

Inscribed by water, by hand, or by machine, stone holds the accountings, philosophies, stories, and teachings of earlier cultures and time. The carved surface of the Rosetta stone, the Chinese steles, the classical friezes on state architectures, and the headstones marking burial sites hold, for a duration, the ideas and ideals of a culture. While nothing is permanent, and all things are subject to time and the elements, that which we put in stone are the things we intend to pass down, that we hope will live on beyond our lifetimes.

A HOUSE TO HOLD THE FUTURE, installed in the new United States Courthouse in Des Moines, Iowa is composed of words drawn from documents and legal cases foundational to the U.S. legal system. Just as geology accretes and becomes more dense and complex over time, so does language and law. Selected and sequenced with a particular focus on the aspirational values and ideals put forth by their authors, the new composition emerging from these woven fragments accretes up and down the nine limestone columns, a stone surface formed by geologic time.

Quarried in the Midwest, Valdars Limestone is a dolomitic stone known for its strength durability, and hardness. The letterforms constituting the piece emerge in relief from its surface, making the language a tactile and material experience rising to be touched by hand. Carved in Penumbra Flare, the font was selected for its contemporary blending of the classical 2,000-year history of Roman capitals with the industrial geometric simplicity of Futura.



In making this project, I asked: how does our reading of a text change when it is not a mark on a surface but in and of a material body? How do words become experiences, become felt, become knowledge? The result is a stone surface touched by hand and eye, legible as a melding of geology and culture, word and material—a formed and felt thing whose order is composed and recomposed by every visitor to the courthouse.

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| TO ESTABLISH EQUAL PROTECTION BY LAW IN CONSEQUENCE OF LIFE |
| ALL PERSONS SHALL BE HEARD |
| TO BEAR BY JOINT CONSENT AN OATH INVIOLEABLY OBSERVED BY TWO OR MORE |
| BOUND BY GRACE BY VIRTUE BY ORDINANCE BY MAJORITY VOTE |
| EMPOWERED TO CONVENE JUSTICE THE VOICE OF JUSTICE |
| LAIID BEFORE THE WHOLE IN ASSEMBLY IN |
| COMMUNITY IN PEACE IN EQUAL FOOTING |
| IN EQUAL STATION IN EQUAL SUFFRAGE MAKING BRIDGES |
| ENTERING THE GROUND OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE |
| IN ALL ACTIONS IN ALL WORDS IN FULL FAITH SERVE THE COMMON GOOD |
| SERVE HONOR AND GRANT JUSTICE |

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| WE GIVE SIGNATURE IN TRUST TO HEARTS TO MINDS TO EVERY PERSON |
| ASSEMBLED WE ESTABLISH IN TRUST A FREEDOM OF |
| SPEECH FOR ALL WE APPEAR FULLY IN WITNESS DEVOTED |
| TO HIGH HOPE WE THE PEOPLE AID AND COMFORT ALL PERSONS |
| WE AFFIRM OPPORTUNITY FOR ONE ANOTHER WE |
| AFFIRM EQUAL PROTECTION WE AFFIRM LIFE |
| WE HONOR FAIR PRACTICES IN HUMAN EVENTS WE |
| WORK FOR JUSTICE FOR HUMANITY IN THE EYE OF THE LAW |
| WE BURDEN IMPARTIALLY WITH LOVE WITH GOOD WILL |
| FREELY GIVEN EVERY PERSON IN THE NAME OF PEACE WE |
| ESTABLISH THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED WE ENSURE |
| THE CIVIL RIGHTS THE CIVIL LIBERTY THE CIVIL LIFE OF ALL PERSONS |
| SITTING IN EQUITY SHALL BE THE PRINCIPLES THE DUTY |
| THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENACT JUSTICE EMPOWERED BY OATH |
| BY ORDINANCE BY VIRTUE BY GRACE BY PEOPLE TOGETHER |
| WE DEFEND PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THESE WORDS |
| IN HUMAN EVENTS IN PUBLIC TRUST |

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| HONOR ORDAIN AND ESTABLISH EQUITY |
| ACHIEVE OPPORTUNITY IN LIFE IN LAW IN FACT IN MUTUAL WELFARE |
| ASSEMBLE THE POWERS OF THE EARTH IN THE NAME OF LIBERTY |
| ESTABLISH JUSTICE EXAMINE EVIDENCE SERVE FAIR PRACTICES GIVE |
| ALL PERSONS PROTECTIONS BY LAW TO SECURE THE BLESSINGS |
| OF FREEDOM SERVE THE PUBLIC RAISE |
| THE CONDITIONS CREATE GOOD WILL BE CALLED IN LIFE |
| TO ENSURE THE PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY THAT TRUTH |
| SO CLOTHED MAY BE GIVEN JUST POWERS LET US STRIVE |
| FOR JOINT CONSENT LET TRUTHS BE OUR DUTY OUR FUTURE |
| OUR FOUNDATION OUR BLESSINGS OUR COURTS IN ALL ACTIONS GIVE SERVICE |
| BE BOUND IMPARTIALLY TO TRUTH BE |
| SOLEMLY PLEDGED TO JUSTICE TO LAW AND EQUITY |
| BE RESOLVED TO HONOR AND EMBRACE EQUAL RIGHTS |
| IN ALL ACTIONS SERVE HOPE GIVE SERVICE RESPECT |
| THE RIGHTS OF ALL PEOPLE SO PROTECTIONS TO AID AND COMFORT |
| ARE MADE |

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| CHERISH ALL PROTECTIONS FOR ALL PEOPLE IN AMERICAN LIFE |
| RAISE CONDITIONS WITH DILIGENCE AFFIRM A SUBSTANTIAL HOPE |
| IN PUBLIC TRUST SECURE THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS CRAFT THE RULES OF DECISION |
| ENSURE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY THE SETTING FORTH OF FACTS |
| SHALL BE THE DUTY OF ALL PERSONS STANDING BEFORE OUR JUSTICES TOGETHER |
| LET US MEET TO SECURE THE HOUSE TO HOLD THE FUTURE |
| WITH OUR HANDS CREATE GOOD WILL SHALL EMPOWER THE JUST RIGHTS TO |
| CHOOSE EQUAL PROTECTION TO CHOOSE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY |
| TO CHOOSE A FUTURE ENSURE THE RIGHTS |
| OF THOSE WHO SUFFER ASSIST EACH OTHER IN GOOD FAITH IN MUTUAL WELFARE WITH CHARITY |
| DECLARE THE VOICE OF JUSTICE IN PUBLIC PLACES DELIVER EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES |
| GUARANTEE FIDELITY TO THE COVENANT OF INALIENABLE RIGHTS MAKE |
| AND ESTABLISH THE SANCTION OF THE LAW FREE FROM SEGREGATION BY UNANIMOUS ORDER |
| BY REASON LET FACTS BE SUBMITTED TO A CANDID WORLD LET THE WORK OF HISTORY |
| DELIVER PRESERVE RECOGNIZE RECTIFY |
| CARE MAY THEN BE GIVEN ORDAINED WITH BREATH IN WRITING |
| GRANTED AS IT SHALL BE FOR ALL |

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| TO INSTITUTE JUSTICE AND HUMANITY IN THE NAME OF IN THE SERVICE OF |
| THE UNITED STATES WE CONVENE A PUBLIC QUORUM IMBUED WITH LOVE |
| BEAR AND CREATE THE FOUNDATION TO ACHIEVE EQUITY TO ESTABLISH |
| LAW TO PRESERVE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TO PROTECT SAFETY AND HAPPINESS |
| SHALL BE THE DUTY DONE |
| WE CONVENE WE HEAR EVIDENCE |
| WE GIVE WITNESS WE GIVE BOND EMPOWERING A FUTURE OF PERSONS |
| IN CONSEQUENCE WE GIVE SERVICE GRANTING A COMMON WELFARE |
| OF AUTHORITY OF HISTORY OF LAW OF NATIONS STANDING |
| ON PRECEDENCE THE PROCEEDINGS SET FORTH SHALL BE SWORN |
| WE HEAR ALL YES AND NAYS WE DEBATE FREELY |
| THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED WE CALL FAIR JUDGEMENTS INTO EXISTENCE |
| BOUND IN CONSEQUENCE OF LIFE BY LAW |
| BY THE GRACE OF ALL PEOPLE IN RELATION IN |
| COMMUNITY WE SHALL BEAR TO THE WHOLE WE |
| SHALL NEGOTIATE FAITHFULLY SHALL TOGETHER ORGANIZE TO ACHIEVE |
| BY JOINT CONSENT THE PROCESSES OF A DEMOCRATIC |
| SOCIETY IN THIS NATION OF PERSONS |

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| IN PEACE IN THESE WORDS GIVEN FREELY WE THE PEOPLE |
| SERVE LIBERTY DEFEND LIFE RECTIFY INEQUALITY |
| WE AFFIRM |
| BY WILL TO SECURE BY LAW THE FUTURE TRIUMPH OF |
| EQUAL PROTECTION MADE UNTO THE WORLD THE UNIVERSAL DUTY THE PUBLIC DEBT |
| TO THE PUBLIC GOOD WE ESTABLISH ALL PROTECTIONS FOR ALL PEOPLE |
| TO ACHIEVE EQUITY TO CHERISH EQUAL STATION TO FAITHFULLY |
| INSTITUTE PROTECTIONS TO SUSTAIN WITHOUT MALICE TO STITCH WITH FIDELITY |
| THESE TRUTHS WE HOLD WITH FIRMNESS IN COMMUNITY |
| IN COMMON SCHOOLS IN CONCILIATION IN |
| FRIENDSHIP |
| GRANTING CHARITY FOR ALL IN RULES OF DECISION |
| TO CREATE THE PRINCIPLES TO RESOLVE DISPUTES TO PRESERVE TO PROTECT |
| TO PROVIDE IMPARTIAL JUSTICE |
| JUSTICE SHALL TAKE AN OATH |
| JUSTICE SHALL ASSIST A COMMON WELFARE JUSTICE SHALL BE DEVOTED |
| TO FORMING FREEDOMS IN UNION WITH THE WORK OF RACIAL EQUITY JUSTICE |
| SHALL BIND THE NATION'S WOUNDS |
| A JUSTICE DEVOTED TO THE HEALTH |
| OF ALL PEOPLE SHALL DELIVER PROGRESS ACCORDING TO ITS MAGNITUDE |
| IN THE SCIENCES IN THE ARTS IN THE CULTURES OF THE PEOPLE |

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| THE VOICE OF JUSTICE FOR THE COMMON GOOD INCLINES THE HEART TOWARD LIBERTY |
| TOWARD TRUTH SOLEMNLY PLEDGED TO MAKE AND ESTABLISH THE AMERICAN FABRIC TO FORM |
| A MORE PERFECT UNION TO HOLD TO THEM OUR KINDRED THE FREEDOMS OF RELIGION |
| OF SPEECH OF PRESS OF ASSEMBLY OF PETITION TO THEM OUR KINDRED |
| THE RIGHT TO MEET THE POWERS OF THE LAND TO MEET THE POWERS OF CHOICE |
| TO MEET |
| REQUIRE EVERY PERSON IN AMERICAN LIFE |
| TO EMBRACE EQUITY WITH HIGH HOPE FOR THE HEALTH OF OUR SOUL OUR CONSCIENCE |
| OUR GOOD WILL |
| ENSURE TRANQUILITY RESOLVE DISPUTES PUT OUT FALSE LIGHTS |
| ESTABLISH TRUTH BY THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED INVIOLABLY OBSERVED |
| BY MAJORITY VOTE RAISING THE CONDITIONS DISCIPLINING THE DUE PROCESS |
| IN GOOD FAITH IN JUSTICE AND HUMANITY THE RIGHTS |
| OF THE PEOPLE SHALL BE BOUND SHALL BE SWORN SHALL HAVE JUST POWERS |
| THAT ALL PEOPLE MAY RECOGNIZE THE TRUTH THAT ALL PEOPLE MAY SEEK |
| THE LIBERTIES OF CHOICE IN LIFE TO MAKE BRIDGES OF JUSTICE |
| FAITHFULLY WE EMBRACE EACH OTHER |
| WITH THESE WORDS WE INSTITUTING FREEDOMS IN LIFE AND LIBERTY IN THE TRIAL OF ACTIONS |
| IN THE QUESTIONS FORMING OUR FOUNDATIONS |

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| FREE AND EQUAL LAWS OF GOVERNMENT CRAFTED ON WATERS |
| OF PUBLIC TRUST ENSURE RELIEF INSTITUTE PROTECTIONS ACHIEVE |
| GOOD CITIZENSHIP IN HEARTS AND MINDS PURSUING HAPPINESS OBTAINING SAFETY |
| ENTITLED TO ALL BY VIRTUE OF THE POWER OF |
| THE AUTHORITY OF THE PEOPLE |
| INSTITUTE THIS OATH |
| BE CALLED BE PRESENT BE WITNESS WITH GRACE AND LOVE |
| TOUCHING THE FABRIC TRACING THE LAWS OPENING |
| TO INSPECTION THE MAGNITUDE OF A NATION ENTERING THE SPIRIT |
| OF THE TIME OF AGREEMENT THE AFFIRMATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS OF EQUAL PROTECTION |
| THE DOORS OF EACH HOUSE SHALL BE OPEN SHALL BE MADE |
| TO HOLD THE GREAT WORK BEGINNING |

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| THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN PEOPLE AND NATIONS TO HEAR |
| TO LEARN TO QUESTION TO ANSWER WELL AND TRULY IN ALL THINGS |
| WE FACE EACH OTHER AS WE FACE THE WORLD |
| TOGETHER WE SEEK A HUMANITY A LASTING PEACE |
| A SUBSTANTIAL HOPE FOR EQUITY FOR JUSTICE FOR OPPORTUNITY |
| SIGNED WITH OUR HANDS IN TRUST IN GOOD FAITH IN CONSEQUENCE |
| INCLINE OUR HEARTS TOWARD HOPE |
| LET THE NATION SURVIVE LET ALL VOICES TESTIFY LET US MAKE |
| A MORE PERFECT CLOTH A BLESSING A COMMITMENT IN HUMBLE TERMS |
| TO ALL PEOPLE TO THE DUTIES OF LIFE TO FREEDOM TO SECURITY |
| TO EQUAL PROTECTION BY LAW LET US STRIVE LET US DELIVER |

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

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A HOUSE TO HOLD THE FUTURE

