

Basic Detail Report



Justice McGrath

Percy Ives, John W. McGrath

Supreme Court Justice

Date

19th c.

Medium

oil paint

Dimensions

69 x 57 in. (175.3 x 144.8 cm)

Paintings

Object number

CA.2025.03.039

Michigan State Capitol Building (100 N. Capitol Ave), Floor

3, East Wing, Supreme Court Chamber

This portrait of Michigan Supreme Court Justice John Wesley McGrath demonstrates the lively, confident style of artist Percy Ives. McGrath is pictured in formal attire, sitting in an upholstered armchair and gazing straight ahead. Though the judge appears focused and serious, there is a hopefulness and ease to his expression as well. This is mirrored by the colorful additions to the portrait's background, along with the spontaneous brushstrokes visible behind the figure. Though Percy's work is often compared to that of his father, Lewis T. Ives, this portrait exemplifies the ways in which the two men differ. While Lewis gravitates towards serious, academic portraiture and hardly reveals his hand, Percy paints with an alla-prima style that leaves behind visible traces of the artist. The brushstrokes seen throughout the painting, particularly in the background, add spontaneity to the portrait and allow for some creativity in the formal commission. Percy's artistic choices signify a more modern approach to his work, which contrasts with the classical nature of his father's oeuvre.