

“The light of my life has gone out.”

Two prominent persons buried in the Eugene Masonic Cemetery are Thomas Condon and his wife, Cornelia Holt Condon. One of the first professors at the University of Oregon, Condon is known for the extraordinary fossil discoveries and geological analyses he conducted in Oregon.

Missionary Family from the East

Oregon became a U.S. territory in 1848, and pioneers were quickly settling the land, coming into inevitable conflict with the Native Americans who populated the area. The American Home Missionary Society (AHMS) sent missionaries out to start churches, expand religious teaching, and proselytize to Native Americans. Thomas Condon's father, a stonemason who had brought his family to New York from County Cork, Ireland, died clearing government land for the family in Michigan when Thomas was 11. Thomas was a personable and inquisitive child, but was educated in fits and starts along with working in households and shops in New York City. In his early 20s he worked as a teacher and won a scholarship to Auburn Seminary. Unable to secure a preaching job due to anti-Irish sentiment, in 1852 he applied to AHMS for missionary work in Oregon, a position that required him to be married. Thus in a short time, Thomas met and proposed to a 20-year-old schoolteacher, Cornelia, but she took weeks to decide. She also had a difficult childhood, as her mother had died and her father was starting a shoemaking business so there was

no money for a dowry. The posting meant she might never see her father or siblings again—but eventually she agreed. The young couple set out from New York Harbor in November. They travelled around Cape Horn and arrived in Portland, in March 1853.

Settling in Several Oregon Towns

The Condons' first posting was to St Helens, on the Columbia River, where they lived and worked among Native Americans and pioneers. Thomas preached and tried to raise funds to build a church, leaving Cornelia lonely and depressed in their damp cabin on the side of a wood. Rumors about Indian raids caused Cornelia great anxiety. During her first pregnancy, Cornelia suffered from malarial fever and depression. After the birth of their first child, Eddy, the family relocated to Albany, then to the Dalles and then to Forest Grove.

State Geologist

Condon enjoyed success in his missionary posting in the Dalles. Generous donors built a new church and many children attended his school. Condon hiked on the bluffs above the Dalles for inspiration for his sermons and he picked up rocks along the way. Soon soldiers posted at Fort Dalles began to pick up fossils for him. Collecting fossils as a hobby led Thomas Condon to extraordinary discoveries in Oregon.

He followed scientific discoveries closely and realized that the fossils provided evidence for Charles Darwin's Origin of Species and the

theory of evolution, then highly controversial, especially for a missionary. In the John Day area, he uncovered fossils of early rhinos and three-toed ancestors of modern horses. He corresponded with scientists at the Smithsonian and at East Coast universities and sent specimens to them. Ever the teacher, Condon offered lectures in the Dalles on fossils and what they revealed about the area's geology.

Fossil-hunting lost its luster for Thomas when his oldest son, Eddy, who had often accompanied him in the field, died at age 18. An ill-fated expedition with his next-oldest son, Seymour, ended in a road accident, broken limbs, and a long recuperation. To add to Thomas and Cornelia's suffering, their youngest daughter, Jane, died in December 1872, which Condon described as “deepening a shade the yet fresh shadow of Eddy's death.” Ironically, lectures in the Portland area that could not be cancelled

continued on page 4



Welcoming Mallori Milligan

A New Voice for History, Nature, and Community

We welcome **Mallori Milligan**, who joined the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association Board in September.

Mallori's interest was piqued by frequent walks through the cemetery. A tour given by board member Caroline Forell impressed her with the stories and rich history of the cemetery, the beauty of the grounds, which reflect the care they receive, and the unique architecture of Hope Abbey Mausoleum.

She has lived in Eugene for 13 years and relocated here after finishing her degree at Oregon State University. A lifelong Oregonian

who grew up close to Mount Hood, she feels at home in the trees. In her off hours she can be found trail running in the wild, at an easel with a new work of art, or cozied up with a good book and a cup of tea. She loves travel and is always open to new unique destination suggestions.

Mallori is a scientist who specializes in the ethical guidance of the sourcing and usage of biological samples for a biotech company



that makes kits used in research and drug discovery.

She is at a point in her life that she finds connection and purpose through community. Not only is she now a board member of the Masonic Cemetery, but she is involved with the Friends of the Eugene Public Library Board and coordinates volunteers for the book sales and other book selling endeavors which support our local library.

What's in a name?

Tracing Oregon's pioneer history through names carved in stone

Consider **America Pearce**, born in 1817—perhaps named in celebration of America's victory in



America's grave marker

1812, or simply for the pride of being American.

Those buried in the Masonic Cemetery include individuals born as early as 1800, whose parents' lives and choices now feel distant from our own. Yet many names remain familiar: Michael, Charles, Robert, Elizabeth, Mary, Anne. Others mark another era—Ebenezer, Horatio, Ambrose, Prudence, Matilda, Bertha.

There's a surprising fondness for "Z" names: Zorabelle, Zelma, Zona,

Zophar, Zodoc, and Zachary, alongside Biblical ones such as Ruth, Martha, Solomon, and Gabriel. Then come the rarities—Septimus, Lycurgus, Octavia, Sophronia, Lucretia, and Pameligia—children of parents steeped in classical learning.

In an Oregon cemetery graced by an Egyptian-style mausoleum, these names whisper of an age when Latin, Greek, and early American pride shaped the frontier spirit of Eugene's earliest settlers.

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association (541) 684-0949 www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org

Board of Directors

John Bredesen
Caroline Forell
Angela Kinari
Catherine Kordesch
Beatrice McKenzie
Mallori Milligan

Don Petting
Sheri Pyron
Jon Savitz
Elizabeth Southworth
Shawn Walker
Charles Wright

Sara Besch,
Business Manager
Diego Llewellyn-Jones,
Site Manager

Ben Rucker,
Groundskeeper
Avion Mallory,
Groundskeeper

The IRS Form 990 is available for inspection upon request.

We acknowledge that the cemetery sits on the the traditional Indigenous homelands of the Kalapuya peoples. We respect this Indigenous homeland, honor the care they provided for the land, and pay tribute to the Kalapuya peoples who continue to live and thrive in the State of Oregon.

A Part of the Neighborhood

The President's Corner

There are many reasons visitors come to the Eugene Masonic Cemetery: to remember a loved one who has passed, to enjoy quiet contemplation, to learn about notable community members and the history of Eugene, to take in a musical performance, to birdwatch, or to walk among the many tree and plant species. Visitors come from far and wide. For some, it may be a first visit, while others come frequently. However, it's safe to say most visitors are neighbors who live around the cemetery.

On many occasions, people I tell I am involved with the cemetery indicate they are unfamiliar with it and ask where it is. Others say, "Oh, I know that cemetery. It's the one next to the U of O near McArthur Court." I then explain that the cemetery off 18th Avenue is the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery, and

the Eugene Masonic Cemetery is about eight blocks to the south.

It is not uncommon to meet long-time residents of Eugene—and even native Eugeneans—who are completely unfamiliar with the cemetery, set back as it is from busier roads and tucked into a neighborhood, unlike the Pioneer Cemetery. Not to stir up a rivalry between the cemeteries, but it may be worth noting that the Eugene Masonic Cemetery was established as the first official burial place in Eugene and is the final resting place of many notable Eugeneans, including Eugene Skinner. Although I jokingly boast of the superiority of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery, the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery is a beautiful place filled with history and operated by an excellent nonprofit organization.

I suspect that many visitors to the Eugene Masonic Cemetery appreciate its location, which provides a quiet, peaceful setting. We consider the cemetery an integral part of the neighborhood and strive to maintain it as a sacred natural resource for the benefit of our neighbors.

Indeed, our neighbors visit frequently; some even stroll or hike up and down the paths daily. We know many by name, we love getting to know them, and we greatly appreciate their keeping a watchful eye over the cemetery, alerting us to anything amiss. On a recent Sunday, a neighbor taking an early morning walk saw that a large tree branch had fallen in the night in front of the main gate. The neighbor has a good relationship with Diego, the site manager, and sent him a text about the fallen tree. Diego and his top-notch landscape crew were at the cemetery within a couple of hours and had the large branch cleaned up and removed before the *Music to Die For* performance later that day. Thanks to that neighbor, we were able to quickly ensure that the landscape was maintained and free of hazards.

We would love to have you join us and our wonderful neighbors at the cemetery for a stroll along a tree-lined path. Also, feel free to visit us at an open house in Hope Abbey Mausoleum on the last Sunday of every month, join the audience at a music performance, or reach out to our staff to discuss arrangement options such as burial lots, scatter rights, and crypts and niches in the mausoleum. Finally, please consider contributing to the EMCA endowment to ensure the historic Eugene Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey remain cultural and natural resources for the community.

Shawn Walker, EMCA Board President



Shawn Walker

LANDSCAPE CREW WORK

In the article above, Shawn refers to the work our landscape crew does, including removing parts of a tree that fell in front of our main entry gate just hours before one of our performances in Hope Abbey. They also mow the lawns and other grassy areas when needed, and as their job description says, "and other tasks as necessary."

At the board meeting each month, Site Manager Diego Llewellyn-Jones presents a list of tasks completed. Below is the list for September. It's only a highlight of the work the crew accomplished in September, but it illustrates the range of tasks completed.

- No burials this month
- Two new markers installed
- One new Veteran's Administration headstone delivered
- Two new plaques installed
- Shrubbery pruned back to expose hardscape
- Some dead tree limbs removed for safety
- Plastic chains taken down around lot 143 at the Public Square
- Successful tour for Walktober, with approximately 15 visitors. "Walktober" refers to the guided tours he conducts each month.

Groundskeepers Avion and Ben are part of the team that keeps the Masonic Cemetery looking like a natural jewel in the midst of an urban area.

Condon, *from page 1*

rekindled his love for geology, which led to a career change.

In 1873, Condon resigned his post as a missionary, took a job as lecturer in geology at Pacific University, and moved his family to Forest Grove. The position offered free tuition for his three children who were ready for advanced education. That same year, the State of Oregon named Thomas Condon State Geologist, which required regular lectures. He seemed to strike the right balance between expertise and the ability to speak to non-experts. The Oregon Guard noted that he was “one of the most popular lecturers in the state.”

In 1876, the University of Oregon persuaded Condon to join them as a founding professor. The well-loved teacher taught geology, geography, physiology, zoology, and ancient history. By now his fossil collection was extensive and he drew on it in labs. A student remembered Condon, explaining why they would not be using a textbook for zoology one semester, saying, “God has given you brains, this room contains bones and boxes of specimens from small insects up... go to work!” He also took students on regular field trips to Smith’s Quarry on the east edge of town, to Spencer Butte, and to Spencer Creek.

Women’s Rights

Cornelia also had her hands full in and outside of their home in Eugene. She gave birth to ten children, though only six lived to adulthood. She was president of the local chapter of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, was active in the Congregational Church and was a founding member of the Fortnightly Club, a still-active women’s organization in Eugene. Perhaps most interesting, in February, 1897, Cornelia spoke in favor of women’s right to vote in local school board elections. When

the measure failed, she was among the women who marched on the county courthouse demanding ballots. The ballots were denied, but women secured the right to vote in school elections in Oregon the following year, and the right to vote in all elections in 1912.

Cornelia and Thomas are both buried in the Eugene Masonic Cemetery. Upon Cornelia’s death from typhoid fever in 1901, Thomas said of his wife of nearly fifty years, “The light of my life has gone out.” After her death he con-

tinued to teach until age 83. He died at age 84 of influenza.

Several of the couple’s relatives are also buried in the Masonic cemetery: their daughters, Ina Condon Bean, Fanny Condon and Ellen (Nellie) Condon McCornack—the first valedictorian of the University of Oregon—and her husband, Herbert, and son, Elwin; and Cornelia and Thomas’ grandson, Baby Seymour, child of their son, Seymour and his wife, Mary.

*Beatrice McKenzie,
EMCA Board Member*

Cemetery Scenes



Gate to McClanahan plot



Fungus



Red-flowering current



Hope Abbey

Memorial Overlook Scatter Garden

As I walked through the cemetery on a sunny October day, I hoped many others would visit

GRAVE MARKERS

The terms headstone, grave marker and tombstone are used to designate a permanent memorial at a grave site. The terms are often used interchangeably; at the cemetery we have chosen to use the term grave marker for consistency. We have discovered that a grave marker is not necessarily placed at the top of the burial site, making the term “headstone” inaccurate.

The Masonic Cemetery was laid out in 1859 with an east-west orientation. Traditionally, most burials are oriented to face the east, yet our hill slopes west with a western view. This is not only challenging to work with, but it seems to have been in the past also.

A walk through the cemetery reveals grave markers placed on the east side of a burial, but also on the west side. Some grave markers are read from the east, but most are read from the west. Because our records don't reveal the way a body is placed in a grave, often we can only guess as to whether we are viewing a headstone or a foot stone.

Luckily there are no hard and fast rules about where a marker needs to be placed on a grave. Because our cemetery is unique and has such a long history, we try to be consistent with the orientation of adjacent burials, providing cohesiveness for the entire plot.

*Spring 2016 article
by Sally Dietrich
Former Cemetery Administrator*

during this season. During the fall, tall grasses have been removed, seeds from native wildflowers have been sown by the wind, and many plants lie dormant. This time of year has a unique beauty, and cemetery plots, free of the overgrowth necessary in the summer months to preserve our native landscape, are easily accessible to view.

However, there is an exception to this. In the northeast corner of the cemetery there is a distinctive place that remains in a natural condition year-round—the scatter garden.



The Memorial Overlook scatter garden is located in a wooded area that provides burial space for individuals who choose cremation rather than earthen burial. Ashes are placed in the ground here, and a small amount may be reserved for a family to scatter by hand during a service at the memorial wall. Bronze plaques are attached to the wall for those whose ashes are in the garden, or as a memorial for a loved one. The overlook also provides a quiet seating area for visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of our historic cemetery.

This area is where the McMurry family carried out their brick-making business. Later, the Eugene Electric Railway's Fairmount Trolley #3 provided convenient access here to families visiting the cemetery.

The scatter garden and memorial overlook were designed by landscape architect Charmane Landing. The area is managed as a habitat restoration area, carefully maintained by our staff. The Memorial Overlook scatter garden is a wonderful place to visit and reflect at any time of year.

*From a Spring 2006 article by
Mary Ellen Rodgers,
Former Cemetery Administrator*



Blair Boulevard Question

As you travel to Sweet Life Patisserie or the Fisherman's Market, or stop in at one of the many eateries located on Blair Boulevard, have you ever wondered how Blair Boulevard was named or why it runs diagonally, while all the other streets in the area are at 90-degree angles with each other? The following information comes from a sign at the Blair gravesite in the cemetery.

Prior and Elenor Blair were part of the first wagon train to take the southern route to Oregon, coming past Klamath Lake, over the Cascades into the Rogue River Valley, and north through the Umpqua Valley to what became Eugene. Other members of the 1847 party were Ben and Catherine Davis and Charnel Mulligan, Elenor's brother, who donated land for the Lane County Courthouse and Columbia College.

Prior (1818–1893) and Elenor (1810–1878) first settled near the Bristow family in Pleasant Hill, but soon took up a donation land claim west of Eugene Skinner's claim. They became wealthy by producing grain for market and were involved in Eugene's early fruit growing and drying industry. The Blair farm was an early landmark for travelers on the Territorial Road (later known as the Pacific Highway), and the portion of the highway crossing the farm was named Blair Boulevard. Besides running his farm, Prior Blair also served as a deputy sheriff and worked with Dr. Andrew Patterson in surveying and platting Eugene's town site.

In 1853, the Lane County commissioners paid Blair \$100 to construct an office building for the county clerk. The Lane County Clerk's building, one of the oldest

existing public buildings in Oregon, is on the National Register of Historic Places and can be seen on the grounds of the Lane County History Museum.

This account is one example of the kind of historical information you can find as you wander through the cemetery on your next visit.

So why is Blair Boulevard diagonal? It was originally part of the Eugene City to Booneville territorial road that served as the main stage coach road north to Corvallis and Portland, later designated as the "Pacific Highway."

It was also part of the route of the Southern Pacific Streetcar Service to downtown. The "Blair Island" area, Blair Boulevard between West 3rd Avenue and West 5th Avenue and named for a cafe that was there, is a registered National Historic Place.

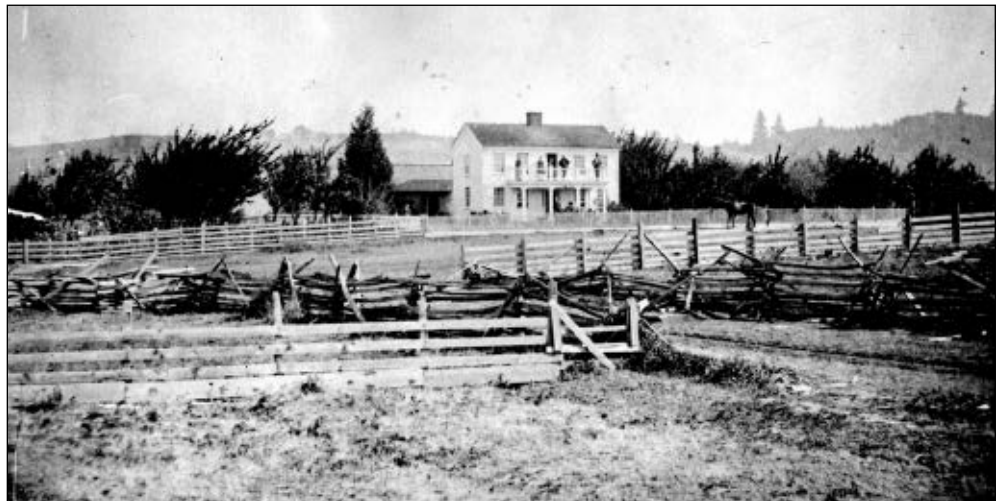
From Homestead to Campus

The McMurrys' Lasting Mark on Eugene

Early Oregon pioneers Fielding and Harriet McMurry arrived in Eugene in 1852, staking a claim and buying land in the area of what is now the University of Oregon. Their homestead was roughly located where the University of Oregon Student Union stands today.

Fielding became the first treasurer of Lane County, paid a salary of \$18.85 in 1853, and was a member of the Territorial Legislature that met in Corvallis. He started a school called "Point of the Hills," which stood on what is now cemetery property at 25th and University streets.

He began a clay pit and brick yard near there that eventually provided bricks for early buildings at the University of Oregon and



McMurry homestead, located where UO student union is today

around Eugene. In 1857, he sold land to the Masons for what became the Masonic Cemetery, and his family received a burial plot at the top of the hill in the center of

the cemetery.

Hallis, whose tribute is on page 8, was the great, great granddaughter of Fielding and Harriet McMurry.

Recent Contributions

The following individuals and organizations contributed gifts between April 1, 2025 through October 1, 2025. We thank you all.

Monumental Giver (\$2,500+)

Betsy Halpern and John Bredeesen
The Larson Family Foundation
The Starlight Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation
Lina White

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

Anonymous
Janet Anderson
Bob and Alex Brokaw

Richard Larson and Barbara Cowan
Brigid Flannery
Charlie Patton and Leslie Harris
Patrick Jones
Mary Lefevre and Spencer Krueger
Lane Forest Products
Devon Mann
James Northrop
Karen Offen

Preserver (\$250-\$499)

Friedl Bell
Rick Brewer
Martha and William Hall

Kay and Fuki Hisama
Glenn Nelson
Camilla Pratt

Sponsor (\$100-\$249)

Alice Barkan
Stephen Pruch and Brooke Belcher
Libby Bottero
William Buskirk
Terry and Anne Carter
Jerry and Vikki Chrostek
Val and Dan Close
John and Cheri Courtlage
Faye and Robert Creed
Julie V.B. Daniel

John Delay
Kathleen Downey
Lawrence and Sandra Dunlap
Gale Fiszman
Dale and Linda Forrest
Rachel Foster
Karen French
Rich Heil and Kay Gidley
Bryna Goodman
Margaret Hadaway and George Jobanek
John Hammer
Sarah and Saman Harnsongkram
Wayne and Susan Jewett
Sarah Klinghammer
Jeffrey and Elizabeth Kurtz
Kris and Jim Lewis
Judy Wood Lyons
Joe McKeever and Kathy Tiger

Jill and Gary McKenney
Jon Scott McNeeley and Mary McKrola
Nancy Moody
Letty Morgan
Gary and Lorri Morse
Ann Muller
Joyce Owen
Christopher and Laura Ramey
Carol E. Schirmer
Berit Shaver
Patrick Sullivan
Jean Tate
The Van Houten Family
Living Trust
Kurt Willcox
Carol Williams

Supporter (less than \$100)

Lorraine Bias
Douglas Blandy
Amy Brandt

Dan Christensen
Bonnie G. Cohn
Laurie Cracraft
Jill Baxter and Robert Daugherty
Kirsten Diechmann
Pam Fields
Erik Fisher
Carol Garringer
Sally Green
Janet Hiller
Jon and Barb Hofmeister
Sally Jackson
Elizabeth A. Keever
Martin Lewis
Marsha McCloskey
Steve McQuiddy
Mallori Milligan
Gil and Martha Osgood
Randy Painter
Jennifer Peterson
Suzanne Peterson
Marolyn and Norman Poole



Thank you!

Eugene Skinner

Ginny Reich
Bruce Sackett
Lyndal Stella
Deb Trist
Cathy Verret
Honey Vizer
Robert Wright
Mark Zorn

Dedicated Gifts

Between April 1, 2025 and October 1, 2025, the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association received gifts from the following. We wish to thank all who contributed and regret any errors or omissions.

Monumental Giver (\$2,500+)

Betsy Halpern and John Bredeesen for the endowment in memory of Hallis
Lina White in memory of David White

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

Janet Anderson in memory of Evelyn Anderton
Richard Larson and Barbara Cowan for the Landscape Endowment
Patrick Jones in memory of Charles A. Reinhardt and Eunice Kjaer
Lane Forest Products to sponsor Music on the Square
Devon Mann in memory of Nancy Jean Fritz

Karen Offen in memory of Karen Seidel

Preserver (\$250-\$499)

Friedl Bell in memory of Robert S. Bell
Martha and William Hall in memory of the Benner family
Kay and Fuki Hisama in memory of Toshiaki Hisama
Camilla Pratt in honor of Kay Holbo

Sponsor (\$100-\$249)

Libby Bottero in memory of Hallis
Terry and Anne Carter in memory of Karen Seidel
Jerry and Vikki Chrostek in memory of Buddy, Guy, Jack and Tucker

Julie V.B. Daniel in honor of the sexton

Gale Fiszman in memory of Rachele and Joseph Fiszman
Margaret Hadaway and George Jobanek in memory of Daniel Aaron Krow

Sarah and Saman Harnsongkram in memory of Jack

Wayne and Susan Jewett in memory of Maureen Williams

Sarah Klinghammer in memory of Daniel Klinghammer

Christopher and Laura Ramey in honor of Calvin, the dog

Kurt Willcox in memory of Eugene and Nola Genevieve Wagoner

Carol Williams for the Endowment

Supporter (up to \$99)

Lorraine Bias in memory of Jerome Bias

Amy Brandt in memory of Hallis
Pam Fields in honor of George Newton Frazer, Sr.

Carol Garringer in memory of Jerry Garringer

Janet Hiller in memory of David O'Neill

Gil and Martha Osgood in memory of John and Dene Sihler

Jennifer Peterson in memory of Karen Seidel

Deb Trist in memory of Phil Lesh
Robert Wright for the Landscape Endowment in memory of

Robbie Wright
Mark Zorn in memory of Karen Johnson Zorn

Thank you!

Recent In-kind Contributions

We happily acknowledge the in-kind services and discounts afforded to us by the following.

Dale Forrest
Lane Forest Products
QSL Printing
Sanipac

Consider your place in history...

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery offers burial rights for both cremated remains and caskets. Your purchase not only creates a beautiful family memorial spot but also supports the cemetery.

For more information, please contact Sara at 541-684-0949 or emca1859@gmail.com



If you wish to donate, please use the enclosed remittance envelope, PayPal or scan the QR Code to be directed to our website
www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org



To Our Readers: If you would like to receive EMCA's monthly eNewsletter, go to the EMCA's website. On the pull down menu, click About Us and then EMCA publications. At the bottom of the page is a link to sign up.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

What's Inside

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Condon Family | 1 |
| Welcome Mallori Milligan | 2 |
| What's in a Name | 2 |
| A Part of the Neighborhood | 3 |
| Landscape Work | 3 |
| Cemetery Scenes | 4 |
| Memorial Overlook | 5 |
| Grave Markers | 5 |
| Blaire Boulevard Question | 6 |
| McMurry's Lasting Mark | 6 |
| Remembering Hallis | 8 |

*Newsletter by Betsy Halpern
and Beneda Design*

Donate with



Remembering Hallis



Hallis, one of the longest-tenured EMCA board members, died on June 15 of this year after setting a shining example of a life well-lived. She was a feminist from birth, a warrior for women's rights, and a crusader for all human rights. She was a lover of art and an accomplished artist, an anthropologist, an accountant and a small plane pilot.

Hallis met Kay Holbo, the first president of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association, at the cemetery in 1995 and, after learning of the EMCA's plans, agreed to work with Kay on the board. Later she took over as EMCA treasurer, a position she held until recently and in which her experience as a CPA was a tremendous asset. She remained on the board until her death.

Many have asked why she only had one name. She was born with an ordinary good-enough name, but that wasn't who she was. She had to be herself.

Hallis will be remembered fondly as an outstanding woman and a dedicated board member. For a fascinating view of her life in her own words, check out her interview for the EMCA Oral History Project under About Us on the cemetery's website.



McMurry family plot, Hallis' great-great grand-father's grave marker