



Leah L. Jones

\* PLACES

# Capitol

Grand, elaborate,  
statuesque, gorgeous  
— and it's all ours

By CHRIS MARTELL

**L**ike many people who grew up in Wisconsin, I first saw the Capitol on a grade school field trip. Even the boys who'd been making rude noises in the back of the bus fell silent when we were led inside.

We'd read fairy tales about distant kingdoms. But looking up at the dome, with our mouths falling open as though we were baby sparrows, we saw

something grander than any castles of our imaginations.

The tour guide emphasized that this place was ours. We were not just little children with scabby knees. We were citizens of Wisconsin, and this magnificent building belonged to all of us.

We went up the grand staircases, into the gold-leaved governor's conference room styled after the Doge's Palace in Venice, and into the marble throne

room of the Supreme Court. Glass mosaics and paintings told the heroic stories of Caesar Augustus and King James as well as those of Wisconsin farmers and Chief Winnebago. We stroked the nose of the bronze badger outside the governor's office to bring us luck. From then on, for many of us, the star on the map of Wisconsin triggered kaleidoscope images of marble and murals and gold.

After college I moved to Madison

