

# North Carolina **LEGISLATIVE BUILDING**



## Visitor Guide

16 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601  
[www.ncleg.gov](http://www.ncleg.gov)



# Welcome to All!

Welcome to the General Assembly, where the entire legislative community strives to improve the lives of citizens every day.

We hope you have a wonderful tour learning about NC history and our state government that serves more than 10 million people from the Outer Banks to the Smoky Mountains.

Thank you for visiting us and learning more about what makes North Carolina so special.



**Tim Moore**  
*Speaker of the House*

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Welcome to the General Assembly! Thank you for taking the time to visit the “People’s House,” where we work every day on behalf of North Carolinians like yourself.

This building is filled with history. I hope you come away from your tour with a greater appreciation for the legislature’s unique position in our great state and take the time to stop by your Senator’s office.

Thank you for taking the time to visit us today to get an up-close look at how your government works.



**Phil Berger**  
*President Pro Tempore  
of the Senate*

# About the Legislative Building

## *Planning*

The North Carolina Legislative Building was the brainchild of architect Edward Durell Stone. Stone designed other government buildings and national landmarks such as the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC; Radio City Music Hall in New York City; and the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India.

Several features of the Legislative Building, including the brass fixtures and red carpets, are reflected in Stone's other structures.

Stone was often inspired by the work of his friend, the architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

## *Construction*

Work began in 1961 and was finished two years later.

The 1963-64 session was the first one held in the new facility, which became the first building in America to be used solely for a state legislature.

In 1982, the state constructed the Legislative Office Building, located behind the Legislative Building, to accommodate growth in the legislative body.

## *By the Numbers*

- ☐ 4 – courtyards in the Legislative Building
- ☐ 1,500 – weight (lbs.) of each chamber's golden door
- ☐ 7,000 – visitors per year from outside North Carolina
- ☐ 206,000 – square footage of Legislative Building
- ☐ \$6,703,914.25 – total cost of Legislative Building



## *Grand Staircase*

**The tour begins inside the Jones Street entrance at the base of the grand staircase.**

The staircase is a hallmark of Stone's architectural style and of 1960s culture. The same red carpeting is used throughout the building, including the House and Senate chambers.

When the building opened in 1963, the carpet covered every inch of the staircase. After two years of wear and tear, however, it was redone as an accent. The staircase is now limited to special occasions, such as session-opening group photos.

The brass railing is another recurring feature. Many of the building's railings and light fixtures are made of brass.



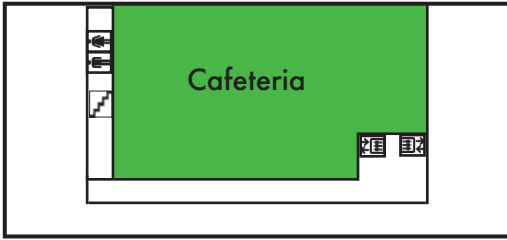
## Rotunda

**Climb the grand staircase and move to the circular railing in the center. This is the rotunda.**

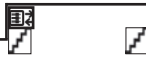
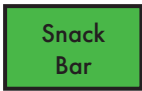
You are standing between the House and Senate chambers. Legislators are elected to two-year terms known as bienniums. New bienniums begin in January of odd-numbered years.

<i>House of Representatives</i>	<i>Senate</i>
<p>This chamber is on the left side of the building when you reach the top of the grand stairs. At the front of the chamber is where the Speaker of the House presides. The Speaker leads sessions, calls for votes, and maintains order.</p> <p>The tapestries behind the Speaker's desk bear the symbols of the eight lords proprietors who gave North Carolina its colonial charter in 1663.</p> <p>The paintings on the outer walls are on loan from artist J. Chris Wilson's <i>Murphy to Manteo</i> series. They depict scenes of North Carolina along U.S. Highway 64.</p>	<p>This chamber sits across from the House of Representatives. Similar to the Speaker of the House, the Senate has a leader, or president. The President of the Senate is the North Carolina lieutenant governor.</p> <p>If the lieutenant governor cannot preside over a session, that role is filled by the president pro tempore.</p> <p>The paintings on the Senate walls depict notable figures from North Carolina Senate history, including Abraham Galloway, a former slave who became a state senator, and Gertrude Dills McKee, the first woman to be elected to the Senate.</p>

## BASEMENT



Staff  
Parking



## FIRST FLOOR

Lane Street Entrance  
Bridge to LOB

1200 Court



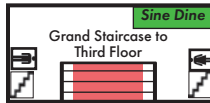
1100 Court



1400 Court



1300 Court



Grand Staircase to  
Third Floor

Sine Dine

1000 Court

Jones Street Entrance

Jones Street

## Map Key



Elevator



Women's Restroom



Legislative Offices



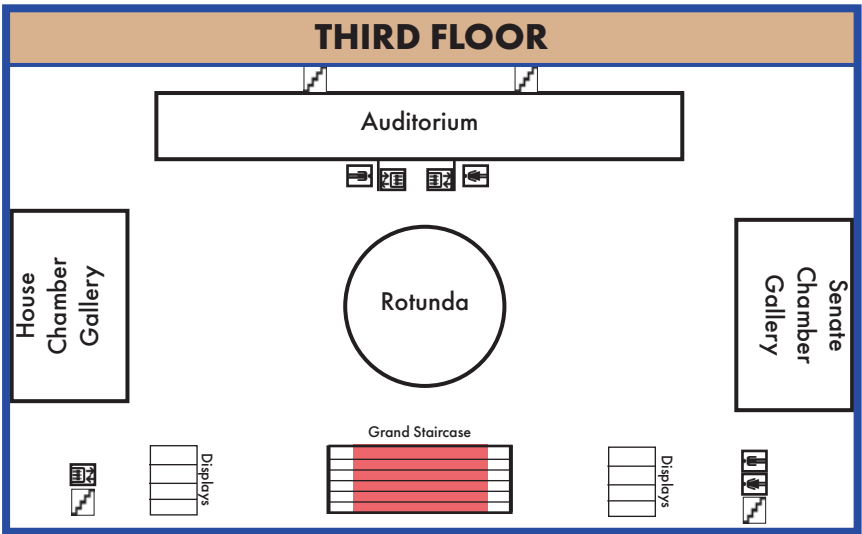
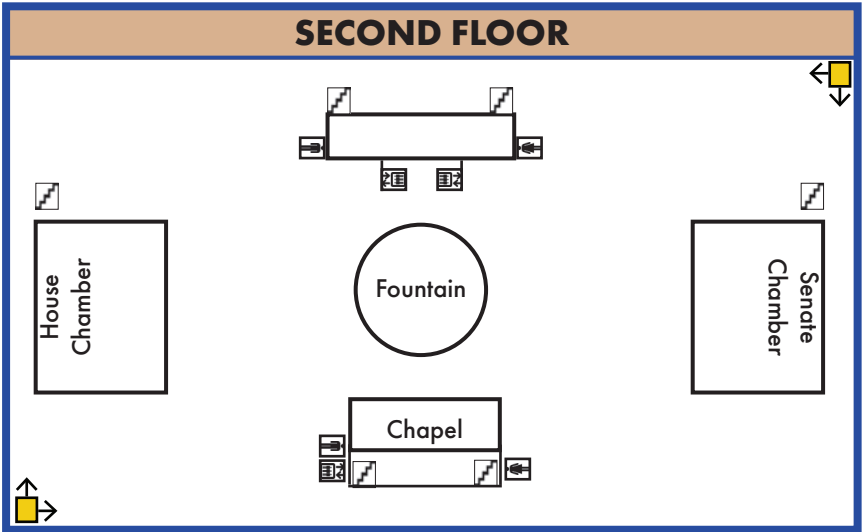
Stairs



Men's Restroom



Food & Drink



Tour Highlights	
<b>First Floor</b>	<b>Third Floor</b>
◆ House Portraits	◆ Rotunda
◆ Senate Portraits	◆ Chamber Galleries
◆ Mural - North Carolina Belongs to Children	◆ Rooftop Garden
	◆ Informational Displays
<b>Second Floor</b>	<b>Basement</b>
◆ House & Senate Chambers	◆ Cafeteria and Snack Bar
◆ Painting - Baptism of Virginia Dare	

## Second Floor

**Take the elevator behind the rotunda to the second floor.**

To the right is the entrance to the House of Representatives. The Senate entrance sits to the left.

Each entrance has a solid brass door (sometimes called a “golden door”) weighing 1,500 pounds. When these doors are open, the two presiding officers face each other.

A small chapel is located south of the rotunda. North of it is the Legislative Services Office.

Outside the chapel hangs *The Baptism of Virginia Dare*, a 1920s oil painting by the celebrated New York artist William Steene. Virginia Dare was born in August 1587 as part of the so-called “Lost Colony” in what is now Dare County.

Virginia was the first child of English parents born in the New World.





## Portrait Galleries

**Return to the elevator and take it to the first floor. Turn left, turn left again and follow the inner hallway to the 1300 Court.**

You will see the House portrait gallery on the left. These portraits show every Speaker of the House since the Legislative Building opened in 1963. Notable names include:

- ◇ Daniel Blue—Became 1st African-American speaker in 1991
- ◇ Thom Tillis—Became U.S. Senator in 2015
- ◇ Harold Brubaker—Retired as longest-serving House member (1976-2012)

**Turn right and follow the inner hallway, past the Sine Dine, to the 1000 Court.**

You will see the Senate portrait gallery on the right. These portraits show every Senate president and president pro tempore since 1963. Notable names include:

- ◇ James Hunt, Jr.—Became governor in 1977 and in 1993
- ◇ Beverly Purdue—Became governor in 2009
- ◇ Marc Basnight—Served nine terms as president (1993-2010)



## Mural

**Cross the 1000 Court to the outer wall, turn left and follow it to the back entrance of the building.**

On the left, you will see the mural *North Carolina Belongs to Children*.

Created by artists James and John Biggers from Gastonia, this 1994 mural reads like an unfolded map of North Carolina.

Inside the quilt-like design are the topography, industry and symbols of the state from the mountains to the coast. These symbols include:

- ◆ The state bird (cardinal)
- ◆ The state tree (dogwood)
- ◆ The state mammal (gray squirrel)

The lower register depicts children playing with toy models. Each toy refers to a particular aspect of North Carolina's history and culture.





Seal

**Exit the building and turn right to walk around to the front of the building.**

You will notice the white columns made of marble quarried in Vermont.

Facing the front entrance, you will see the 28-foot terrazzo mosaic of the Great Seal of North Carolina embedded in the walkway. Laid down shortly after the building opened in 1963, the seal includes significant dates and images from North Carolina history. On the left is "Liberty," a woman holding a staff and freeman's cap. To the right is "Plenty," a seated figure holding a cornucopia. The ring around the seal includes the state motto, "Esse Quam Videri," Latin for "To be, rather than to seem." At the top is "May 20, 1775," the date of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.

In 1983, twenty years after this mosaic was created, the General Assembly approved a second date for the Great Seal: April 12, 1776, the date of the Halifax Resolves.

## Additional Information

### PUBLIC HOURS

Monday-Friday	8am-5pm
Saturday	9am-5pm
Sunday	1pm-5pm

### PARKING

Paid visitor lots at  
 (1) 140 E. Jones St.  
 (2) 329 N. Salisbury St.  
 (3) 120 W. Edenton St.

### VISITOR GUIDELINES

Available at  
[www.ncleg.gov/about/visitorinfo](http://www.ncleg.gov/about/visitorinfo)

### FOOD & DRINK

#### Cafeteria

Monday-Friday  
 11 am-2pm  
 Located in basement

#### Snack Bar

Monday-Friday  
 8am-3pm  
 Located in basement

#### Sine Dine (vending)

Open public hours  
 Located on 1st Floor

Daily Cafeteria Menu  
[www.ncleg.gov/about/cafeteriamenu](http://www.ncleg.gov/about/cafeteriamenu)



## OTHER CAPITOL AREA ATTRACTIONS

### Museum of History

5 E. Edenton Street  
 (919) 814-7000  
[ncmuseumofhistory.org](http://ncmuseumofhistory.org)

### Museum of Natural Sciences

11 W. Jones Street  
 (919) 707-9800  
[naturalsciences.org](http://naturalsciences.org)

### State Capitol

1 E. Edenton Street  
 (919) 807-7950  
[ncstatecapitol.org](http://ncstatecapitol.org)