2. 1995 to Present: Edward N. Cahn United States Courthouse and Federal Building, 504 West Hamilton Street

Construction was completed in the fall of 1995. The building was opened in November of 1995 and it was dedicated on December 29, 1995. It is the largest federal court facility outside Philadelphia for the nine- county United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

The building is a four-story structure with a basement level of secure parking and consists of 89,000 gross square feet. There are three courtrooms and chambers for two district court judges and one magistrate judge. The cost of the project in 1995 was approximately $17 million.

The architects designed the building to fit into the neighboring building landscape. Materials such as limestone, cement, and masonry were used to reflect in color, finish, and scale the Old Lehigh County Courthouse across the street, the Post Office building across the street, and the church structure behind the Courthouse.

Approximately sixty federal employees work in the building. Tenants in the building include the United States District Court, Pretrial Services, Probation, United States Marshals Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and General Services Administration.

An artist from upper New York State by the name of Jenny Holzer designed sixteen green granite benches with sayings carved on the benches. The title of this artwork is “Allentown Benches: Selections from the Truism and Survival Series.” The benches are placed in public areas of the building on the first, third, and fourth floors.

Ms. Holzer uses language as a visual arts medium. To create her work she draws from social, political, and cultural commentaries, as well as her own writings. She presents these texts and carvings on stone benches and in other artwork. She says that she uses words as an artistic medium in order to “provoke thinking, emotion, and conversation.” The words are intended to elicit both reflection and passion from readings, as she chose statements that variously

compliment and contradict one another. This was her first General Services Administration commissioned artwork.

The land upon which the courthouse is situated was originally owned by the United States Postal Service. The courthouse was constructed using the General Services Administration design-build program, which allows for the award of a single contract to cover architecture, engineering, and construction. Under an agreement with the General Services Administration, the Post Office contracted with Keating Building Corporation of Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania to both design and build the new courthouse. After completion of construction, title was transferred in 1995 by the United States Post Office to the General Services Administration for consideration of $16.7 million.

In March of 1999, proposed legislation naming the new courthouse after then retired District Judge Edward N. Cahn passed the House by voice vote and without debate. However, the legislation stalled in the Senate due to concern over whether retired Judge Cahn might have an unfair advantage if he appeared as a lawyer in a courthouse named after him. In response to this concern, Judge Cahn promised not to practice law in the courthouse and on August 20, 2001, Congress named the building the "Edward N. Cahn Federal Building and United States Courthouse."[8] A naming ceremony for the building was held on November 19, 2001. Judge Cahn was the first Lehigh County citizen to serve as a United States District Judge, and played a key role in securing the design, construction, and government funding necessary for the courthouse project.

[8] Act of August 20, 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-31, 115 Stat. 213.