



THE LADY OF FREEDOM

Atop the dome of the Nation's Capitol Building sits the Statue of "Lady" of Freedom, representing Freedom not only for the United States, but for all the Cosmos.

THE MODEL

The Lady of Freedom's plaster model original, from which the statue's five sections were cast in bronze, was on display in Statuary Hill prior and subsequent to casting. In December 1890, after 22 years of storage in the Capitol, the model was transferred to the Smithsonian Institution, where it was on display in the Arts and Industries Building until March 1967. At that time it was dismantled and placed in storage.

THE STATUE

The figure is a woman clad in flowing draperies with her right hand resting upon the hilt of a sheathed sword and her left holding a wreath and grasping a shield. At the waist, a brooch bearing the letters U.S. holds the drapery in place. Her head is covered by a helmet encircled with stars, depicting her heavenly origins and surmounted by a crest composed of an eagle's head and an arrangement of feathers. The globe upon which the "Lady" stands is made of iron and painted to match the bronze. The words *E Pluribus Unum* are inscribed on the band which in encircles the globe.

THE HISTORY

The Lady of Freedom, or Statues of Freedom, as it is officially named, was designed by Thomas Crawford, an American sculptor whose works include the bronze doors of the House and Senate wings, the statuary of the Senate tympanum, and the statues of Justice and History that sit above the bronze Senate doors. Crawford received \$3000 for the plaster model of the statue which he made in his studio in Rome. In 1857, Crawford died, before the model was even shipped to the United States.

On April 19, 1858, the model left Rome on the Emily Taylor in five huge crates. En route, the small three-masted ship sprung a leak and had to be docked in Gibraltar for repairs. The voyage resumed, but stormy weather caused new problems and by July, the bark was put into Bermuda. Here the vessel was condemned and the model placed in storage.

By December, portions of the model arrived on the G.W. Norton. But it was not until March 30, 1859, that the last sections of the model were shipped to Washington on the schooner Statesman.

In 1860 the contract for casting the statue in bronze was awarded to Clark Mills, whose foundry was located on the outskirts of Washington. Due to the Civil War, casting was temporarily halted, but President Abraham Lincoln saw the completion of the capitol as an "omen for American Unity" and the work was resumed.

Statue of Freedom:

Sculptor: Thomas Crawford

Erected: 1863

Height: 19 ½ feet

Weight: 7 ½ tons

Material: Bronze

**For additional information
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At the time of the statue's dedication, the northern armies were suffering from severe defeats and poor morale. When asked how he could justify continued work on the Capitol while the country was being torn apart by war, Lincoln replied, "If the people see the Capitol going on, it is a sign that we intend the Union shall go on."

On December 2, 1863, at precisely 12:00 noon, the Statue of Freedom was secured on the top of the Capitol dome to the sounds of a 35-gun salute, one for each State of the Union.

THE RESTORATION PROJECT

In the early 1980's, Mornah Nalamaku Simeon, President and Founder of The Foundation of I, Inc. Freedom of the Cosmos, based in Honolulu, Hawaii visited Washington, D.C. During her trip, she was inspired to refurbish and restore the original model of the Lady of Freedom for display in a place of honor. She shared her intentions and vision of the importance of the statue with Daniel K. Akaka, then a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Hawaii. Akaka amended the Legislative Appropriations Bill to permit the Architect of the Capitol to receive private funds for this purpose.

Through the Foundation of I, Inc. Freedom of the Cosmos, Mornah raised \$25,000 for the restoration. The U.S. Capitol Preservation Commission accepted this gift and approved the proposal to display the statue. The funds enabled the Architect of the Capitol craftsmen to transfer the model in its entirety from storage after 25 years for repair and repainting.

Available for public viewing in the Russell basement rotunda January 1993, visitors were able to get a closer glimpse of the Lady of Freedom especially when the bronze model was removed for cleaning and repairs May 1993 and returned on top of the Capitol dome October 1993.

Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1990, Senator Akaka continued to work actively to foster greater understanding of the Lady of Freedom's significance by encouraging greater visibility of the model. He shared with Mornah the vision of the Lady of Freedom destined to make her final home in the Great Hall of the newly constructed United States Capitol Visitor Center.

December 2, 2008 at 10:00 am marked the fulfillment of that vision with the official opening of the Center. The date was selected to coincide with the 145th anniversary of placing the bronze model atop the Capitol when the dome was completed.

"As our country continues to lead the world in the universal pursuit of freedom and democracy, we look to Lady of Freedom for her constant inspiration-to bolster us in our mutual efforts toward these great ideals, said Senator Akaka. "She stands as a noble reminder to the world of the fundamental principals that make our country great."

A SYMBOL OF FREEDOM

The State of Hawaii has officially recognized the Lady of Freedom as a Symbol of World Peace and Freedom. In her address to Hawaii's House Committee on Intergovernmental Relations and International Affairs, Mornah Nalamaku Simeona stated:

"The ancient Hawaiians lived and breathed our national motto: In God We Trust. They held sacred every manifestation of God's creation. Central to their existence was a true understanding of themselves as spiritual, mental and physical beings, and their relationship with God and all of God's creation. Like themselves, they knew that every manifestation had its own unique i-identity and rhythm. By knowing their i-identity, they were able to communicate with the sky, ocean, plants, animals and the land, and even atoms and molecules. What the Lady of Freedom represents today is the i-identity and rhythm of these United States. As each of us discovers our own unique i-identity, we will come to understand what the Ancient Hawaiians knew – that life exists in all form of creation, animate and inanimate. So it is with the Lady of Freedom. Why does she exist? She represents Freedom for the United States of America and for the Cosmos, not just for mankind, but for all creation."