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Supreme Court Chair Presentation

A long-lost chair with historic and architectural significance returns to its original home in the Harrisburg Supreme Court chamber during a special ceremony at 10:30 a.m. June 5 in the court chamber.

The Pennsylvania Capitol Preservation Committee will present the chair, which has been fully restored, to John P. Flaherty, Chief Justice of Pennsylvania.

The highly ornate mahogany chair is one of only seven made for the Supreme Court when the Capitol Building was constructed. According to Ruthann Hubbert-Kemper, Executive Director of the committee, the chair, designed by architect Joseph Huston, is the only known surviving chair original to the Supreme Court Chamber.

"The court is enhanced by the presentation of this magnificent piece of historic furniture and its timely addition to the Supreme Court Chamber as we enter the 21st century," Flaherty said. "Valuable resources we inherit from the past — such as this chair — help all citizens appreciate our rich historical legacy and the role it played in shaping a court system today that administers justice in the most efficient means possible."

The restoration of the chair involved upholstering with new leather, retying original springs, adding new webbing and burlap, and repairing the original internal framework. The original leather was deteriorated, and this restoration is the first time it has been re-upholstered.

The chair was acquired from a private citizen with funds donated by committee member Bea Garvan and from the Capitol Restoration Trust Fund. The Restoration Trust Fund was established in 1982 for the purpose of restoring the Capitol Building and acquiring artifacts relevant to the building. The fund can receive monies from both public and private sources.

"This chair is an important addition to the Capitol's historic furniture collection," said Capitol Preservation Committee chairman Paul I. Clymer. "The committee encourages citizens to come forward with any furniture that may be original to the Capitol Building."

The Capitol Preservation Committee is an independent committee established by the General Assembly in 1982 for the purpose of coordinating and overseeing programs to conserve, restore, preserve and maintain the Pennsylvania State Capitol and its historic contents for the future.

For more information, please contact the Committee at (717) 783-6484 or visit the committee web site at <http://cpc.leg.state.pa.us>.

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