

We live in a community that embraces its historic heritage. The heroes of the American Revolution founded Marietta. Those men and their pioneer families braved unimaginable hardships for one purpose - freedom. Since their time, countless others have served and many have died that we may live as a free people.

Across America, there is no greater monument to the cause so many have served to protect than our local courthouses and halls of justice. The solemnity of those buildings reflect the great sacrifices that have been made, are being made, and will be made so that America will always be free. The buildings themselves, like the great monuments in our nation's capital, remind us of those sacrifices and impress upon us the importance of our duty to participate and preserve that freedom.

We are a vibrant community but we have a vexing problem. We need a justice center for our Municipal Court. We must provide facilities for justice that assure each participant a fair and equal opportunity to receive it. By solving this problem, we have a wonderful opportunity to contribute to our community's historic heritage.

We are proud of the architecture of our City. We marvel at the foresight of our founders who built the structures that reflect that proud heritage. We can erect a justice center that will fit with our heritage and reflect the importance we place on preserving our freedom. We can dedicate it to all those who have served to protect the very thing that is so delicately balanced within its halls. It is time we join together to make that statement.

There will always be those among us who raise their voices in dissent. We celebrate their right to do so. However, we must recognize that their arguments spring from fear. They do not see a bright future for Marietta. They do not understand that symbolic importance of this effort. They argue that this building will place an impossible burden on our taxpayers. Their argument falls flat. The building will be paid for by

user fees not taxpayer money. Besides, any imaginary taxpayer's burden pales in comparison to the burden placed on those who died for the very freedoms protected within the halls of this structure. It would be an insult to their sacrifices to do anything less than we propose. If we cannot build this building, then shame on us!

Let us seize the opportunity to build a sound structure for our Court putting the craftspeople in our community to work. Let us plan a grand dedication of the building to all of those who serve the cause of freedom. I challenge all of you to contribute your ideas and help make this building say to our future citizens that those who lived here in 2004 exhibited the same dedication, foresight and courage as those who came here in 1788.