

Official Exoteric Publication of Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity

Alpha Rho Chi fraternity was founded at the Universities of Illinois and Michigan on April 11, 1914. It is a social undergraduate fraternity limiting its membership to students of architecture, architectural engineering, landscape architecture, or the allied arts, enrolled in the departments leading to a bachelor's degree. The name Alpha Rho Chi is derived from the first five letters in Architecture. The title of the magazine is derived from the same source.

EFFLO E. EGGERT, Managing Editor

## IN MEMORIAM

### Master Architect Leaves Many Permanent Monuments to His Memory



#### Chapter Eternal

CASS GILBERT  
MASTER ARCHITECT

*Died suddenly last May 17 at Balmer Laven Hotel, Brockenhurst, in New Forest, near Southampton, England. Funeral services were held at 10 o'clock a.m., Saturday, June 2, at the Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Avenue and 90th Street, New York City. Interment at Ridgefield, Conn.*



Mr. Gilbert married Julia T. Finch, November 29, 1887.

He is survived by his wife; two daughters, Mrs. Charles Morgan Post and Miss Emily F. Gilbert; and one son, Cass Gilbert, Jr.



#### He Believed in Aristocracy of Ability

BY ARTHUR PICKETT, for the New York Alumni Chapter

CASS GILBERT has passed. May every member of Alpha Rho Chi fully realize our loss—the loss of our Master Architect, in all that the title may possibly imply. In Mr. Gilbert's own words, this title will some day become the highest honor an architect may receive. If this were true today, then the proper and only man in the profession worthy, has answered to that title. We mourn his passing as our greatest loss, but we rejoice in the fact that he leaves so much as an inspiration to us and our young men as they go out into the world to practice the profession of his choice.

America has had its Richardsons, its McKims, its Sullivans, and its Goodhues, but we may point to but one CASS GILBERT. The very mention of his name will bring a flush of pride to those who knew him. Who else could have secured a comparable group of commissions and executed such fine examples of our art? His accomplishments are so many that the most outstanding ones crown out and obliterate the lesser ones.

Like many of us, Mr. Gilbert's early life was spent in the middle west. He believed in aristocracy of ability as well as race. Although he numbered among his many friends Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Herbert Hoover, Frank Kellogg, J. P. Morgan, Elihu Root, and Nicholas Murray Butler, and among his acquaintances such men as Woodrow Wilson, Baron Von

CASS GILBERT, Master Architect, was born in Zanesville, Ohio, November 24, 1859, son of General Samuel Augustus Gilbert (U. S. Coast Survey and U.S.V.) and Elizabeth Fulton Wheeler Gilbert; educated in Zanesville, Ohio, St. Paul, Minnesota, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Later Michigan and Princeton Universities, Oberlin and Middlebury Colleges conferred the degree of Bachelor of Laws, LL.D.; New York University in 1931 conferred the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, and in the same year Columbia University awarded the degree of Doctor of Literature.

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Muller, Mussolini, and the Prince of Wales, still he has always found sufficient time to see any member of Alpha Rho Chi who called upon him. He took the time to attend our Convention in Virginia, many lunches and dinners in New York, and to discuss our problems and offer any sought-for advice concerning them. His attitude was always one of helpful assistance and service. As examples, let us cite two occasions when he was called upon for aid.

At the time of the Alpha Rho Chi exhibit in New York, Mr. Gilbert contributed \$75 toward the rental of space at the Architectural League. On the night the exhibit was hung, he appeared with some twenty beautiful water colors made in Europe from which he wanted a small group selected for the exhibit. The other occasion was at a time when we were seeking assistance for the possible establishment of new chapters at Pennsylvania University and New York University. The writer called Mr. Gilbert and asked his advice. He stated that he was very busy, but asked that we stop in the office for a few minutes. We stopped at one and left at four after he had discussed the possibilities thoroughly, telephoned the Dean at New York University, and written the Dean of Pennsylvania University. Thus has his attitude always been unselfish, inspiring and uplifting. It is, we believe, highly interesting and significant of his attitude to know that his last public appearance anywhere, was at the Founders' Day Banquet of the New York chapter on the night before he sailed for Europe, where he became ill and died. Those who heard him will never forget the salient facts or ideals expressed on that occasion.

He is gone, but his work lives on. He has made of American Architecture what it should be, and what it would never have



## Woolworth Building, 1912



CASS GILBERT  
Architect

*A pioneer in the designing of the first tallest building in the world. The Woolworth Building maintained the title of Tallest Building in the World from 1912 to the late twenties.*

*Always versatile in design styles, Architect Cass Gilbert chose the Gothic treatment for the Woolworth Building.*

been without him. In measuring his successes and accomplishments, we can find no shortcomings. His commissions were those most sought for. His execution of them is symbolized by New York's first and best tall building, the Woolworth Tower, one of the country's first modern buildings, the Brooklyn Army Supply Base, and finally by the Supreme Court Building in Washington, our finest monumental structure. His place in the community is unequalled by any in the profession. Surely the Master Architect is gone.



## Memorial Services Held by All Chapters

ON MAY 22, 1934, all active chapters received the following letter from the Grand Council:

"It is with sincere sorrow that I call to your attention the death of our Master Architect Cass Gilbert.

"In his death we have lost a friend, an adviser and an ardent supporter of Alpha Rho Chi.

"As a tribute to Brother Gilbert and what he has done for our Fraternity, I am asking our chapters to meet on Thursday evening, May 24, at 6 P.M., for a short memorial service. We enclose some material to be read at that service. Following the service, please drape your badges for a period of twenty-four hours."



## Master Architect Considered a High Honor by Cass Gilbert

ALPHA RHO CHI is proud of the membership classification, "Master Architect," and she is also proud of the only two men ever to attain this membership, the late Dr. Nathan C. Ricker, whose death occurred March 19, 1924, and Cass Gilbert, who was initiated in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 22, 1924, by the Mnesicles chapter.

At no time has more than one living man been listed under the "Master Architect" membership during the last twenty years. The original intent of this membership was for men of extremely high merit in the architectural profession. Alpha Rho Chi has never betrayed that trust—a record any college Greek letter fraternity would be proud to have.

That Cass Gilbert was pleased to act as Master Architect of Alpha Rho Chi during the last ten years may be seen in his letter written in February, 1932, to the Grand Council, from which we quote the following:

"To be elected as Master Architect of the Alpha Rho Chi is, from my standpoint, one of the highest honors, if not the highest, that an American Architect can receive.

"As the years pass, the members of Alpha Rho Chi necessarily will become the leaders of our art in this country, and the election of the Master Architect will be accepted as without doubt the highest honor that can be conferred by the profession."



## Comments of Press

The *London Times* of May 18.

"The list of his most important buildings only would be long enough to prove him the most remarkable architect of his generation in America.

"His range and versatility were extraordinary. Like his old master, Stanford White, he was attached to no traditional style.

# United States Supreme Court Building

CASS GILBERT, *Architect*

*\$9,700,000 United States Supreme Court Building under construction in Washington, D.C.*



*It is quite fitting and proper that the last job on the trestle board of Architect Cass Gilbert should be Classic Architecture.*



He was both an Architect and an executive, able to direct staffs and carry out his own designs, and from the beginning his work bore the impression of his personality. His scholarship was combined with severely practical attention to the purpose for which each structure was to be used."

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*New York Times* of May 18, Editorial.

"His closing years were crowned with the highest honor that his country could give him in his selection as the architect of the United States Supreme Court Building.

"If he lived in Athens in the age of Pericles, he would no doubt have been chosen with Iktinos and Kallikrates to fashion the 'greatest gem on earth's zone.' In his day he was a leader among those who have given America a prime place among the nations in the art that 'aims at eternity.' Sir Christopher Wren could have said that with special fitness of the buildings of Cass Gilbert that, being an ornament of his country, they help to establish a nation, draw people together and make them love more their native land."

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*Columbus, Ohio, Dispatch*, May 21.

"Death of Cass Gilbert Takes Outstanding United States Architect.

"Cass Gilbert, historians of art may say, was the first great architect born and reared in the United States. His death, last week, marked the close of an epoch—his life had signified the fruition of a whole period.

"Forces of Colonial origin produced him, his own innate genius developed his gifts, and it was his privilege to open the doors of the Twentieth Century so far as building design and construction were concerned."

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*Time*, May 28.

"For Minnesota he designed a \$4,500,000 classical Capitol of Georgia marble and granite, a 142-foot rotunda. His Municipal Building in Waterbury, Connecticut, was pure colonial in brick and white marble. Detroit's white marble Public Library was Italian Renaissance. The Union Central Life Insurance Building in Cincinnati was a towering office building. The \$10,000,000 West

Virginia State Capitol in Charleston was Classic. In 1899 he won a competition with a French Renaissance rendering for a U. S. Customs House in Manhattan, moved to Manhattan shortly thereafter.

"In 1913 Cass Gilbert completed and President Wilson formally opened his most famed structure, the 792-foot Woolworth Building, still sixth tallest in Manhattan. To critics who objected to the building's Gothic decorations and demanded a 'new' style in ornaments, Cass Gilbert gave a reply which described his traditional, assured attitude toward architecture: 'New schools of design come, with intervals of centuries between, by slow evolution, and can no more be created out of whole cloth than new social orders or systems of government. The problem of this great shaft cried aloud for some form of Gothic treatment and the soaring sense of uplift achieved more than justifies it.' But that Cass Gilbert could also achieve complete simplicity in mass was proved by his enormous warehouse for the Army in Brooklyn."

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The American Institute of Architects in Convention, May 18.

"Resolved, by The American Institute of Architects, in Sixty-sixth Convention assembled, that in the passing of Cass Gilbert, long and honored leader in design, construction and architectural problems, the profession of architecture has lost a man of outstanding ability, whose achievements remain in many of our States and cities as permanent monuments to his memory."

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*Architectural Forum*, June, 1934.

"A high place in the profession was already his when in 1913 the Woolworth Building was completed, which clearly marked him as a pioneer in a new field of design, the inaugurator of the skyscraper age.

"It may be that with his passing that age has reached its close. On January 16, 1931, when awarded the gold medal of the Society of Arts and Sciences, he said: 'We have carried concentration too far now. We must begin to think of decentralization. The most beautiful skyscraper that is possible has not yet been built. It may never be built. Those of us living today may never see it, for the need may change, and these ephemeral structures will not last indefinitely.'"

