



CLASSROOM LAW PROJECT COURTHOUSE EXPERIENCE TOUR GUIDE HANDBOOK

The Gus J. Solomon Courthouse

Courthouse Tours begin at the Gus J. Solomon United States Courthouse, which houses the offices of Classroom Law Project. This was the original home of the United States District Court for the District of Oregon until the Mark O. Hatfield United States Courthouse opened in 1997. The Gus J. Solomon Federal Courthouse was built in 1933. It originally contained eight courtrooms. None of the courtrooms are used today in an official court capacity, with the exception of naturalization ceremonies for new United States citizens.

The courtroom on the 6th floor where the student orientations takes place still looks the way it did when the courtroom was in use. It is an impressive space to be in and contains many decorative elements that signify its important purpose. The desks and benches are all made out of oak, which symbolized strength when the courthouse was built. The marble floors and tall ceilings give the room an echo that also signifies the importance of the room. Ornate bronze grills and lamps add an extra touch to this courtroom.



The courthouse is named after Gus J. Solomon who served as a federal judge from 1949 through 1987. His tenure of 37 years has made him the longest standing federal judge in the District of Oregon. Solomon was a Portland native who practiced law as an attorney in his hometown prior to his judgeship on the District Court for the District of Oregon. As an attorney, Solomon had a special interest in representing union workers and farm cooperatives. As a federal judge, Solomon was recognized as a strong advocate for civil rights.

Famous Cases from the Gus J. Solomon United States Courthouse

The work of Judge Solomon was highly praised by the justices on the United States Supreme Court. This Court affirmed his opinions on numerous occasions and admired his sense for pragmatic justice. Judge Solomon served at a time when laws regarding the fourth amendment or protection against unreasonable government searches and seizures were being refined. In the case of *Cupp v. Murphy*, Judge Solomon presided over a murder case involving the constitutionality of the seizure of evidence used in the prosecution.

Dale Murphy was convicted of killing his wife. However, his successful prosecution hinged upon evidence collected while he was voluntarily at the police station before charges were filed against him. While talking to police about his wife's murder prior to becoming a suspect, police officers noticed what looked like dried blood

on his fingernails. Murphy declined police requests to be searched, but police forcibly obtained samples of the dried blood against Murphy's will.



In federal district court with Judge Solomon presiding over the case, Murphy's conviction was upheld against his fourth amendment violation claims. Judge Solomon found that the police had probable cause to search Murphy on the basis of the Supreme Court precedent established in *Schmerber v. California*. *Schmerber* established the proposition that police may search an individual without a warrant or consent if they believe the suspect has evidence capable of being destroyed. Facts presented at the trial indicated that Murphy became nervous after police noticed the blood on his fingers and that he tried to wipe it off by rubbing his hands in his pockets.

The Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit reversed Judge Solomon's decision. However, the Ninth Circuit was then reversed by the Supreme Court. As a result of affirming Judge Solomon's decision, the Supreme Court added another layer to

fourth amendment jurisprudence. *Cupp v. Murphy* established the legal precedent that permits police to conduct a limited search of a suspect involved in a crime before an official arrest if there is reason to believe that the suspect has evidence that may be destroyed.

The Gus J. Solomon Courthouse as Hollywood Star

In the past, the courthouse's gold inlaid marble hallways rang with matters of justice. Today it has embarked on another adventure—as a film star. Because its corridors carry only the memory of busy trials and court schedules, Solomon Courthouse's oak-clad courtrooms are free for the exciting bustle of filming schedules. The halls have rung with the voices of Robert De Niro, Cuba Gooding Jr., Marlee Matlin, and Timothy Hutton. Since 1977, virtually all of the directors, stars, and crew of the movies shot in Portland have walked under the outstretched wings of the stone-carved eagle perched above its door.

The names of some of these productions include "Grimm," "Leverage," "Men of Honor," "The Hunted," "Final Justice," "A Change of Heart," "Take My Advice: The Ann and Abby Story," "Where the Truth Lies," and "Switched at Birth."



Courtroom scene from "Men of Honor"