

# WOOD-works

insights and information on the hardwood flooring industry

## Upping the Bar

San Antonio courtroom filled with historical wood

The longleaf pine flooring inside the San Antonio, Texas, Bexar County Courthouse's Double Height Courtroom, built in 1891, is older than the building itself, by more than 20 years, in fact. But what makes it more noteworthy is where it was sourced. After local wood flooring company Advanced Wood Floors already had its bid accepted to restore the Double Height floor, owner Bob Wexler heard some news—a former cornerstone of the downtown San Antonio community was being gutted. The original Joske's, an enormous department store built in 1867 that provided jobs to generations of San Antonians, had longleaf structural beams inside, perfect for salvaging. Wexler wanted them for the Double Height as an homage to history.



The beams were milled into 3¼-inch-wide, 20-foot-long quartersawn flooring and, at that length, had to be machine-lifted through the hole in the middle of a stairwell to reach the Double Height on the second and third floors. The reclaimed longleaf had a ton of character—so much that the county asked Advanced to hide the more rugged boards underneath the courtroom seating. The cleaner boards were installed in front of the courtroom bench. Working for the county government was slow, Wexler says.

Project manager Manny Gaxiola, after making many trips through courthouse security, began to blend in with courtroom regulars. "It got to the point where people thought I was a lawyer," Gaxiola says. How fitting since, considering the high praise from local media, Gaxiola and the Advanced crew sure won this trial.—A.A.



See more photos at [www.hardwoodfloorsmag.com/BexarAS15](http://www.hardwoodfloorsmag.com/BexarAS15).



Courtesy Manny Gaxiola and WoodCo Supply

The Double Height courtroom features longleaf pine reclaimed from a San Antonio institution. Left: The Bexar County Courthouse.

## Funfetti Floor

Design firm's floor connects with clients, employees



Courtesy Ashley McGraw Architects

Sometimes, when clients come into the office of Ashley McGraw Architects in Syracuse, N.Y., they look down at the floor and say, "Oh! I played on that." Why? Because the firm's maple flooring is reclaimed from the gymnasium of Geneva Middle School, built in the early 1920s in Geneva, N.Y., only an hour away. The flooring is 1½ inch thick and 2½ inches wide in random lengths up to 5 feet. There was enough material to fill up most of the space at Ashley McGraw, and the space left over was covered with gym floors reclaimed from two schools in

Maryland. The firm chose to install old school gymnasium floors in their office because their niche is designing schools. The flooring not only connects the firm's clients to its work, it helps Ashley McGraw's employees too, says Susan Angarano, an interior designer with the company. For the employees who choose to stand at their desks instead of sit, the gym floor is easier on their feet and knees than other floor coverings, she says. The design team chose against sanding and finishing the gym floor because they got a kick from seeing the painted court lines. The firm concentrated the painted floorboards in the office walkways and laid them down randomly, which created a unique look. "It looks like confetti," Angarano says. "That's fun, too."—A.A.