor's hand rests on a globe, representing her efforts to recruit international business to the state during a time of increasing globalization.

John Engler
Michigan's 46th Governor, 1991-2003

Democrat

Engler, the last governor to serve Michigan for three terms, following the adoption of gubernatorial term limits in 1992. His portrait reflects his political philosophy, represented by the bust of Abraham Lincoln, an elephant, an Adam Smith-inspired tie, and a biography of Margaret Thacher. Often books include a biography of Pope John Paul II, representing Engler's faith, and Sovereign of State, a history of Michigan governors. Engler's wife and triple daughter are depicted in a framed portrait on the table. Yellow roses, found both in the portrait and in a frame, represent his wife's Texas heritage. The governor's hand holds the binoculars for the Capitol's landmark restoration, which he championed.

George W. Romney
Michigan's 43rd Governor, 1963-1969

Republican

Romney, one of the most well-known governors in American history, is depicted on the left with a briefcase and a briefcase. Romney's image is a symbol of the business world, which he represented in the state. The portrait is inscribed with the words: "The Spirit of Detroit." A heart has been inscribed in the portrait, symbolizing his faith. The governor's hand rests on a globe, representing his efforts to attract international business to the state during a time of increasing globalization.

John B. Swainson
Michigan's 42nd Governor, 1961-1962

Democrat

Swainson, Michigan's second youngest elected governor at the age of 35, is depicted with a briefcase and a briefcase. Swainson's image is a symbol of the business world, which he represented in the state. The portrait is inscribed with the words: "The Spirit of Detroit." A heart has been inscribed in the portrait, symbolizing his faith. The governor's hand rests on a globe, representing his efforts to attract international business to the state during a time of increasing globalization.

G. Mennen Williams
Michigan's 41st Governor, 1949-1959

Democrat

Mennen Williams, known as "Soupy" Williams, was the heir to the Meany family fortune, was the first person to serve twelve years as Michigan's governor. Williams was depicted as a statesman, wearing his trademark green and white polka-dotted tie, and a business card with his name and title. His hand is outstretched, symbolizing his efforts to attract international business to the state during a time of increasing globalization.

Kim Snyder
Michigan's 40th Governor, 1947-1959

Republican

Snyder, Michigan's 40th Governor, 1947-1959, is depicted as a statesman, wearing his trademark green and white polka-dotted tie, and a business card with his name and title. His hand is outstretched, symbolizing his efforts to attract international business to the state during a time of increasing globalization.

William G. Milliken
Michigan's 44th Governor, 1969-1982

Republican

Milliken is Michigan's longest-serving governor, having served 14 years in office. A moderate coalition-builder, he strengthened tax and environmental conservation laws, increased the focus on social rights, and strengthened the relationship between the governor's office and the City of Detroit. He was also instrumental in saving the present capital building from demolition, paving the way for its eventual restoration. The governor's hand rests on a globe, symbolizing the Great Seal of the State of Michigan.

Harry G. Kelly
Michigan's 39th Governor, 1943-1947

Republican

Kelly, Michigan's 39th Governor, 1943-1947, is depicted as a statesman, wearing his trademark green and white polka-dotted tie, and a business card with his name and title. His hand is outstretched, symbolizing his efforts to attract international business to the state during a time of increasing globalization.

See reverse side for additional Rotunda Portraits

Senate Chamber

To view these portraits, visit the Senate Gallery located on the Capitol's third floor in the west wing. As you face the rotunda, begin with the first portrait on your left and move clockwise.

Gülbert du Moulin, Marquis de La Fayette
French hero of the American Revolution, was depicted in 1837 and has hung in all three Michigan capitols.

Austen Blair
Michigan's Civil War Governor, 1860-1864

Blair dedicated much of his efforts as governor to recruiting Michiganders to serve during the Civil War. Twenty-five percent of the state's male population fought, making Michigan's contribution among the highest of the Northern states.

Sara McCall Hamilton
Michigan's First Female Legislator, 1921-1922

Hamilton was elected to the Michigan Senate in the first election after women won the right to vote in 1920. A noted suffragette, she focused on women and children's issues.

Mary Claus
Michigan Territorial Governor, 1813-1818, 1820, 1822-1823, 1825-1826, 1829-1832

Called the "Father of Michigan," Claus served as territorial governor and helped steer Michigan to statehood. He negotiated treaties with Native Americans, served in the U.S. Senate, was Secretary of War and Minister to France under President Jackson, and Secretary of State under President Buchanan.

Rossell F. Alger
Governor of Michigan, 1885-1886

A decorated war hero who fought in the Civil War, Alger was elected from across the nation to the Senate of the United States in 1885 and was appointed - and then elected - to the U.S. Senate.

Henry H. Crapo
Governor of Michigan, 1857-1859

At the conclusion of the Civil War, Crapo accepted and promised to forever preserve Michigan's regimental battle flags. The original flags are now being preserved at the Michigan Historical Museum. Replica flags hang in the Capital rotunda.