



November, 2020

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



Last Sunday Open House **CANCELLED**

The normal Last Sunday open house is cancelled for November because of the COVID-19 restrictions currently imposed by the Governor's office.

We normally have a Last Sunday open house January through November, so there will not be an open house next month, December. We hope things improve enough that we can invite you to visit Hope Abbey in January.

Women Who Made a Difference

The EMCA is Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment which gave women the right to vote. This is the eighth in a series about some of the women "who made a difference in our community" and who are interred in the historic Masonic cemetery. These entries are compiled by EMCA board member Alex Brokaw.



Ruth Bascom

To conclude our series of Women Who Made a Difference for 2020, we're honoring former Mayor of Eugene, Ruth Bascom, known by many as our "Bicycling Mayor."

Ruth Ellen Fenton (1926-2010) was born in Ames, Iowa, but grew up in Kansas, the daughter of two university professors. She met her husband, John Bascom, in the sixth grade, and both graduated from Manhattan (Kansas) High School in 1943.

She attended Kansas State University and later earned a master's degree in social psychology from Cornell University. She and her husband married in June 1950, living in Chicago and Minneapolis, before moving to Eugene in the spring of 1960. Ruth and John had four daughters and two sons, all of whom went to South Eugene High and all went into medicine (four became doctors, one a nurse and one a pharmacist), following in the footsteps of their father, who was a physician/ surgeon/researcher.

In 1984, Ruth was elected to the Eugene City Council, where she served eight years before being elected the city's first female mayor, serving from 1993-1997. As mayor, she worked to revitalize downtown Eugene by getting rid of a large fountain that blocked traffic on Broadway and Willamette streets. Mayor Bascom was proud to have ceremoniously taken a bulldozer to the concrete fountain! This act ultimately led to the removal of the downtown mall and the reopening of both streets.

Biking was Ruth's passion. She was appointed to the new Eugene Bicycle Committee in 1971 and served as chairwoman of that committee and the Oregon Bicycle Advisory Committee during the 1970's, during which she helped to develop the Eugene Bikeway Master Plan. After that she continued to push for completion of the path system, and was honored by the city in 2003 when the final leg of the east bank path, north of Valley River Center, was opened. The [Ruth Bascom Riverbank Path System](#) extends for twelve miles through the city along the Willamette River.

Ruth was also a lifelong piano player and loved to sing. She is remembered as a long-time supporter of local arts and the library. She made one of the largest donations ever to the city in 1997 in honor of her mother, Doris Hays Fenton. Her \$100,000 donation created the Hays Memorial Tree Garden in Alton Baker Park.

Some of the tributes paid to Ruth include this from Charles Henry, former City Manager of Eugene, "I never heard her say a bad thing about anybody; she was a wonderful person and a great supporter of Eugene." Local bicycle shop owner and former city council member Paul Nicholson, referring to all the bicycle paths, said, "Ruth had a big influence on Eugene and the way it is now". This is only a sampling of the tributes paid to the former First Lady of Eugene.

BALLET FANTASTIQUE

You may recall the last issue of this eNewsletter had an article about a movie being produced by the local dance company Ballet Fantastique, with some scenes shot in the Masonic Cemetery. It's their interpretation of the classic tale, *A Christmas Carol*. It's set to an original score by Halie Loren, with narration by Adam Goldthwaite.

American Christmas Carol: A Ballet Movie will be available to the public at 5 PM on November 28th. In the meantime, you can watch a trailer of the film [here](#). The trailer contains information about access for watching the movie on its release date and through the holiday season.

REMEMBER THAT THE MASONIC CEMETERY

- Grounds are open to the public, subject to COVID-19 safeguards.
- Has a website, eugenemasoniccemetery.org, that contains lots of information about the cemetery.
- Has free informational brochures available at the Garden Cottage, including a walking tour brochure.
- Uses PayPal for on-line donations; see our website.
- Is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is not subsidized by the city of Eugene.
- Is eligible for the Oregon Cultural Trust match.
- Has burial and cremains space for sale. Contact Sally Dietrich at (541) 684-0949, or by email by [clicking here](#).

John Bredesen, eNewsletter Editor
Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association

Please Donate

Mission Statement

To restore, rehabilitate, maintain, interpret and operate the historic Eugene Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey Mausoleum as a cultural and natural resource for the community.

The cemetery is operated for the public benefit,
but it is private property.
(A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization)



Eugene Masonic Cemetery
ASSOCIATION

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