

# Commemorating 90 Years of Service HMG Newsletter



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Presented by Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, a Perpetual Care Cemetery  
Owned and Operated by Highland Perpetual Maintenance Society, Inc.

## 90 Years of Service!



Just three months after the 1929 stock market crash, a non-profit organization was formed to establish a private cemetery north of Des Moines. On December 26, 1929, 40-acres of farmland was purchased by the organization from Edward & Abbie Evans. The farmland was located at Hobson Drive (now NE 60th Ave.) and Second Avenue, one of the highest tracts of land in Polk County. Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery was one of the first “Memorial Park”-style cemeteries in the United States, having only flat bronze memorials and no upright monuments to interfere with the expansive grounds of green grass, flower gardens, hedges and ornamental trees. This park-like setting served as a model for cemeteries across the country for decades to follow. The new cemetery was originally named “Magnolia Memorial Park”.

The first burial took place on April 14, 1930, in what was then the only garden

in the cemetery, the Prayer Garden. Other gardens were added later, with the names indicative of scenes or events in the life of Jesus.

The cemetery has operated under the business name of Highland Perpetual Maintenance Society, Inc. from 1933 to the present. In 1935 the cemetery was renamed Highland Memory Garden. As more gardens were developed within the cemetery, the name was changed to Highland Memory Gardens.

In 1935, Des Moines philanthropist F.W. Fitch, was credited with the survival of the cemetery through its difficult early days. Mr. Fitch envisioned a beautiful tower which would play chimes and

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## Annual Proxy Meeting Set for Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Highland Perpetual Maintenance Society, Inc., (“Society”), owner and operator of Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery (“HMG”), announces the annual meeting of the Society to occur on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. in the cemetery office at 1 NE 60th Avenue.

The Society is a lot-owner-owned business governed by a nine-member volunteer board of directors who are lot owners and who serve for three-year terms. As a lot owner and member of the Society, your vote by

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## Memorial Day Celebration

Our annual Memorial Day Celebration honoring our veterans will be held on Monday, May 25, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.



in front of the Tower of Memories at Highland Memory Gardens. Bring your lawn chairs if you desire.

This short service is jointly sponsored by the Highland Park American Legion Post 374 and Highland Memory Gardens. The ceremony includes the reading of the names of veterans buried in Highland Memory Gardens since Memorial Day, 2019. Refreshments follow the service.

In case of inclement weather, we will notify WHO Radio, KCCI TV and WHO TV regarding an alternate location.

## Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery

# Greetings from the General Manager

As we enter the 90th year of service to our community, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery is very mindful of the long years of confidence that our lot owners have placed in us to care for the graves and memorials of their loved ones as well as the quality care and beautification of our cemetery grounds. We are very serious about the ongoing obligations to our lot owners and work each day to earn your trust.

As a lot owner of this lot-owner-owned cemetery, I ask that you would please **help us by taking a few moments to sign and return the enclosed postage-paid proxy card. It is important we have your consent to cast a vote on your behalf in the election of officers at our Annual Meeting, as well as care for other cemetery business as it arises.**

Founded in 1929, the year that "Memorial Park" cemeteries first came into existence, Highland Memory Gardens is considered to be one of the very first memorial park cemeteries in the nation. This cemetery style is designed in many ways to look like a city park that is both beautiful to the eye and very welcoming and approachable to all who visit. Ground level memorials permit a safe and unobstructed panoramic view of the entire cemetery.

During 2019, our office building was renovated with an attractive up-to-date exterior surface that includes a stone wall below the windows designed to closely match the size and colors of the existing stone on our southern entry. The office building was last remodeled in 1983 adding much needed office space while maintaining an English Tudor theme that had been here since our beginning. The deteriorating heavy cedar planking was nearly impossible to replicate and convinced us to have the exterior redesigned using modern materials that are more energy efficient and lower maintenance. We think the results are handsome and we hope you will think so as well.

As General Manager, I welcome you to contact us at any time should you have concerns or if a family grave should need attention. Our dedicated staff stands ready to help you.

Robert Canady

## Annual Proxy Meeting cont. from page 1

proxy is important to the operation of the cemetery. The proxy card included with this official notification is sent to all lot owners with a current address on file. The purpose of the enclosed proxy card is to assign your voting authority (1/4 of one vote per space owned) to the board officers to vote on your behalf in the election of directors and other business that may come before the annual meeting.

**The proxy postcard is postage-paid and requires one signature of each person named on the card. Please mail or return the card promptly to the cemetery. We will accept proxy cards with a postmark**

**no later than April 18, 2020, so be sure to sign and mail as soon as possible.**

With this notice all lot owners are invited to attend. If you plan to attend, please call or note it on your card so we may have adequate seating.

Directors currently serving, with their beginning year of service:

- Ivan Wikner, President (1994)
- Kim Dreher, Vice-President (2000)
- Mark Adams, Secretary (1986)
- Kirk Hartung (2013)
- Nancy Lundstrom (1990)
- Ann Thye (2007)
- Lavona Webb (1998)
- Roger Hill (1993-1998; 2018)

## 90 Years of Service! cont. from page 1

serve as a landmark for the community. Plans were drawn by Ralph E. Sawyer and construction began utilizing colorfully cut limestone from Rowat Cut Stone of Des Moines. Thus, the Tower of Memories became the central feature of our gardens. Funds for the construction were loaned by Mr. Fitch, who was given large plats of land in exchange for the money. Over time, Mr. Fitch deeded all the land back to the cemetery.

In the early 1960's our cemetery leadership took prudent public steps to safeguard the future and worked diligently during those years to firmly establish and preserve the financial stability of this cemetery while advancing cemetery law in general. Accordingly, trust fund accounts required by law ensure that the monies collected for spaces and merchandise both then and now would be secure and available for delivery at any time.

In 1999 the board of directors developed a restoration plan to restore the Tower of Memories, which had been showing signs of deterioration. A plan was launched to restore mortar joints, the stone facing, roof and more. The Fitch Foundation provided a \$25,000 matching grant to complete the 5-year project which included new electrical service, night-time floodlighting, installation of two stained-glass windows and restoration of the room on the first floor. The Tower of Memories was rededicated on Memorial Day 2005.

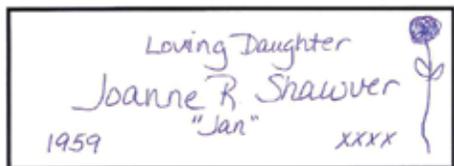
In 2011, we launched a new website ([www.highlandmemorygarden.com](http://www.highlandmemorygarden.com)) which includes burial planning information, a Garden Tour, history of HMG, and a feature which allows families and friends to share pictures, memories, stories, etc., of each individual buried in our Gardens.

In the summer of 2014, we integrated GPS navigation to our cemetery. By downloading our free mobile app, you are able to type in the name of an individual buried here and you will be directed to within 10-feet of their grave. Go to our website to download the app.

# Designing Your Permanent Memorial: 1929-2020

How are we better equipped to serve you today than in the early days of HMG? Let's take a look at how we design memorials today as opposed to just 20 years ago...

Up until around 2000, when you came to design a bronze-on-granite memorial, your Family Services



Representative would hand-write the wording and design on a

small square, which represented the bronze memorial. If you wanted an emblem on the memorial, it was "drawn" on. (Do you like the rose on the side of the memorial?)

In the early 2000's we began using a computer program which allowed us to type the information on the square

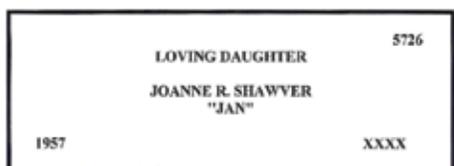


diagram. This was a major improvement in that we were less likely to make

errors in spelling, dates, etc., but it still didn't give you a clear picture of the finished product.

Fast forward to around 2015. Our major bronze company, ColdspringUSA, installed their Personal Reflections® program here at Highland Memory Gardens. With this program, we are immediately able to show our families an exact color image of the finished product and they have the opportunity to help in the design placement, bronze and granite colors, choice of emblems and endearments.

Among the choices of memorials are 1) grave marker – which shows the person's name, date of birth and death.

This is a very basic memorial which simply shows the location of a grave.

2) personalized memorial – which, through the use of color, emblems and endearments tell of the deceased's interests, hobbies, beliefs, etc. or, 3) Personal Expressions – where actual photos of the individual and/or family are cast into the memorial.

Whichever memorial style you choose, we offer a great variety of colors, designs, emblems and endearments to help you create a lasting tribute for you and/or your loved ones.

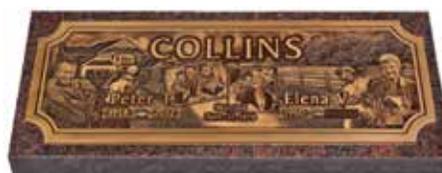
As always, it is our pleasure to serve you.



Grave Marker\*



Personalized Memorial\*



Personal Expressions\*

\*Photos Courtesy of Coldspring. ©2020 Coldspring

## Garden Improvements

For the first time in several years, the spring of 2019 started out with just the right amount of moisture in the ground so that each of our 21 Flower Gardens here at Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery took off and were in full bloom in no time.

In 2019 we replaced a few lilac bushes along the north border of the cemetery and hope to see them bloom this year and join the existing wall of Lilacs.

It was a sad day in 2019 when we had to take down one of the two

Lollipop crabapple trees in front of the tower, which has since been replaced (possibly just temporarily) with a perennial Blue Salvia, and some pink Mums that were transplanted from the Reverence garden. By the fall, these replacements grew to be some of the tallest and largest Mums and tallest Salvia that we have had in the cemetery. They had even surpassed the size of the bushes to the north of them.

In spring 2019, every Garden in the cemetery received a new layer of mulch

that was spread throughout the flower gardens giving them a fresh, clean look. This year we hope to see even greater growth as the mulch makes its way into the soil to give each of the flowers in the cemetery the nutrients they need.

In the fall we ended our planting season by planting an additional one hundred Tulips and one hundred Daffodils. We are very excited to see what the spring, summer, and fall of 2020 will bring forth.

## *Reminders –*

### **Check our website for events & reminders**

#### **Yearly Cleanup Schedule**

##### **SPRING CLEANUP**

1st Monday in March, weather permitting – or 1st day when ground is thawed so wreath stands can be removed. (signs will be posted and notice sent via email)

##### **MEMORIAL DAY CLEANUP**

One week following Memorial Day – Monday June 1, 2020. All items not in permanent vases will be removed and discarded

##### **FALL CLEANUP**

1st Monday in October – Monday, October 5, 2020. All permanent vases will be inverted into the ground for winter. All decorations removed and discarded. Remember, vase use is prohibited during the winter months to prevent damage.

#### **HMG has GPS**

HMG has GPS navigation directly linked to every grave in the cemetery. Visit our website ([www.highlandmemorygardens.com](http://www.highlandmemorygardens.com)) to download our app. This tool will navigate you to within 10-feet of a grave.

#### **Remember Your Loved One**

Every life should be remembered. Everyone buried at HMG has their own page on our website, where you may share memories, events, pictures, etc. Go to [www.highlandmemorygardens.com](http://www.highlandmemorygardens.com), and follow these steps to share a permanent tribute to your loved one: 1. “Locate a Loved One”; 2. Insert loved one’s name; 3. Search; 4. Scroll to bottom of page to “Share Your Memories”.

#### **Flowers**

A variety of silk floral bouquets for grave placement during the late spring and summer decorating season are now available. A color flyer of our selections and prices is available by mail, email or on the events page of our website. Flowers ordered by April 11, 2020 will be placed before Mother’s Day, May 10, 2020. Flowers will be available in the cemetery office on a cash-and-carry basis beginning May 1st.

#### **Contact information**

Have you moved? Phone number and/or email address changed? Please remember to contact HMG with any changes to your contact information. Thank you!

## *Pre-Need Seminars*

**P**re-planning your future burial needs can be a fearful step into unknown territory. Many questions come to mind, such as, Where do I begin? Should I call a funeral home or a cemetery? Do I want to be buried in a casket? Do I want to be cremated? If I am cremated, can I be buried? Do I have to be buried in the ground? Is a funeral home and/or cemetery really necessary?

We have developed a pre-need presentation entitled, **“Pre-planning: Where Do I Begin?”** This is a general presentation giving guidelines for beginning the pre-plan process. This program is applicable to all funeral homes and cemeteries; however, of course, we will use HMG as a reference when speaking of private cemetery needs. While we would hope everyone would choose Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, this presentation is for general information, not solicitation. Our purpose is to encourage people to pre-plan for their future needs – no matter which funeral home or cemetery they choose.

If this information would benefit your church group, club, senior group, etc., please contact Jan Shawver, Family Services Representative for more details and to schedule a time for us to meet with your group.

## *Concrete vs. Granite Foundations*

**F**or many years our lot owners had a choice when it came to the foundation under their bronze memorials: concrete or granite.

In 2000, the Board of Directors determined that concrete foundations would no longer be offered due to the fact that concrete tends to crack and break – especially when there is a “weak spot” caused by the hole allotted for the permanent bronze vase. Broken concrete occasionally results in damage to the bronze memorial.

While we no longer sell the concrete foundations, some remain in our gardens that are cracked or in disrepair. Unfortunately, concrete is not covered under our perpetual care policy; therefore the replacement of the broken foundation ultimately falls to the family of the deceased.

If you have a family member buried at HMG whose memorial is on a concrete foundation, you may wish to consider a “Granite Reload” through a special program for those with concrete foundations. We offer multiple colors of granite at a reduced price.

The greatest advantage to having a granite foundation is that the granite as well as the bronze will be covered under perpetual care.

If you are interested in our granite reload program, please contact Jan Shawver, Family Services Representative.