

Gravestone Memorial Art

Gravestone Memorial Art can serve multiple purposes: consolation for friends and family, preservation of vital statistics, admonition and inspiration to future visitors. At its very best—and its most intimate and intense—a memorial brings us into the presence of the one who died. It can express an essential essence of who they were, what we remember, and what we want others to know.

In hinting at the larger story, memorial art introduces a visitor to a missing life and provides a threshold into one's own memories.

While creating individual and civic memorials over 20 years, I've learned that effective memorials come from personal stories. It takes time (hours, weeks, and months) to develop the memorial design that will best serve the sur-

vivors' purposes. Corporate funeral homes and cemeteries desiring higher profit margins cannot provide the time or artistic skills to develop gravestones to speak deeply of someone's essence.

And yet—it is not a dead art. Memorialists still actively create.

Here are some stories hinted at through memorial art I've placed in the Eugene Masonic Cemetery—and some won international memorial design awards:

- Matzoh ball soup on a supper table ornamented with fresh gardenias—recalling the warm welcomes and gracious hospitality of Ruth Levy Lader (1920–2003).
- Two pearl necklaces purchased in Tokyo, while refugees en route to Shanghai—after fleeing the Nazis' Warsaw Ghetto using visas from Japanese ambassador Sugihara—were intended by Joseph Fiszman (1918–2000) and his father as reunion gifts for sister and mother, but the women perished in Travniki Concentration Camp in 1943. (Yes, we now know the carved date is incorrect.) Joseph became a UO professor of political science; his wife Rachele (1920–2013) received the pearls.
- A mountain of Barre ("Bare-ee") grey granite rising above rivers of life—visually conveyed with swirls of his words—brings us into the presence of avid climber and world adventurer Mike Heil (1956–2017).
- Fairy dolls made by Elina Wind-song (1979–1999) while facing terminal illness, carved in a



Heil's Gravestone: Frontal View

Photos by David Stone

Mohawk Valley stone from where she lived; her gravestone inspired a song and teens have left notes about choosing not to commit suicide after viewing her grave.

- Dancers in South African black granite under the cosmic drum of the universe to honor Adriane Miller (1971–1998), who brought African dance to Eugene and was converting to Islam.
- Spencer Butte, in bronze—as viewed from their home—set in columnar basalt, near a flat marker depicting Dr. John (1923–2013) and Mayor Ruth (1926–2010) Bascom's own bicycles riding to a pair of trees, symbolizing their life together.

Lisa Johnson Ponder became a memorialist and advocate for people in grief in 1997, and already has her EMC plot.



Heil's Gravestone: From Above

From the President

It's an interesting business, operating a cemetery, especially a historic one with a treasured landscape.

Part of our nonprofit's mission is to be a cultural and natural resource for the community. We want to make the grounds attractive and informative, and because we still sell burial and scatter rights, appearance is particularly important.

When the EMCA took ownership in 1995, the place was a jungle of blackberries, ivy, poison oak—you name it—so the board started by commissioning a landscape restoration plan to create an inviting garden. That early plan didn't give much attention to the gravestones and other "hardscape," though.

We think that plantings, however attractive, shouldn't restrict access to graves and markers, particularly those with special meaning for visitors. When you visit the cemetery now, you'll see that we're making extra efforts to manage both plants and markers in harmony.

We recently also got City permission to put an attractive iron fence along the north border. We think the fence will improve the over-

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Autumn View

What Do Board Members Do All Day?

For new board member Sheri Pyron there aren't enough hours in the day. Sheri plays French and tenor horns in five local musical groups, two of which she started herself. She is especially excited to be part of the 30-piece Oregon Brass Band, the only British brass band in Oregon, which will play at the cemetery next Memorial Day weekend. Her current involvement in the music scene began five years ago when, after twenty-nine years, she picked up her French horn again.

Sheri has her bachelor of fine arts and a master's in architecture



Sheri Pyron

from the University of Oregon. She is trained and has worked as an architectural and landscape designer. In addition, Sheri is an artist and jewelry maker. While raising her children, Madeleine and Nathan, she also ran a successful jewelry business, with her work in ten galleries throughout the United States. Now that her children are grown (Madeleine at the UO and Nathan apprenticing at the Houston Ballet) she is concentrating her creativity on her music and her quilting in modern patterns.

When asked why she joined the

EMCA Board, Sheri explained that now that her children are launched, giving back to her com-
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**Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association —
541-684-0949**

Board of Directors

John Bredesen	Dina Wills
Alex Brokaw	Charles Wright
Caroline Forell	Wendi S. Kuchera,
Denny Hellesvig	Landscape Manager
Hallis	Yael Gammon and
Rich Maris	Diego Llewellyn-Jones,
Sheri Pyron	Groundskeepers
Karen Seidel	Sally Dietrich,
Roz Slovic	Cemetery Administrator
Elizabeth	
Southworth	

The IRS Form 990 is available for inspection upon request.

www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org

President, from page 2

all experience of visitors to the north end of the property. It will also make more gravesites available for burials.

There's more to think about, of course. What happens when we run out of lots and niches to sell? How do we encourage you to support us? What means the most to you?

Yes, it's an interesting and unique business and one we believe is well worth supporting. We hope you agree. We could really use your help now.

Charles Wright, EMCA President

Board, from page 2

munity by volunteering is her new focus. Sheri is also on the board of Amici Chamber Music and the Central Lutheran Church Council.

Sheri has been married to John Rowell for nearly thirty years. Together they raise grass-fed beef on Sheri's family farm in Dexter. John keeps himself busy as both a UO professor of Architecture and principal of Rowell Brokaw Architects, which takes projects from design through construction, including many on the UO campus.

Considering how much Sheri and her family do, the EMCA is delighted that she joined our board this year. She has already made a splash by playing taps last Memorial Day weekend and, with the Central Horns quartet, performing the final concert in the EMCA *Music to Die For* series for 2018.

Recent Contributions

The following individuals and organizations contributed gifts between April 1, 2018 and October 1, 2018. We thank you all.

Monument Rebuilder (\$500-\$2,499)

John Bredesen
Bob and Alex Brokaw
Betsy Halpern
Mary Lefevre and
Spencer Krueger
Robert and Debbie
Laney
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and Walter Fox
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Thank
you!

Eugene and Sandra
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Suzanne Peterson
Helmut Plant
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Peter Saraceno
Nancy Smith
James Chang and
Douglas Smyth
Lyndal Stella
Cathy Verret
Honey Vizer
Maggie Yokum
Mark Zorn

Gifts in Honor and in Memory

Between April 1, 2018 and October 1, 2018 the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association received gifts from the following. We wish to thank all who contributed and regret any errors or omissions.

Monument Rebuilder (\$500-\$2,499)

Bob and Alex Brokaw in memory of Olivia Helen Brokaw and Barbara and Harold Butler and in honor of John and Betsy
Robert and Debbie Laney for the Hugh and Phyllis Hiller memorial window
Larson Family Foundation for the Landscape Endowment
Paul and Roslyn Slovic in memory of Daniel Slovic and in honor of John and Betsy

Preserver (\$250-\$499)

Warren Wong in memory of Bella Girouard

Sponsor (\$100-\$249)

Ray Adams in memory of Murray Adams

Mark and Regina Agerter in memory of Joan Herbranson Agerter
Christina Armstrong in memory of Byron and Justine Buck
Virginia Currens in memory of Gerald Currens
Katherine Eaton in memory of Burt E. Eaton and John F. Girton
Sarah Klinghammer in memory of Dan Klinghammer
Rebecca Weedon Lacy in memory of Bob, Jonnie and Sam Lacy
Linda Pentz in honor of Denny Hellesvig
Camilla Pratt in memory of Hope Pressman
Louise Wicks in memory of Noel "Pappy" Wicks

Supporter (up to \$99)

Libby Bottero in honor of John and Betsy's wedding
Joakima K. Erickson in memory of Elida and Otto Erickson
Kris Lindstrom Fox and Walter Fox in honor of John and Betsy's wedding
Sally Green in memory of Ellie and Irene Bangs
Doreen Kilen in memory of C. Bruce Kilen
Judy Wood Lyons in memory of William and Sallie Wood
Jennifer Peterson in honor of Kay Holbo
Lyndal Stella in memory of Thomas B. Anderson
Maggie Yokum in memory of Sarah Elina Windsong

Donate with



Consider your place in history...

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery has burial lots to sell. We can accommodate cremated remains and caskets. Your purchase provides a beautiful and meaningful place for your family to visit and helps support the cemetery. **For more information, please contact Sally at 541-684-0949 or emca1859@gmail.com.**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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*Newsletter by Caroline Forell
and Beneda Design*

Cemetery Weddings

Recently, the cemetery was the site of two weddings. On June 2nd, long-time Board Member John Bredesen and Betsy Halpern were married in Hope Abbey in a ceremony presided over by Rev. Bingham Powell. About 75 family members and friends of both the bride and groom attended from as far away as Alaska, Minnesota and Washington, D.C.

John has been an active board member since 2002, participating in many projects including coordinating the *Music To Die For* concert series. The activity he's most proud of is helping with the restoration of Hope Abbey, so using the building for their wedding and reception appealed to both John and Betsy.

After over two decades of work, Hope Abbey is again a place of tranquil beauty, illuminated by golden light streaming through the reproduction stained glass windows.

The Fall equinox fell on September 22nd at 11:11am, the exact moment that EMCA Landscape Manager Wendi Propst married former EMCA Groundskeeper Steve Kuchera. They were married on the cemetery grounds where they first met four years earlier when Wendi hired Steve as Groundskeeper. Love soon blossomed in the cemetery which, for that reason, holds a special place in both their hearts. Wendi and Steve wed in an intimate ceremony attended by just the officiant and two witnesses, one of whom was EMCA Cemetery Administrator Sally Dietrich. In August 2017 Steve took up a new career as an electrician but, as Wendi noted, "For us, the cemetery is the most beautiful, sacred and serene space in Eugene."

In the words of John Bredesen: "Cemeteries are as much for the living as for their traditional use." Nevertheless, for now these weddings are the exception to EMCA's "no private functions" rule.



John and Betsy in the Abbey



Wendi and Steve in the cemetery