



Use of National Statuary Hall: Assignment and Historic Events

Jacob R. Straus

Analyst on the Congress

Matthew Eric Glassman

Analyst on the Congress

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Summary

Statuary Hall has been used as the setting for a variety of events, including memorial ceremonies and receptions for new Members of Congress, award presentations, and as media space after presidential addresses. This report identifies and categorizes uses of Statuary Hall since 2005.

Use of Statuary Hall is at the discretion of the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Under House Rule I, clause 3, the Speaker has the authority to assign unappropriated rooms on the House of Representatives side of the Capitol, including Statuary Hall. Use of Statuary Hall could also be authorized by House resolution, but no events since 2005 have been held in Statuary Hall on such authority.

Since 2005, 94 events have been held in Statuary Hall. Events held in Statuary Hall can be divided into four categories: (1) receptions and dinners, (2) ceremonies, (3) media events, and (4) memorial services. The report provides a brief explanation of each category and examples of activities in each category.

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Introduction

Between 1819 and 1857, the room currently called Statuary Hall served as the Hall of the House of Representatives.¹ Upon the completion of the current House chamber in 1857, the fate of the old “Hall of the House” was debated for many years.

Perhaps the simplest was that it be converted into additional space for the Library of Congress, which was still housed in the Capitol. More drastic was the suggestion that the entire Hall be dismantled and replaced by two floors of committee rooms. Eventually, the idea of using the chamber as an art gallery was approved, and works intended for the Capitol extensions were put on exhibit; among these was the plaster model for the Statue of Freedom, which was later cast in bronze for the Capitol dome. The lack of wall space effectively prevented the hanging of large paintings, but the room seemed well suited to the display of statuary.²

Beginning in November 1879, Statuary Hall was first used for events. The first two events were a reception and dinner for the Society of the Army of the Cumberland on November 20, 1879,³ and a ceremony to close the Centennial Safe on November 22, 1879.⁴

Today, Statuary Hall is the home to many of the statues in the National Statuary Hall collection, which consists of two statues from each state.⁵

Scheduling Statuary Hall Events

A room in the House Wing of the Capitol may be reserved in one of two ways: through a chamber resolution or pursuant to the Speaker’s authority. House Rule I, clause 3 provides the Speaker with the authority to assign unappropriated rooms (i.e., not already assigned to a committee, House leadership, or an officer of the House). House Rule I, clause 3 states

Except as otherwise provided by rule or law, the Speaker shall have general control of the Hall of the House, the corridors and passages in the part of the Capitol assigned to the use of the House, and the disposal of unappropriated rooms in that part of the Capitol.⁶

¹ U.S. Congress, Architect of the Capitol, “National Statuary Hall,” http://www.aoc.gov/cc/capitol/nat_stat_hall.cfm.

² *Ibid.*

³ Anson G. McCook, *Address Before the Society of the Army of the Cumberland at their Eleventh Reunion*, Washington, November 19, 1879 (Cincinnati: Press of Robert Clarke & Co, 1879).

⁴ U.S. Congress, Clerk of the House of Representatives, “The Mysterious Centennial Safe of Mrs. Charles F. Deihm,” *Historical Highlights*, <http://artandhistory.house.gov/highlights.aspx?action=view&intID=505>.

⁵ U.S. Congress, Architect of the Capitol, “About the National Statuary Hall Collection,” http://www.aoc.gov/cc/art/nsh/nsh_coll_origin.cfm. For a list of statues in the National Statuary Hall Collection, see U.S. Congress, Architect of the Capitol, “Statues in the National Statuary Hall Collection,” <http://www.aoc.gov/cc/art/nsh/index.cfm>. Not all statues are currently housed in Statuary Hall. Some statues are stored in various halls of the Capitol, including the Crypt, the Hall of Columns, the Rotunda, the first and second floor of the Senate Wing of the Capitol, and the second floor House connecting corridor; and in the Capitol Visitor Center.

⁶ House Rule I, clause 3. U.S. Congress, *Constitution, Jefferson’s Manual, and Rules of the House of Representatives, One Hundred Eleventh Congress*, prepared by John V. Sullivan, Parliamentarian, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., H.Doc. 110-162 (Washington: GPO, 2009), § 623, p. 336.

For rooms jointly controlled by the House and Senate (e.g., the Rotunda and Emancipation Hall), a concurrent resolution is generally required to authorize use.⁷

Initially adopted in 1811 to provide the Speaker with approval authority over events in the House chamber,⁸ clause 3 was last amended in 1911, to provide the Speaker with control over unappropriated rooms elsewhere in the House Wing of the Capitol.⁹ Since 1911, the Speaker has generally authorized the use of rooms in the House Wing of the Capitol not otherwise appropriated.¹⁰

Events in Statuary Hall, 2005-2011

Since 2005, 94 events have been held in Statuary Hall. The House Sergeant at Arms, whose office provided data for this report, defines an event as activity that prevents public access to Statuary Hall for a period of time. As a result, activities such as a brief wreath laying at a particular statue are not included. **Table 1** reports the total number of events held in Statuary Hall during each of the past seven years. The **Appendix** provides the date of each event and a brief description.

Table 1. Number of Events Held in Statuary Hall, 2005-2011

Year	Number
2005	16
2006	15
2007	16
2008	18
2009	10
2010	15
2011	4
Total	94

Source: CRS Analysis of Sergeant At Arms data.

Notes: 2011 data includes events through March 30, 2011.

⁷ Since the 101st Congress (1989-1990), only one event was held in the Rotunda without a concurrent resolution: the lying in state of President Gerald Ford. President Ford died in December 2006, during the recess between the 109th and 110th Congress. The Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader jointly authorized the use of the Rotunda without a concurrent resolution. For more information on use of the Rotunda, Emancipation Hall, and the Capitol Grounds, see CRS Report RL34619, *Use of the Capitol Rotunda, Capitol Grounds, and Emancipation Hall: Concurrent Resolutions, 101st to 111th Congress*, by Matthew Eric Glassman and Jacob R. Straus.

⁸ U.S. Congress, *Hind's Precedents of the House of Representatives of the United States*, prepared by Asher C. Hinds, vol. 2 (Washington: GPO, 1907), § 1354, pp. 892-893. The Speaker's authority to assign rooms in the House Wing of the Capitol stems from his or her general authority to control the use of the House chamber. For more information, see "Committee Rooms, &c.," *Annals of the Congress of the United States*, vol. 42 (May 26, 1824), p. 2764.

⁹ U.S. Congress, *Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives of the United States*, prepared by Clarence Cannon, vol. 6 (Washington: GPO, 1935), § 261, pp. 424-425. See also, "Recognition Still Remains with the Speaker," *Congressional Record*, vol. 47, part 1 (April 5, 1911), p. 80.

¹⁰ U.S. Congress, *Hind's Precedents of the House of Representatives of the United States*, prepared by Asher C. Hinds, vol. 5 (Washington: GPO, 1907), § 7273, p. 1104.

Following receipt of the data from the House Sergeant at Arms, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) examined the events and divided them into four categories: (1) receptions and dinners, (2) ceremonies, (3) media events, and (4) memorial services. The following sections provide a brief explanation of each category and examples of activities. **Table 2** reports the number of events since 2005, by category.

Receptions/Dinners

The largest percentage of events held in Statuary Hall (63%) between 2005 and 2011 were for receptions or dinners, hosted by both official congressional entities and private groups. For example, the Joint Congressional Committee on the Inaugural Ceremonies held the Inaugural Luncheon in Statuary Hall in both 2005 and 2009 and the Capitol Historical Society held a reception for new Members of Congress in the Hall in 2005.

Ceremonies

Ceremonies account for just over one-quarter of the events held in Statuary Hall since 2005. These ceremonies include presentations of awards, unveiling of official portraits, commemorations of event anniversaries, and formal wreath layings. For example, the annual National Moment of Remembrance is held in Statuary Hall. In addition, prior to moving the statue to Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center, an annual lei draping ceremony at King Kamehameha statue was held in Statuary Hall.

Media Events

Statuary Hall has also been occasionally used as the location for media availability, primarily after a presidential address to a joint session of Congress in the House chamber.

Memorial Services

Since 2005, four memorial services for Members of Congress have been held in Statuary Hall: for Representatives Robert Matsui (January 5, 2005); Juanita Millender-McDonald (May 17, 2007); Stephanie Tubbs Jones (September 10, 2008); and John P. Murtha (March 30, 2010).

Table 2. Events Held in Statuary Hall, by Category
2005-2011

Category	Number	Percentage of Total
Receptions / Dinners	59	63
Ceremonies	24	26
Media Events	7	7
Memorial Services	4	4
Total	94	100

Source: CRS Analysis of Sergeant At Arms data.

Notes: 2011 data includes events through March 30, 2011.

Appendix. Events Held in Statuary Hall, 2005-2011

Since January 1, 2005, 94 events have been held in Statuary Hall. **Table A-1** contains a chronological list of these events, the date of the event, and the event type.

Table A-1. Events Held in Statuary Hall
January 5, 2005, to March 30, 2011

Date	Event	Type
1/5/2005	Memorial Service for the Late Honorable Robert Matsui	Memorial Service
1/20/2005	Inaugural Luncheon ^a	Ceremony
2/2/2005	Media Availability for Members of Congress following a Presidential Address before a Joint Session of Congress	Media Event
2/17/2005	Ceremony Celebrating the 100 th Anniversary of the Placement in Statuary Hall of the Frances E. Willard Statue	Ceremony
3/2/2005	Reception following the Presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to Jackie Robinson	Reception/Dinner
3/7/2005	Reception for New Members hosted by the Capitol Historical Society	Reception/Dinner
4/16/2005	Kennedy Center Gala Reception	Reception/Dinner
4/27/2005	Association of Former Members of Congress Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/19/2005	Association of Former Members of Congress Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/29/2005	Memorial Day Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/31/2005	National Moment of Remembrance	Ceremony
6/5/2005	Ford's Theatre Gala Rehearsal Reception	Reception/Dinner
6/6/2005	King Kamehameha Lei Draping Ceremony	Ceremony
6/7/2005	International Club Reception and Dinner	Reception/Dinner
7/4/2005	July 4 th Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
9/22/2005	Reception following the Dedication of the Statue of Po'pay from New Mexico	Reception/Dinner
1/21/2006	Wreath Laying Ceremony Honoring General Robert E. Lee	Ceremony
1/31/2006	Media Availability for Members of Congress following a Presidential Address before a Joint Session of Congress	Media Event
3/15/2006	50 th Anniversary of Hungarian Democracy with an Address by President George W. Bush	Ceremony
4/27/2006	Association of Former Members of Congress Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/6/2006	Kennedy Center Gala Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/10/2006	U.S. House of Representatives Distinguished Service Award Presentation Ceremony to Vice President Cheney, Lindy Boggs, and Father Drinan	Ceremony
5/25/2006	Memorial Day Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/31/2006	National Moment of Remembrance	Ceremony
6/11/2006	King Kamehameha Lei Draping Ceremony	Ceremony

Date	Event	Type
6/24/2006	Ford's Theatre Gala Rehearsal Reception	Reception/Dinner
7/4/2006	July 4 th Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
7/19/2006	Tribute to Retiring Members of Congress sponsored by the Capitol Historical Society	Reception/Dinner
11/13/2006	Speaker's Reception and Dinner Honoring New Members of the House	Reception/Dinner
11/14/2006	Democratic Leader's New Member Dinner	Reception/Dinner
12/6/2006	Speaker's Holiday Reception following the Lighting of the Capitol Christmas Tree on the West Front	Reception/Dinner
1/23/2007	Media Availability for Members of Congress following a Presidential Address before a Joint Session of Congress	Media Event
3/29/2007	Photo Op with the Tuskegee Airman, President Bush, and the Speaker prior to the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal in the Rotunda ^b	Ceremony
4/7/2007	Wreath Laying Ceremony Honoring General Robert E. Lee	Ceremony
5/10/2007	Association of Former Members of Congress Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/17/2007	Memorial Service for the Late Honorable Juanita Millender-McDonald	Memorial Service
5/27/2007	Memorial Day Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/31/2007	National Moment of Remembrance	Ceremony
6/2/2007	Speaker hosted Reception and Dinner	Reception/Dinner
6/10/2007	King Kamehameha Lei Draping Ceremony	Ceremony
6/21/2007	2007 Achievement Summit – Academy of Achievement Dinner and Reception	Reception/Dinner
6/23/2007	Ford's Theatre Gala Rehearsal Reception	Reception/Dinner
7/4/2007	July 4 th Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
7/17/2007	Reception honoring Dr. Norman Borlaug following the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal in the Rotunda	Reception/Dinner
8/25/2007	Wreath Laying Ceremony Honoring Father Junipero Serra	Ceremony
11/30/2007	Kennedy Center Gala Reception	Reception/Dinner
12/4/2007	Presentation of the Freedom Award to former Speaker Thomas Foley by the U.S. Capitol Historical Society	Reception/Dinner
1/19/2008	Wreath Laying Ceremony Honoring General Robert E. Lee ^c	Ceremony
1/28/2008	Media Availability for Members of Congress following a Presidential Address before a Joint Session of Congress	Media Event
2/14/2008	Memorial Service for the Late Honorable Tom Lantos	Memorial Service
3/5/2008	Reception for the Washington Premiere of the HBO series of "John Adams" hosted by the Speaker	Reception/Dinner
4/3/2008	Congressional Tribute to the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King "Renewing the Dream"	Ceremony
4/17/2008	Association of Former Members of Congress Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/21/2008	Congressional Tribute to the Centennial of the Birth of President Lyndon Johnson	Ceremony

Date	Event	Type
5/25/2008	Memorial Day Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/31/2008	National Moment of Remembrance	Ceremony
5/31/2008	Ford's Theatre Gala Rehearsal Reception	Reception/Dinner
6/8/2008	King Kamehameha Lei Draping Ceremony ^d	Ceremony
7/4/2008	July 4 th Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
9/10/2008	Memorial Service for the Late Honorable Stephanie Tubbs Jones	Memorial Service
9/24/2008	Reception Honoring Retiring Members of the 110 th Congress and the Presentation of the Freedom Award by the Capitol Historical Society	Reception/Dinner
9/24/2008	Reception honoring the Congressional Black Caucus hosted by Speaker Pelosi and Leader Reid	Reception/Dinner
11/18/2008	Reception for New Members of Congress hosted by the Speaker	Reception/Dinner
12/7/2008	Kennedy Center Honors Reception	Reception/Dinner
12/15/2008	Reception Honoring Rep. John Tanner and NATO Parliamentarians hosted by the Speaker	Reception/Dinner
1/20/2009	Inaugural Luncheon	Ceremony
2/10/2009	Celebrating the Honorable John Dingell of Michigan on the Occasion of Becoming the Longest Serving Member in the History of the U.S. House of Representatives	Ceremony
2/24/2009	Media Availability for Members of Congress following a Presidential Address before a Joint Session of Congress	Media Event
5/13/2009	Reception for New Members of Congress hosted by the Capitol Historical Society	Reception/Dinner
5/24/2009	Memorial Day Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/31/2009	National Moment of Remembrance	Ceremony
6/3/2009	Reception and Dinner honoring Mrs. Ronald Reagan and the Unveiling of the Statue of President Ronald Reagan	Reception/Dinner
6/16/2009	Association of Former Members of Congress Reception	Reception/Dinner
7/4/2009	July 4 th Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
7/28/2009	Unveiling of the Official Portrait of Speaker J. Dennis Hastert	Ceremony
1/27/2010	Media Availability for Members of Congress following a Presidential Address before a Joint Session of Congress	Media Event
3/21/2010	Sunday Worship Service for Members of Congress and Congressional staff ^e	Ceremony
3/25/2010	Women's History Event Honoring Secretary Hillary Clinton hosted by the Speaker	Ceremony
3/30/2010	Memorial Service for the Late Honorable John P. Murtha	Memorial Service
5/30/2010	Memorial Day Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
5/31/2010	National Moment of Remembrance	Ceremony
6/5/2010	Ford's Theatre Gala Rehearsal Reception	Reception/Dinner
6/15/2010	Association of Former Members of Congress Reception	Reception/Dinner

Date	Event	Type
6/24/2010	Ceremony to Commemorate the 60 th Anniversary of the End of the Korean War	Ceremony
7/4/2010	July 4 th Concert Reception	Reception/Dinner
7/24/2010	Reception and Dinner for the Spain/US Council Annual Forum	Reception/Dinner
7/26/2010	Reception honoring the 20 th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act	Ceremony
11/8/2010	Kennedy Center Gala Reception	Reception/Dinner
11/8/2010	Kennedy Center Reception Honoring the 2010 Recipient of the Mark Twain Award	Reception/Dinner
11/14/2010	Reception hosted by Leader Boehner for Republican New Members	Reception/Dinner
1/25/2011	Media Availability for Members of Congress following a Presidential Address before a Joint Session of Congress	Media Event
3/9/2011	Reception to Welcome Members of the 112 th Congress hosted by the Capitol Historical Society	Reception/Dinner
3/24/2011	150 th Anniversary of the Congressional Medal of Honor	Reception/Dinner
3/30/2011	40 th Anniversary of the Congressional Black Caucus	Reception/Dinner

Source: U.S. Congress, Office of the House Sergeant at Arms

- a. Inaugural lunches are hosted by the Joint Congressional Committee on the Inaugural Ceremonies (JCCIC). The first luncheon in Statuary Hall was held in 1953 for President Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- b. The Gold Medal Ceremony for the Tuskegee Airman was held in the Rotunda (see S.Con.Res. 15, 110th Congress). In addition to being used for photo opportunities, Statuary Hall was used as an overflow room for the Gold Medal Ceremony.
- c. The Robert E. Lee statue was moved to the Capitol Crypt in 2008.
- d. The King Kamehameha statue was moved to the Capitol Visitor Center's (CVC) Emancipation Hall in 2009. The Lei Draping ceremony was moved to the CVC beginning in June 2009.
- e. The worship service held in Statuary Hall was in conjunction with a Sunday session of the House [*Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 156 (March 21, 2010), pp. H1819-H1890].

Author Contact Information

Jacob R. Straus
Analyst on the Congress
jstraus@crs.loc.gov, 7-6438

Matthew Eric Glassman
Analyst on the Congress
mglassman@crs.loc.gov, 7-3467