Welcome to the Illinois State Capitol

Begin your tour at the Sundial at the north entrance.

Illinois State Capitol

“Monuments and statues...are the open books of civilization...made to perpetuate the memories of those who have been true and faithful in the battle of life.”

—Judge Henry S. Baker at the dedication of the Pierre Menard statue
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Begin your tour at the Sundial at the north entrance of the Capitol and work your way clockwise.

I am pleased to present this brochure about the statues and monuments located on the grounds of the Illinois State Capitol Complex.

We can take great pride in our State Capitol and the grounds surrounding it. The statues and monuments described on the inside of this brochure add beauty and dignity to the area while providing a glimpse of those individuals who have helped shape Illinois’ rich history.

I hope you find your walking tour of the Capitol grounds both interesting and educational.

Jesse White
Secretary of State
Illinois Workers Memorial
Paid for by donations from union members, this 3,000-pound memorial “is dedicated to the memory of the thousands of Illinois workers killed and injured on the job.” The bronze sculpture of three workers on top of a polished granite base was dedicated on April 28, 1992, with about 800 people in attendance. Illinois AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and Chicago Federation of Labor President Robert Holley moderated the ceremony, with national AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland giving the keynote speech.
Sculptor: Peter Fagan, 1992

The Coal Miner
At the urging of Vachel Davis, a Southern Illinois coal miner, poet and artist, the statue of former Illinois Governor and Senator Richard Yates. The 8-foot bronze statue was paid for by the State of Illinois. During a joint dedication ceremony for the Yates and John M. Palmer statues on Oct. 16, 1923, Yates’ son, Richard, a former Governor himself, spoke about his father, whose most brilliant service was during the four tumultuous years of the Civil War. Many Civil War veterans attended the ceremony.
Sculptor: Albin Polasek, 1921

Abraham Lincoln
In 1913, the Illinois State Art Commission was authorized to secure a new statue of Abraham Lincoln for Illinois’ centennial. The 10-foot, 6-inch bronze statue and large granite base and backdrop, engraved with Lincoln’s “Four score and seven years ago” speech, cost about $50,000. The statue was dedicated on Oct. 5, 1918, the centennial of the first meeting of the Illinois General Assembly. Lincoln biographer Lord Charnwood (William Arthur Smith Benson) gave the keynote address, and Illinois poet Vachel Lindsay recited his poem, “When Lincoln Walks at Midnight in Springfield.”
Sculptor: Andrew O’Connor, 1918

Illinois Firefighters Memorial
On May 13, 1999, a monument was erected in memory of “the firefighters of Illinois who have given their lives in the line of duty and to those who heroically serve with courage, pride and honor.” Four life-size, bronze firefighters and a rescued child on a 14-foot-tall stone cairn are surrounded by 2,400 red paver bricks and enclosed by a 2-foot wall. The monument was built through public contributions and the sale of Firefighters Memorial license plates. A ceremony is held at the memorial each Memorial Day honoring Illinois Fallen Firefighters Memorial Day.
Sculptor: Neil Bradin, 1999

Illinois Police Officers Memorial
This memorial, with its life-size bronze figures of a male and a female police officer, was dedicated on Oct. 29, 1990, in memory of Illinois police officers killed in the line of duty. The 13-foot monument has a pedestal and a base of red granite and was paid for with $85,000 in public donations. Each May, on National Police Officers Memorial Day, a ceremony is held to honor officers recently killed in the line of duty. Their names are added to the original 634 officers engraved on the surrounding polished black granite steles.
Sculptor: Keith Knablock, 1990

9/11 Memorial
Through fundraising efforts by the Blue Knights Law Enforcement Club of Illinois, a memorial to the victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks was erected in 2005. The memorial commemorates the three sites of the terrorist attacks, and the front is an etching of a New York firefighter raising the flag at Ground Zero. A memorial service takes place annually on the second Sunday in September.
Designer: D&M Services of Blue Island, 2005

Robert Green
On May 30, 1933, the 10-foot bronze statue of Illinois’ first Lieutenant Governor Governor was the first to be placed on the Capitol lawn on May 28, 1886. A French-Canadian, Menard is depicted trading with a Native American along the Mississippi River. The fox skin and calumet pipe symbolize the peaceful commerce Menard fostered between the Native American and white communities. Charles Chouteau, the son of Menard’s former business partner, donated about $10,000 for the statue and 10-foot granite base, which was dedicated on Jan. 10, 1888.
Sculptor: John H. Mahaney, 1886

Pierre Menard
Sculptor: Geraldine McCullough, 1988
ue, and was rededicated on Sept. 18, 1993. The statue was moved to its current location on May 1993, the statue was moved to its current location at “Freedom Corner,” facing the Abraham Lincoln statue. Then Secretary of State Jim Edgar said King “merits this special recognition for his contributions to Illinoisans of all colors and creeds.” The statue was unveiled in the Capitol rotunda on Jan. 14, 1988. King Martin Luther King, Jr., cost $25,000 and was first crack hand-painted, was moved to the Capitol grounds the Secretary of State’s Illinois bicentennial exhibit. The bronze reproduction, which has the same cast inscription as the original Illinois Memorial “is dedicated to the memory of the thousands of Illinois workers killed and injured on the job.” The bronze sculpture of three workers on top of a polished granite base was dedicated on April 28, 1992, with about 800 people in attendance. Illinois AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and Chicago Federation of Labor President Robert Holley moderated the ceremony, with national AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland giving the keynote speech.
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