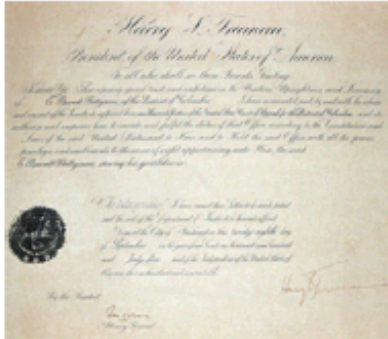




# Historical Society of the District of Columbia Circuit

Newsletter # 16 July 2013



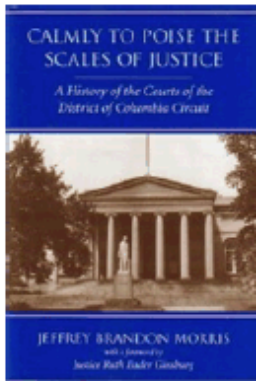
## From Houston to Washington, D.C. - an Unusual Trip

From a box inside a Houston, Texas, thrift shop, the original Commission naming E. Barrett Prettyman to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, signed by President Harry S. Truman in 1945, has made its way to the Courthouse, thanks to Robert Martin, an interested public citizen. Today the Commission hangs proudly in the Courthouse Annex on the wall above a display cased filled with Prettyman memorabilia. [Read the full story of Martin's discovery when still a teenager.](#)



## Standing Room Only - "Women in the Life and Law of the D.C. Circuit Courts"

An overflow crowd listened intently as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Judge Patricia Wald, Chief Judge Royce Lamberth, Judge Gladys Kessler, Nancy Mayer-Whittington, Michele Roberts, and Helgi Walker talked about the barriers they and other women confronted in the legal profession and how women have broken through many of them. You can watch and listen to the entire program, led by Professor Babcock, as soon as the video is streamed on the Society's website, probably in August.



#### **Did You Know That:**

–When the Courts of the District of Columbia opened in 1801, penalties included whipping, pillory and branding?

–Just after World War I, half of the cases before the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia involved local disputes, and the rest of the cases were almost entirely patent and trademark appeals?

–It wasn't until 1933 that the D.C. Circuit Courts achieved equal status with their counterparts around the country?

–Interesting but little-known facts like these appear regularly on the Society's website at

[www.dcchs.org](http://www.dcchs.org) Go to "Of Historical Interest."

#### **New on the Scene**



**William A. Schreiner, Jr.**

William A. Schreiner, Jr. is the Society's Treasurer, having agreed to take over from Logan Smith in February. Bill practices insurance law at Zuckerman Spaeder. He graduated from New York University School of Law in 1997. Outside the office, Bill's interest in history keeps him busy. He is President of the Friends of Fort Ward, an organization which advocates for the preservation of Civil War fortifications in the Washington area, and he serves as a Colonial-era docent at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House in Old Town Alexandria.



**Belinda Peterson**

#### **Behind the Scenes: Belinda Peterson**

Often unseen but always available and helpful, Belinda Peterson has served as the Society's volunteer bookkeeper for over eight years, assisting all Society Treasurers – Bill Schultz, Lisa Barclay, Logan Smith and William Schreiner, Jr. Married on a beach in Cancun, Mexico, five years ago, Belinda enjoys reading, entertaining, and spending time with her 21-pound Shih Tzu, a special gift from her husband.

#### **On Display in the Courthouse**

U.S. District Judge Louis Oberdorfer's extraordinary contributions to the bench and bar are noted in the latest Historical Society exhibit on the first floor of the U.S. Courthouse. Judge Oberdorfer wrote more than 1,300



opinions. He was Co-Chair of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and served as Chief Executive Officer of the Legal Services Corporation and President of the D.C. Bar. A strong supporter of the Historical Society, Judge Oberdorfer served for ten years as its first Chair, and he co-chaired the Bicentennial Anniversary celebration of the Courts of the D.C. Circuit in 2001. Judge Oberdorfer remained active in the work of the Court until his death at age 94.

### New Board Members

The Society welcomes new Board members Elizabeth E. Beske, Professor of Legal Rhetoric and Research Coordinator, American University, Washington College of Law; James H. Johnston, lawyer and author of numerous articles and books, including *From Slave Ship to Harvard*; and Steven A. Steinbach, history teacher at Sidwell Friends School and former Partner, Williams & Connolly.