

The Texas Capitol Ornament Program

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This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the Texas Capitol ornament program. In 1996, Nelda Laney (pictured left), wife of then-House Speaker Pete Laney, began this program as a way to raise money for restoration projects and education programs at the Capitol. Nadine Craddick, wife of former Speaker Tom Craddick, and Julie Straus, wife of current Speaker Joe Straus, have carried on this tradition. So far, the money raised from ornament sales has helped pay for several projects, including the restoration of the historic paintings within the Capitol as well as installation of historically accurate floor coverings in the House and the Senate chambers.

Typically, the official ornament highlights an architectural detail of the Texas State Capitol building. For example, designs from previous years include the rotunda ceiling, the rotunda floor, the Capitol's front gate, and the Goddess of Liberty statue, to name a few. This year, however, the Official Capitol Ornament depicts a Christmas tree decorated with the official ornaments from previous years.

Official Capitol ornaments are available for purchase at the [Capitol Gift Shop](#) or the [Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum Gift Shop](#).

Fun Facts:

- Nelda Laney was inspired to create this program after receiving a fundraising ornament sold by the White House historical society.
- Since 1997, the *Texas Bar Journal* has featured the Official State Capitol Ornament on the cover of their December Issue.

- Of the 20 ornament designs, 18 feature at least one star.
- In 2014, a collector bought the one millionth ornament on eBay for \$5,176.
- The Capitol Visitors Center has two display cases that feature information regarding the design and assembly of the Official State Capitol Ornament.

Below are photos of the Official Capitol Ornaments from 1996 - 2016.

An advertisement for the first Official Capitol Ornament, featured in the October 1996 issue of *Texas Monthly*.

The Official Capitol Ornaments from 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000.

The Official Capitol Ornaments from 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004.

The Official Capitol Ornaments from 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008.

The Official Capitol Ornaments from 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012.

The Official Capitol Ornaments from 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016.

Sources:

Photos of the Official State Capitol Ornaments from 1998, 2001, and 2002 are from the covers of the *Texas Bar Journal*.