



OAK HILL CEMETERY

Historic Preservation
Foundation

OAK HILL CEMETERY

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Washington, DC 20007
Telephone: 202-337-2835
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Email: info@oakhillcemeterydc.org

Cemetery Hours

Office and Grounds:
M - F 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
Saturday 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sunday 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
(Weekends and holidays walk-in gate only,
no drive-in access. Gates will close, weather
permitting. Please observe visiting tips at
front entrance)

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From the President

Dear Friends of Oak Hill,

We wish to thank our contributors, friends, neighbors, and our staff for achieving a net positive year during this past twelve months of the terrible pandemic. The Preservation Foundation had a subdued year, with few public events or great achievements, but we can report progress, nonetheless.

Our grand restoration project for the Historic Bigelow Iron Fence along R Street is moving along five sections at a time. The first few experimental sections near 30th Street were completed some time ago, and G. Krug and Son Ironworks reinstalled the first sections in December and removed the next five for treatment and repair. Lorton Stone prepared the new granite stone bases and acted as our general contractor. The design incorporates hidden stainless-steel supports that will last at least another hundred years or more. Comments about the historic green paint have been favorable.

Our redesigned website has been helpful for virtual visits, but the fact that we remained open for in-person visits has been met with great support. We have seen an increase in visitors and are relieved that they could come safely to Oak Hill.

A great deal of restoration was achieved in the Reno Hill section early last year, with several paths rebuilt and many monuments realigned and repaired. Later in the year the long path between the Renwick Chapel and Reno Hill, the path nearest to and parallel to R Street, was re-laid and the monuments there restored and reset. Please visit those sections when you come to visit and see what Oak Hill is, could, and should be. Multiple new burial options have been created in both those areas. We are currently creating several new interment sites and niches just below the Renwick Chapel. When they are purchased, the renovation outlays will be repaid. Many other stones across the cemetery have been repaired and gradually we are getting a handle on the remaining work. We believe that by restoring Oak Hill we are also demonstrating that we are careful stewards of our forebears and loved ones.

We are pleased to report that the finances of the Preservation Foundation are positive. Revenues for the Foundation were somewhat challenged until late in the year, at which time several families were extraordinarily thoughtful and supportive.

With respect and gratitude for the support of our community during especially trying times,

Sincerely,

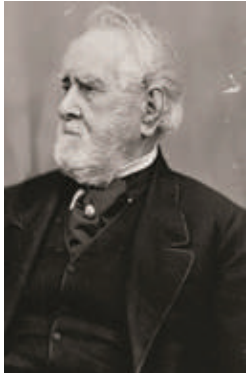
George G. Hill, President
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Contributors to Oak Hill



The Oak Hill Cemetery and the Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation are honored to recognize all of the individuals, foundations and organizations who generously support our important work. Below is a list of Annual Donors whose gifts were received from January 1 – December 31, 2020.

(Gifts in Honor of** and Gifts in Memory of*)



The Corcoran Society

Our leadership giving society is named for William W. Corcoran, the man whose generous gift of land made the Oak Hill Cemetery possible. The Corcoran Society recognizes those individuals, companies and foundations that demonstrate their commitment and enthusiasm for Oak Hill with an annual gift of \$1,000 or more.

Renwick Circle (\$10,000+)

James Renwick, Jr., architect of the Smithsonian Building and the original Corcoran Gallery (now the Renwick Gallery) and St. Patrick’s in New York City, also designed the iron enclosure and the Gothic Chapel located on the south end of the cemetery’s ellipse.

- Mr. and Mrs. Mario H. Boiardi
- Mrs. David Springer Brown*
- Mrs. Lillian Peeler
- Mr. Joseph Kaempfer
- and Mrs. Georgiana Warner**
- The Alisann and Terry Collins Foundation

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1849 Oak Hill Society

- Mrs. David Springer Brown
- Mr. Marc Nicholson

de la Roche Circle (\$5,000+)

Captain George F. de la Roche, a master engineer, was tasked with supervising the original plotting and grading of Oak Hill as well as the creation of a grand bank along Rock Creek.

- Mr. Thomas Crocker
- Mr. L. Richard Fischer
- Mr. Richard
- and Mrs. Margaret Werling
- The Dorothy Wyatt Shields Trust
- The Sachiko Kuno Foundation

Rock of Dumbarton Circle (\$2,500+)

Adjacent to the original Parrot’s Woods, the Rock of Dumbarton was another of the original land parcels at the heart of Oak Hill.

- Mrs. Judith B. Cochran
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Parrot’s Woods Circle (\$1,000+)

Named for one of the original land parcels comprising Oak Hill.

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Mrs. Michele Tanaka–*In memory of H. William Tanaka*

Ms. Rebecca Tees Finlay–*In memory of Josephine Payne Finlay*

Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Thompson–*In memory of Raymond W. and Sidney Thompson*

Mr. William Thomson, III–*In memory of William and Ruth Thomson*

Mrs. Marylee H. Tinsley–*In memory of Peter A. Tinsley*

Mr. Jahncke, Jr. and Mrs. Tomlinson–*In memory of Stanton Jahncke*

Mr. and Mrs. John Cusworth Walker–*In memory of Johnny Cusworth Walker, IV*

Mrs. Virlinda G. Walsh–*In memory of Pete and Susie Walsh*

Dr. and Mrs. Henry F. Walter–*In memory of John and Dorothy Lokerson*

Mr. and Mrs. George Watson–*In memory of Martin Dunetz*

Mrs. Margaret M. Weaver–*In memory of James B. Weaver, Jr.*

Dr. Marina Lee Weiss–*In memory of Lyndon and Marina Lee*

Mr. George C. Werth–*In memory of John W. Gill*

Mr. and Mrs. Rushton Williamson–*In memory of Virginia Trutt*

Mr. Eric Wolman–*In memory of Dr. Sandra Wolman*

Ms. Peggy M. Wood–*In memory of Dr. Catherine de Nerville*

Mr. Eliot R. Young–*In memory of Louise H. Young*

Mr. and Mrs. Robert R. Zecher–*In memory of the Bache Family*

Elon University, Information Technology– *In memory of Johnny Cusworth Walker, IV*

If an error or omission was made in these listings, please notify Lois Brown, Director of Development at loisbrown@oakhillcemeterydc.org.



OAK HILL CEMETERY

Historic Preservation Foundation Newsletter

From the Desk of David Jackson, Executive Director

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read from others about some of the activities that are upcoming as well as about the seasonal changes that are going on in the cemetery. In our last newsletter, we showed pictures of the work the staff is doing to refurbish pathways and slopes in the Chapel Hill area of the cemetery. This was part of an ongoing effort to recover the original contours of the cemetery as well as create new burial spaces, both casket and cremation. The ravages of time and erosion have moved significant amounts of earth all around the cemetery. We are bringing in countless loads of top soil and fill to replace what has been lost in several of the areas. An exploration of North Hill near the main intersection will show what has been done and the resulting benefits. The results are attractive and much needed in the other areas in which we are working.

The main feature of this newsletter is the “thank you” to all the donors in 2020. There are significant numbers of you and we really appreciate what is being donated to the cemetery. Overall our donations were about \$240,000 combined between the cemetery and the foundation. This is a significant amount in the life of the cemetery as it represents over 20% of our normal annual revenues. Some years are higher when a mausoleum site sells but for the most part, cemetery revenues are around \$1million. Donations make it possible for us to have an extra man on the grounds crew, make an annual donation to the endowment fund (instead of drawing down the endowment as many not-for-profits do) make improvements to the grounds such as our iron fence project, and add equipment necessary for the efficient maintenance of the grounds. This year we used a gift from a donor to purchase a leaf mulcher that enables us to grind all the fall leaves and put the resulting leaf mold back and nutrients back into the ground. In prior years, we were hauling 15-20 roll off boxes full of leaves with the accompanying labor and haul expenses. Our donations are starting off strongly this year as we have received two sizable donations from cemetery families and a bequest from the estate of former Weekend Superintendent Louis Krach. We hope others will follow the lead of these families to support our fence restoration project.

You see donations really do make a difference for us! Thank you to all our donors for your generosity! Keep up the good work!



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Happy Spring by Scott Staples, Grounds Manager

Happy Spring from the grounds crew! Well, it's not spring yet, but nothing can stop it now. “Spring fever” is a very real biological phenomenon which we see every year, as people emerge from their winter hibernation.

While Oak Hill is picturesque and beautiful year-round, spring is a special time of year for us as flower buds open and green life starts bursting forth from the buds of plants. As all scientists and gardeners know, life on earth is definitely solar-powered. Every insect has a temperature at which they are active and below which they are inactive, and as part of the natural world we're subject to that biology as well.

The many crocuses of Oak Hill are blooming now, opening up wide on sunny days for early bees and other pollinators. Joining the crocuses are large drifts of Snowdrops which previous generations have planted for our enjoyment. Last year, we divided and replanted many daffodils which are now starting to re-appear and will only become more bountiful and beautiful as time goes on.

We have been increasing our ambitious (and fairly expensive) pruning of our large trees. One of our tree contractors has been working from a 95-foot lift these past two weeks, performing some much needed pruning. Not many cemeteries are fortunate to have as many large trees as we are blessed with because of the hazard and expense of large trees growing over a jewel box of fine statuary.

However, our large trees are essential to the character of Oak Hill, “a sleep beneath the waving woods” as our founder William Corcoran put it in a long-ago letter to Oak Hill's Board of Managers.

For this pruning session we are focused particularly on removing deadwood from our largest trees to ensure the safety of our monuments. Good pruning has a long-lasting effect on the beauty, health, and longevity of





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a tree. We're very happy with the quality of the work being performed right now, even though there is much more to be done. Unless one is a particularly careful observer one might not necessarily notice how much pruning our arborist has done, but most times the best and most tasteful pruning is hard to notice, while bad tree pruning is painfully obvious.

As far as our continuing adventures in leaf madness, fall leaf removal has gone very well so far, an unabashed success in my opinion, with both the crew and the machine working very hard to complete the task. Our new leaf vacuum (thank you again, Lizzie) has even put us a couple weeks ahead of schedule as far as leaf removal. We've produced two rather large piles of chopped leaf mulch, and now must figure out how to disperse and incorporate our leaf mould into the soil and thus close the carbon loop.



In other news, our volunteer program is coming along nicely and is only going to get better and more exciting. This winter, the volunteers of Oak Hill decorated the cemetery quite beautifully, receiving many compliments from our friends and neighbors. We've got more volunteer projects planned and are looking forward to spring and the end of the cold so we can start doing more.

I want to thank our volunteers for their dedication and energy and I'm super excited to see the creativity that they'll bring to our main spring project of planting perennials into as many urns as we can afford to do. I'd also love to see us do more gardening from direct-sown seed.

If you'd like to join us for some good fun, so far we've been getting together on Friday mornings as our usual day, but if you're interested in volunteering there are plenty of other opportunities. There's always work to be done to make things better! Feel free to email me at groundsmanager@oakhillcemeterydc.org and please put "VOLUNTEER" in the subject line.

I'd like to take a moment to say something about this year of Covid-19. As a scientist myself (gardening is an art and a science), I have been keenly following the Covid-19 research literature since January of last year.

At the beginning of this pandemic there was an excellent op-ed in the Washington Post written by a trio of Harvard biology experts, namely: Dr. William (Ned) Friedman, Director of the Arnold Arboretum, Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, and fellow of the Linnean



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Society of London, who studies the organismic interfaces between developmental, phylogenetic and evolutionary biology; Dr. Joseph G. Allen, Doctor of Science (DSc), Master of Public Health (MPH), and Assistant Professor of Exposure and Assessment Science; and Director of Harvard's Healthy Buildings program and Dr. Marc Lipsitch, Professor of Epidemiology with primary appointment in the Department of Epidemiology and a joint appointment in the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases, director of the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics, (a center of excellence of the NIH), and Associate Director of the Interdisciplinary Concentration in Infectious Disease Epidemiology, whose recent COVID-19 research builds on 20 years of groundbreaking work on SARS, including real-time estimation of SARS transmissibility and modeling of control measures, as well as the effect of naturally acquired host immunity, vaccine-induced immunity and other public health interventions.

According to these highly credentialed experts, it's important to "disentangle real from perceived risk." Together they wrote that public parks are "essential to the public health and well-being of the more than 80 percent of Americans who live in urban areas. The science could not be clearer: The benefits of getting outside vastly outweigh the risk of getting infected in a park."

Thanks to the wisdom and judgement of our Superintendent, David Jackson, and the diligence and hard work of our crew, we've stayed open to you, the public, this entire time. We sincerely hope you are doing well. Our motto is "Continuing to Serve".

Upcoming Fun Events...Join Us!

by Lois M. Brown

And 5-6-7-8 Walk!



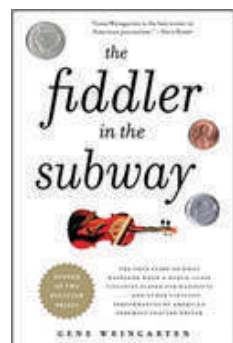
Put away the fancy equipment and gym membership card. All you will need are these few essentials, walking shoes, water, and sun protection. Julien LeBourgeois, our very Georgetown neighbor, friend, and lot owner, will initially lead the group on a curated route, and suggest alternatives and extensions for participants to try on their own. April 5–June 18 | Monday–Friday 8:00a.m.–9:00a.m. | September 6–November 19. Email Lois Brown: loisbrown@oakhillcemeterydc.org to register at no cost and receive your "5-6-7-8 walk" details.



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The Chapel Café Book Club



We are not letting social distancing get in the way of good books, good friends, and good a time. The Chapel Café Book Club will be meeting again virtually on Wednesday, May 12 at 7:00 p.m. We are excited to announce our book choice, the Fiddler in the Subway by Gene Weingarten; it is a true story of the World-Class Violinist who played for handouts. Anna Reid Jhirad will be our host; she is an author and filmmaker with a long career in historical documentary films for PBS and museums. She is currently directing a film, The Last Battlefront: Quest for the Vote in Washington, D.C., and is also a devoted supporter of Oak Hill. Email Lois Brown: loisbrown@oakhillcemeterydc.org today to register.



Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation presents

DOG DAY 2021

Saturday, August 28, 2021 from 8am - 12pm

Bring your pups for a leisurely walk around Oak Hill Cemetery.
Donations are welcome.



OAK HILL CEMETERY

www.oakhillcemeterydc.org



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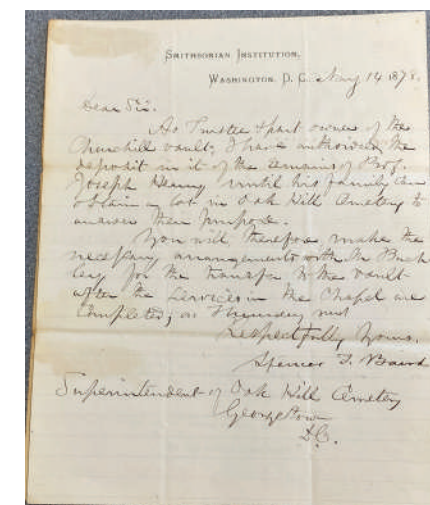
Smithsonian Connections by Laura Hackfeld



Happy Spring, friends of Oak Hill! My name is Laura Hackfeld, and I am lucky to be the Weekend Host, and newly-appointed Social Media Manager here at the cemetery! Over the past year, I have been granted access to some the cemetery's most amazing hidden histories, and discovered several Smithsonian connections that I think may intrigue you!

The Henry Crescent section of the cemetery is one of the most beautiful lots on the grounds, and belongs to the family of Joseph Henry, scientist and first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. What you might not know, is that following his death, Joseph Henry spent more than two years interred in an Oak Hill lot that was

not his own! Spencer Fullerton Baird, Henry's longtime Assistant Secretary at the Smithsonian, as well as its first curator, wrote a letter to Oak Hill's Superintendent, offering a place in his family vault for Mr. Henry until proper arrangements with his family could be made. Henry remained in the Baird-Churchill Vault (Lot 278) for two years before he was moved to his final resting place.



Spencer Fullerton Baird took over as the second Secretary of the Smithsonian, and worked on obtaining collections for a National Museum. His previous position as the first Curator grew the natural history specimen collection from 6,000 to over two million! Baird is not alone in bringing artifacts to the Smithsonian, however. German-born Dr. Charles Rau started writing articles for the Smithsonian's publications in 1863, and ultimately served as the Curator for the Department of Antiquities at the SI from 1875-1887. Dr. Rau is also buried here at Oak Hill, on Border 4, Plot 59!



OAK HILL CEMETERY
Historic Preservation Foundation

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