



Foreword



It has been my great privilege to work at the United States Capitol for 20 years, and in my current position, to be involved with the preservation and protection of the Senate’s art. When I first arrived, I noticed that the Senate wing had been altered by the ever-evolving needs of a working public building. Office equipment and phone booths intruded on the historic interiors, while heavy layers of overpaint from numerous early, misguided restoration efforts obscured the true nature of Constantino Brumidi’s beautiful 19th-century murals. Nevertheless, Brumidi’s art instilled in me a sense of awe and purpose that reflects the important legislative work performed in the Capitol. Over the years, painstaking restoration has gradually transformed the flat, dull, altered murals into the exquisitely modeled originals with their bright and delicate colors. Watching this transformation, I came to recognize the Capitol as more than just a building; it is a canvas upon which the story of this nation is told. Today, with all those who work in the Capitol and who serve in the United States Senate, I share a deep sense of pride in Brumidi’s efforts “to make beautiful” the Capitol. Brumidi’s art is truly a tribute to our nation and a lasting heritage for America. As executive secretary to the U.S. Senate Commission on Art and as secretary of the Senate, I am pleased to present *To Make Beautiful the Capitol: Rediscovering the Art of Constantino Brumidi*.

THE HONORABLE NANCY ERICKSON
*Secretary of the Senate and Executive Secretary
to the Senate Commission on Art*