

# Monumental News

An occasional newsletter of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association

Spring 2024

## The Significance of Memorial Day

Today, Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer. Many families plan picnics with traditional foods like grilled hot dogs, burgers, and potato salad. Friends get together to celebrate a day off work and hope it doesn't rain. Children laugh and play in parks.

In contrast, in the late 1800's Memorial Day was a solemn day of mourning for the extreme loss of life in the Civil War, an estimated 360,000 Union deaths and 258,000 Confederate deaths. In 1868, General John A. Logan proclaimed an annual "Decoration Day" to be held on May 30th. The intent of Decoration Day was for families to visit the graves of their loved ones and decorate them with flowers. After WWI, Memorial Day was expanded to honor all fallen soldiers and sailors who have served in the U.S. Military. On that day, a wreath is placed on the grave of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery by the President or Vice President. Even today it is not considered appropriate to wish a Veteran a "Happy Memorial Day."

Why did the mood of Memorial Day change? Matt Dennis, emeritus professor of history at the University of Oregon, says the holiday lost its original meaning because of the efforts of the North and South to reconcile in the decades following the war.

Memorial Day is one of three annual military holidays. Armed Forces Day occurs on the third Saturday of May, at the end of Armed Forces Week. Its purpose is to honor active-duty members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard

and National Guard and Reserve forces. It is not an official holiday.

Veteran's Day, originally called Armistice Day, was created to celebrate the end of the Great War, WWI, ambitiously called "The war to end all wars." Treaties were signed and went into effect at 11:00 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th

month of 1918. However, two decades later WWII started in 1939. Thereafter, Armistice Day has been called Veteran's Day, a day we honor all veterans, alive or dead.

*Catherine Kordesch  
EMCA Secretary*

Sources: [www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com); [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org);  
[www.npr.org/2005/05/30](http://www.npr.org/2005/05/30)

## Memorial Day Weekend

*Sunday, May 26, and Monday, May 27.  
(No events on Saturday, May 25)*

Hope Abbey will be open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday and Monday. Please come in and enjoy some refreshments while looking at displays in the mausoleum. Consider a donation to help us maintain the beauty and serenity of this historic cemetery.

"History Hunts" is a fun activity for children and families on both days. Start your search in Hope Abbey where you will get a map and clipboard. Everyone who participates gets a prize.

Take a walk through the ten acres. You will see graves of Veterans of the US military that are marked with flags. Pay your respects to the soldiers and sailors buried here.

Taps will be played by trumpeter Barry Barreau at 12:15 p.m. both days. Take a moment of silence afterwards to reflect on the sacrifices of the veterans buried here.

Two scheduled tours will start at Hope Abbey at 12:30 p.m.

Diego Llewellyn-Jones' tour on

Sunday, May 26th will focus on "The Landscape" and our arboretum.

Caroline Forell will lead a "Cemetery Highlights" tour on Monday, May 27th.

On Sunday, May 26th there will be a free concert at 6 p.m. at the Public Square. The Riverside Chamber Orchestra will play Haydn and Brahms. Bring blankets or low seats to be comfortable on the grass.



# Coins on a Headstone

Memorial Day is a time to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. During this time, ceremonies honoring those brave men and women who gave their lives for our freedoms are conducted at cemeteries across the country. Often veteran gravestones are marked with flags or other tributes.

While flowers are the most common grave decoration, they aren't the only way to pay tribute to those who have passed. Cultures and religious faiths worldwide each have their own traditions that harken back for hundreds and even thousands of years. In the Jewish faith, for instance, people leave stones. In Latin America, it's common to leave candles. A tradition that developed from U.S. military culture is the leaving of coins on a headstone.

In ancient times, coins signified the preparation of departed loved ones for the afterlife. They were a bribe to ensure safe passage to the world of the dead. Over the years, the meaning behind this practice shifted. More recently, coins are left on military graves as a sign that living soldiers have visited the burial site to pay their respects.

The custom gained popularity in the U.S. during the Vietnam War as a way to honor the fallen during a time of upheaval and political divide over a controversial war. The coins were a way to quietly honor service members and communicate a message of respect for family members.

The practice has expanded and is considered a way for the general public to honor those who died in service to America.

According to tradition, there is a

specific meaning behind each type of coin.

**Penny:** This symbolizes visitation. It is for those who have no formal relationship with the deceased, but wish to honor their service and their family.

**Nickel:** A nickel is left by those who trained at boot camp with the departed.

**Dime:** A dime indicates service alongside the departed in some capacity.

**Quarter:** A quarter is a special symbol reserved for those who were with the departed when they passed.

This language of coins allows active servicemen and women to communicate with the families of those who served. It's essentially a way to pay respects without overstepping boundaries.

The cemeteries, typically military cemeteries, collect the coins to use for cemetery upkeep and to help pay for the burial costs of other veterans. The service people who leave these coins understand they are contributing to these efforts, and it's one of the reasons the tradition continues.

*Source: batchelorbrothers.com/blog*



**Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association (541) 684-0949 [www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org](http://www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org)**

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*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.**

## More of the EMCA's Early Days

In the Fall 2023 issue of Monumental News, Kay Holbo, the first president of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association (EMCA), wrote about all the requests she said “yes” to in the early days of the restoration of the cemetery. There were also many times she had to say “no.” Here are a few of the more interesting ones.

Many kinds of parties had occurred in the cemetery or on top of the mausoleum during the time the cemetery was in disrepair. It was predictable, then, that some of the first requests were for parties of many kinds. Halloween parties, pony rides and Easter egg hunts were some of the suggestions, and of course parties on top of Hope Abbey. All of these were an automatic “no.” Requests for weddings, or rock concerts in the Public Square were also turned down.

A young couple drove from Alaska with a hope of somehow

gaining access to the casket of a long dead relative reputed to have been buried with a fabulous jewel. They begged Kay to open the casket. She could not imagine the process nor outcome of such a venture, or even what legal issues might have been involved. She said “no.”

The scoutmaster of a Boy Scout troop considered the cemetery a pocket of “near wilderness” in the city. He had planned a lesson in fire building for his scouts in an obscure portion of the cemetery. When Kay discovered this plan, her reaction was an incredulous “What were you thinking?” Obviously, she said “no!”

And finally, a most astonishing idea. Because the cemetery in 1995 was blanketed by a dense layer of blackberries, grasses and other vegetation, families of those buried in the cemetery could not locate family gravestones. A former Oregon

Fourth District congressman suggested removing all the tombstones and placing them in alphabetical order on the grassy slope in front of Hope Abbey. He said at least then the families could find them. He further suggested that the woody hillside be terraced and planted with grass. He didn't offer a plan for what to do with the almost 1000 tombstones that would be in front of Hope Abbey or the buried caskets left behind. This suggestion elicited an emphatic “no” from Kay.

Today there are several sanctioned events in the cemetery, including the Music to Die For and Music on the Square concerts, Memorial Day events, tours of the cemetery, and Hope Abbey open houses. These events are all sponsored and hosted by EMCA board members.

*Based on notes from Kay Holbo, former Board President*



*Mausoleum roof top where parties were held*

## About Those Who Served

Each Memorial Day the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association (EMCA) places flags by graves to honor the service of more than 130 veterans who are buried in the cemetery. Not all of our records contain precise military service information, but according to the records we do have, the largest number of veterans served in the Civil War (36), followed by World War II (24), World War I (14), Indian Wars (11), Vietnam War (4), and Korean War (1).

Most of the Civil War veterans buried in the cemetery were north-

erners from other states who fought for the Union and came to Eugene after the war. This was partly due to state politics; although Oregon was counted among the northern states, Governor John Whiteaker was pro-slavery and sympathized with the Confederacy. Oregon men who were mustered during the Civil War era were engaged in battling Native Americans in the region.

The cemetery's Civil War veterans were from Iowa, Maine, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, among other states, and had served in their state

militias. Many veterans had immigrated to the U.S. as children or young adults, and at least two Civil War veterans buried at the Masonic Cemetery served in the Confederate Army.

Information about other veterans in the cemetery is limited or non-existent. Family members with information about relatives buried in the Masonic Cemetery who served in the 20th century U.S. military are kindly requested to send information to EMCA for our records.

*Beatrice McKenzie, Board Member*

## Alan Wolfe (1944–1998) *Brave, Knowledgeable, and Authentic*

The bereaved hope that the stone they choose represents the essence of their deceased loved one. An unusual stone in the Masonic Cemetery seems to satisfy this hope.

A recent visitor to the cemetery noticed and asked about Japanese characters on a tombstone that had no name. A translation of the characters is “brave, knowledgeable, energetic, honest, and true.”

Cemetery records indicate the stone commemorates Alan Wolfe, Professor of Japanese Literature and Chair of the Department of East Asian Studies. Wolfe died of cancer in 1998 at the age of 53, leaving his wife, Marie-Pierre, and two young children, Mikael and Marika. Wolfe grew up in Boston where the linguistics skills he gained in Hebrew school were later applied to the study of Japanese and French.

As a participant in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) civil rights action in the South, he expressed an early commitment to racial justice. In 1969, Wolfe declined a Defense Department Foreign Language Fellowship on moral and political grounds, preferring to fund his undergraduate studies at Columbia by driving a taxicab.

He taught, researched and lived with his family in Japan and France in the 1970s, and earned his Ph.D. from Cornell University. In 1990, Princeton University Press published his book, *Suicidal Narrative in Modern Japan: the Case of Dazai Osamu*, a deconstruction of the use of biography by Japanese intellectuals to combat aspects of Western Orientalism.

Wolfe exhibited characteristics of deep political commitment and high moral integrity throughout his eighteen-year career at the University of Oregon. At a posthumous award ceremony honoring Wolfe in 1999, University President David Frohnmayer credited his “authenticity,” and said his work and life “exemplified respect for freedom of speech, the ability to change while nurturing the learning process, a belief in the free examination of all ideas, and a fearless willingness to follow the truth wherever it may lead.” Wolfe was, indeed, brave, knowledgeable, energetic, honest, and true.

*Beatrice McKenzie, Board Member*

Sources: 1999 *Journal of Asian Studies* article, 1998 *Register Guard* obituary.



# Congressional Cemetery: A Washington, D.C. Gem

The thirty-acre Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C. is less well-known than its famous kin, Arlington National Cemetery, but is just as special. Established in 1807, it has a section for members of Congress, but like our cemetery it is an operating cemetery and has no limit on who can be interred there.

In 2021, I read a book about NPR's political commentator Cokie Roberts. Cokie was an inspiring, trail-blazing woman who died in 2019 and is buried in Congressional Cemetery.

I visit Washington quite often, because my daughter lives there. During a visit in November, 2021, I mentioned that I wanted to see Cokie's grave. On a gloriously sunny fall day, I walked to the cemetery, since it is quite close to my daughter's home.

When I arrived, I wondered how I would find Cokie's gravesite. Another visitor pointed to an elderly Black man on a tractor heading my way. "Ask Randolph. He'll know." And so I did.

Randolph King (then 86 years old) was the cemetery's long-time landscape manager. He gave me excellent directions to Cokie's marker. However, I was side-

tracked en route by something even more fascinating: The Public Vault. This structure was built in 1835 to store bodies that were to be interred later. Over time more than 1000 bodies were stored there including John Quincy Adams and Dolly Madison. Poor Dolly remained in storage for nine years! It's now a popular event space and tour stop.

After paying my respects to Cokie, I visited John Phillip Sousa, J. Edgar Hoover and former Washington, D.C. mayor Marion Barry, along with other fascinating folks. I had the best time! At the end of my visit, I stopped to chat more with Randolph King. We both happily talked about "our" cemeteries. He also told me that he was going to be laid to rest next to Marion Barry.

A few months ago, I paid my second visit to Congressional Cemetery. There was a tribute to Mr. King at the cemetery's entrance. It said he died in October, 2023, and was buried in the cemetery soon after. I feel fortunate to have met Randolph King, and decided to see whether he was interred next to Marion Barry. Indeed, he was.

*Caroline Forell, EMCA Vice President*



## Let Us Tell Your Story

Consider a purchase of burial space in the historic Eugene Masonic Cemetery. Our native and heritage landscape is environmentally welcoming for urn and ash burial. Your purchase will provide a beautiful and meaningful place for your family and friends to visit, and it will support the cemetery into the future.

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



# NEWS UPDATES

More complete articles on these items can be found on the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association (EMCA) website. To access them, click on About Us, EMCA Publications, and then either EMCA eNewsletter or Monumental News in the Newsletter paragraph.

## Staff Changes

Shannon Blas-Blair is the new Managing Director of the cemetery. Sally Dietrich, the former Cemetery Administrator, spent two months with Shannon helping her learn the ropes and orient her to her new job. Shannon has quickly taken a lead in several new projects, including a new gate by Hope Abbey.

Site Manager Diego Llewellyn-Jones has been promoted to full time status. His position now includes additional responsibilities, such as manager of the cemetery as an arboretum.

See the November 10, 2023 eNewsletter.

## Storm Damage

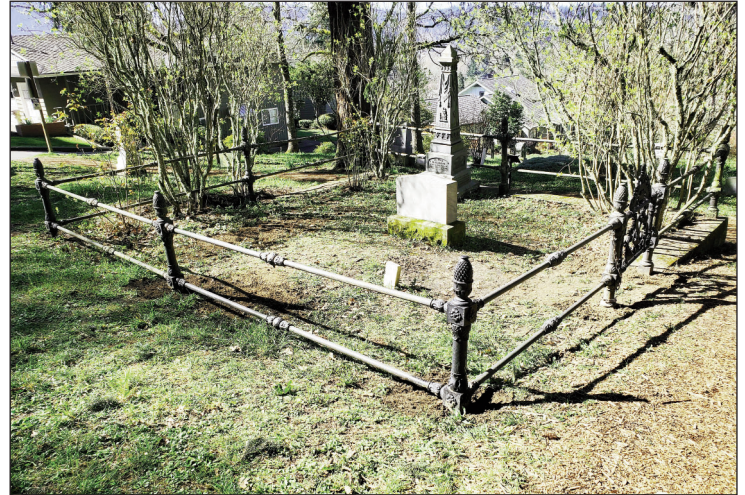
Damage to the cemetery from the January ice storm was fortunately not as severe as at other locations in the area. Two large oaks and a cherry tree were lost, but in each case they did not damage any of the markers as they fell.

Diego and Jackson, our hard working and efficient landscape crew, quickly cleared up the debris and had the cemetery looking as if very little had happened.

See the January 2024 eNewsletter for Diego's excellent article and pictures.



Storm damage



Completed fence around the McClanahan-Hudson burial site.

## McClanahan-Hudson Fence Repair

This project has been in progress for a long time, but is essentially completed, with just final cleaning and painting left to be done. Stumbling blocks along the way included finding a company to cast a new post and designing a latch for the gate.

Check out the complete story and pictures in the Fall 2022 Monumental News and the February 2024 eNewsletter. Many thanks to the Eugene Masonic Lodge for their generous donation which funded this project.

## Music at the Cemetery

2024 brings a new season of free concerts sponsored by the Masonic Cemetery. We offer two series: "Music To Die For" inside the beautiful Hope Abbey mausoleum and "Music on the Square" at the Public Square atop the hill. Hope Abbey provides a smaller, more intimate setting with all music "unplugged," while the Public Square allows space for larger ensembles.

"Music To Die For" programs are monthly, beginning in June, while "Music on the Square" kicks off with a concert on Memorial Day weekend.

Details and listing of these programs can be found on the Cemetery's Facebook page and in the monthly eNewsletters.

A note to John at jarthurbredesen@gmail.com will get you on the subscriber list of the eNewsletter. (We share this list with no one.)

**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.

## Recent Contributions

The following individuals and organizations contributed gifts between October 1, 2023 through April 1, 2024. We thank you all.

### Monumental Giver (\$2,500+)

William and Christina Bradshaw  
Betsy Halpern and John Bredesen  
Ruth Nill

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

Bob and Alex Brokaw  
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Caroline Forell  
Diana Gardner  
Heritage Research Associates  
David and Lauren Hulse  
The Hundredth Monkey Foundation  
Gregory Brokaw and Elaine Lawson  
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### Preserver (\$250-\$499)

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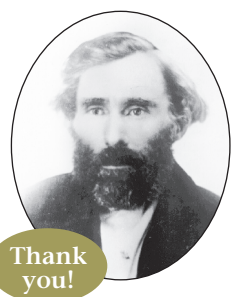
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Thank you!

Eugene Skinner

## Dedicated Gifts

Between October 1, 2023 and April 1, 2024, 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+)

Richard Larson and Barbara Cowan for the Landscape Endowment  
A-J Roslyn Gaines Foundation in memory of Carolyn Spector for the Endowment  
David Fryefield and Catherine Kordesch for the Endowment

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

Kenneth Currens in memory of Gerald Currens and Beth Currens Westcott  
Brigid Flannery in memory of Roz Slovic, for the landscape  
Hallis for the Endowment  
Linda Lewis in memory of Martin Kaufman

Barbara Truax in memory of Donald Truax, Connor Truax and Mary Truax Johnson  
Jim Weston in memory of Sally Weston and in honor of Sally Dietrich  
Carol and Samuel Williams in memory of the Luckeys and the Leasures  
Warren Wong in memory of Karen Seidel

### Preserver (\$250-\$499)

Friedl Bell in memory of Robert S. Bell  
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Edward Rusty Novotny and Fuki Hisama in honor of Toshiaki Hisama  
Patrick Jones in memory of Charles A. Reinhardt  
Lawrence Lawson in memory of Myra Lawson  
Tamara Lutz in memory of Mike Lutz, Carl and Dolly Plant

### Sponsor (\$100-\$249)

Judith Lein Brower in memory of Toivo and Marion Lein  
John Delay in memory of Dr. Brigitte Delay  
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Judy Wood Lyons in memory of John L. Wood and William and Sallie Wood  
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Elizabeth Potter for the Endowment  
Sharon Schuman in memory of David Schuman  
Rene Speer in memory of Noel Wicks

Cornelia Taggart in memory of Bob Dritz  
Jacqueline Manley and Dale Taylor in memory of John and Lorraine Taylor  
John VanLandingham in honor of Karen Seidel

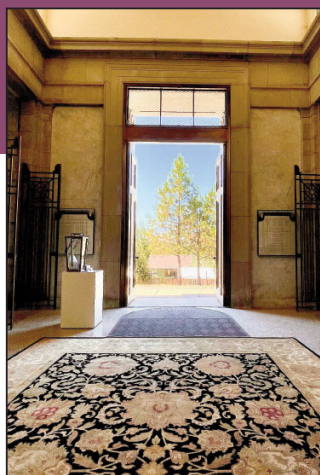
### Supporter (up to \$99)

Larry and Paula Bangs in memory of and in honor of the Bangs family  
Shirley Bolles in memory of the Addisons  
Teri and Robert Jones in honor of Mike Heil  
Christopher and Laura Ramey in honor of Calvin, the dog  
Eric and Kelli Rosen in memory of Eileen Binenkorb  
Lyndal Stella in honor of Thomas B Anderson  
John and Kim Toner in memory of Peggy and Peter Farmer  
Marilyn Walker in memory of Heather and Bill Walker

## 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 Shannon at 541-684-0949 or [emca1859@gmail.com](mailto:emca1859@gmail.com)



If you wish to donate, please use the enclosed remittance envelope or PayPal.



## Recent In-kind Contributions

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

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## Lord Nelson Roney – (1853-1944)

Lord Nelson “Nels” Roney, buried in our cemetery, signed his works like any artist, except his works were covered bridges. Named after the British naval hero, Roney came to Eugene from Ohio in 1876.

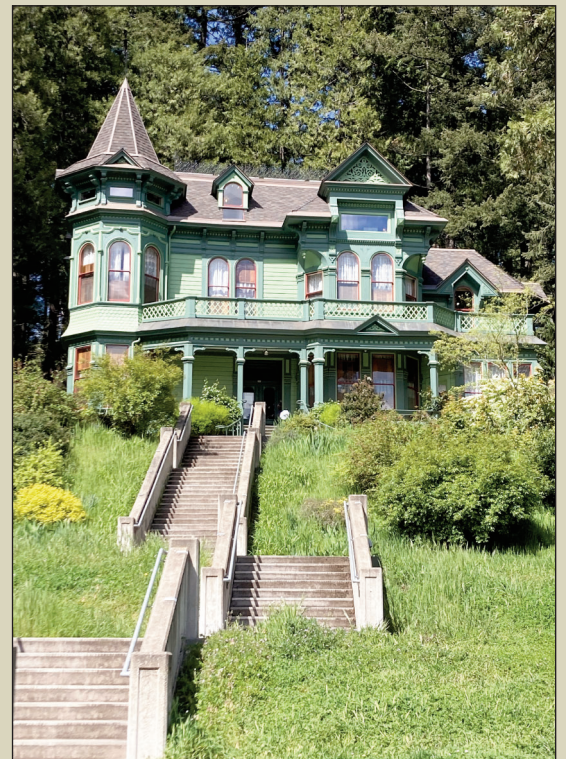
When the great flood of 1881 took out many bridges, he started his own bridge building business.

In a career which spanned forty years, he built over 100 bridges, including many for the Oregon and California Railroad.

In 1889, he married Orilla Humphrey. Their children died in infancy.

Bridges were not the only structures built by Roney. From 1886 until 1905, he supervised the construction of nearly every important building in Eugene, including the no longer existing Lane County Courthouse. Two landmarks built by Roney can still be seen: Villard Hall at the University of Oregon (in partnership with W.H. Abrams) and, at the foot of Skinner’s Butte, the Shelton-McMurphey-Johnson House, originally built for Dr. Thomas Shelton.

Roney enjoyed the outdoors. After completing a bridge in some remote area, he might hunt and fish his way back to Eugene. Orilla would sometimes come out to camp with him, visit a nearby hot spring, then return by stage to meet her husband back home.



The digital version of this newsletter is at [www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org](http://www.eugenemasoniccemetery.org)

