

ON WISCONSIN | BLUE MOUNDS

# FESTIVE FLUKE



AMBER ARNOLD PHOTOS, STATE JOURNAL

For the third straight year, Cave of the Mounds is decked out in a festive light display. Tate Phillip, assistant general manager of the more than 85-year-old western Dane County tourist attraction, is seen here giving a tour shortly after noon. The Cave of Lights runs through the end of January.

## Cave of the Mounds’ holiday light show another happy accident at historic site

**B**LUE MOUNDS — You don’t need a heavy jacket, thick gloves and a stocking cap to wander this holiday light show. There’s no snow or ice and no need to wait until the sun sets.

At Cave of the Mounds, the environment is a year-round 50 degrees. Without artificial light, it’s also pitch black.

That’s why this 2-million-year-old cave just north of Highway 18-151 in western Dane County is an ideal spot for a holiday light display, now in its third year.

Much like the cave itself, the Cave of Lights didn’t really start out as an intentional effort.

Tate Phillip, the cave’s assistant general manager, posted photos online of a few festive lights in the cave in 2023. A blogger misinterpreted the post and



Thousands of lights illuminate Cave of the Mounds. The cave is estimated to be around 2 million years old but opened for tours in 1940, a year after it was discovered.

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BARRY ADAMS

## Milwaukee judge found guilty of obstruction

Dugan helped man evade immigration officials seeking to make courtroom arrest

TODD RICHMOND  
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — A jury found a Wisconsin judge accused of helping a Mexican immigrant dodge federal authorities guilty of obstruction Thursday, marking a victory for President Donald Trump as he continues his sweeping immigration crackdown across the country.

Federal prosecutors charged Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Hannah Dugan with obstruction, a felony, and concealing an individual to prevent arrest, a misdemeanor, in April. The jury acquitted her on

the concealment count, but she still faces up to five years in prison on the obstruction count.

The jury returned the verdicts after deliberating for six hours. Dugan faces up to five years in prison when she’s sentenced, but no date had been set as of late Thursday evening.

The case inflamed tensions over Trump’s immigration crackdown, with his administration branding Dugan an activist judge and Democrats countering that the administration was trying to make an example of Dugan to blunt judicial opposition to the operation.

Dugan and her attorneys left the courtroom, ducked into a side conference room

and closed the door without speaking to reporters. Steve Biskupic, her lead attorney, later told reporters that he was disappointed with the ruling and didn’t understand how the jury could have reached a split verdict since the elements of both charges were virtually the same.

U.S. Attorney Brad Schimel denied the case was political and urged people to accept the verdict peacefully. He said courthouse arrests are safer because people are screened for weapons and it isn’t unfair for law enforcement to arrest wanted people in courthouses.

“Some have sought to make this about a larger political battle,” Schimel said. “While this case is serious for all involved, it is ultimately about a single day, a single bad day, in a public courthouse. The defendant is certainly not evil. Nor is she

a martyr for some greater cause.”

According to a court filings that include an FBI affidavit and a federal grand jury indictment, immigration authorities traveled to the Milwaukee County courthouse on April 18 after learning 31-year-old Eduardo Flores-Ruiz had reentered the country illegally and was scheduled to appear before Dugan for a hearing in a state battery case.

Dugan learned that agents were in the corridor outside her courtroom waiting for Flores-Ruiz. She left the courtroom to confront them, falsely telling them their administrative warrant for Flores-Ruiz wasn’t sufficient grounds to arrest him and directing them to go to the chief judge’s office.

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