

The Museum of Baltimore Legal History – Original Orphans' Courtroom
The Clarence M. Mitchell Jr. Courthouse

This room housed the Orphans' Court of Baltimore from 1900, the year the Courthouse opened, until 1977. Included among the items in the Museum are a grandfather clock, circa 1800 (records indicate that the clock stood in the Orphans' Court of Baltimore City prior to 1810); a copper drum that was used by the Clerk of the Court prior to 1960 to select juries; and an opinion by the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City from 1885 that ruled that black lawyers could not be denied the right to practice in that court. It would not be until 1888 that African-Americans were admitted to practice before the Court of Appeals. The mural behind the bench depicts the surrender of Lord Cornwallis to General Washington at Yorktown. Painted in Paris by Jean-Paul Laurens, it was hung in December 1910. The museum owes its existence and success to the late Philip Sherman, Esquire and the Honorable James F. Schneider of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Maryland.

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