



JAN. – FEB. 2021

Orange County Cemetery District

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William E. Nelson, Vice Chair
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Tim Deutsch, General Manager

Wreaths Across America Honors Veterans for the Holidays

On Saturday, December 19th all across the nation beautiful fresh wreaths adorned with red ribbons were placed on the gravesites of veterans to remember and honor their service and sacrifice. The events are organized through Wreaths Across America, a non-profit organization whose mission is to **REMEMBER** our fallen U.S. Veterans, **HONOR** those who serve, and **TEACH** our children the value of freedom.” Due to the pandemic, special precautions were in place so that this important tradition could continue.

El Toro Memorial Park

American Heritage Girls Troop 356, who first brought Wreaths Across America to El Toro Memorial Park in 2017, once again conducted a beautiful wreath ceremony. Due to COVID the ceremony was private, but dozens of people scattered across the grounds to lay 585 wreaths. All participants wore masks and plenty of hand sanitizer was available at each wreath station. The guest speaker for the ceremony was U.S. Air Force Veteran, Sara Vuoso (pictured upper right). Sara acknowledged that she is currently fighting stage 4 brain cancer, and stated that each person has their own set of challenges. She encouraged everyone to face each day with both strength and joy.

Santa Ana Cemetery

Thanks to the Orange Coast Elks District and Santa Ana Elks Lodge #794, this was the first year Wreaths Across America participated at Santa Ana Cemetery. The Elks lodge held a
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Top Clockwise: The wreath ceremony at El Toro; Volunteers laying wreaths including Board Chair Maribel Marroquin pictured above at Santa Ana Cemetery.

Wreaths Across America - Continued

private ceremony off site and then volunteers arrived at Santa Ana Cemetery at 10:00 a.m. to distribute approximately 100 wreaths.

Sponsor a Wreath for 2021

With over 1,100 Veterans at El Toro Memorial Park, and over 800 Veterans at Santa Ana Cemetery, our goal for 2021 is to see enough wreaths sponsored so that every veteran's grave can be honored at both cemeteries. You can sponsor wreaths for next year anytime between now and early December 2021. Please visit the Orange County Cemetery District's website at: www.occemeterydistrict.com. On the home page scroll down to Additional Information. There you will find links to Wreaths Across America for both El Toro Memorial Park and Santa Ana Cemetery. Thanks to all our volunteers!!



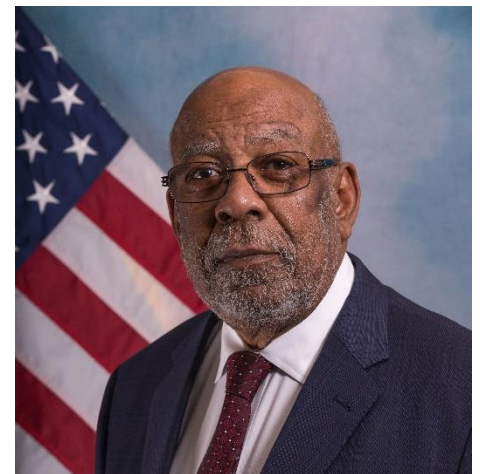
The Board of Trustees Selects 2021 Chair and Vice Chair

Each December the Board of Trustees selects the Chair and Vice Chair who will serve throughout the upcoming year.

In 2021, Trustee Maribel Marroquin will serve as the Board Chair. Chair Marroquin was appointed to the Board on December, 5, 2017. This will be her first term as Board Chair, having just completed her first term as Vice Chair in 2020. Chair Marroquin brings a wealth of experience as a skilled and dedicated public service advocate. She is currently the Senior Strategist and Finance Director for Moorlach for Orange County Supervisor.



Maribel Marroquin
2021 Board Chair



William E. Nelson
2021 Board Vice Chair

Trustee William E. Nelson will serve as the 2021 Board Vice Chair. Vice Chair Nelson has served on the Board since 2003 and has completed four terms as Board Chair. He has served on multiple Boards throughout his career including the

California Association of Public Cemeteries (CAPC) and the California Special District Association. He was honored as Cemeterian of the year by CAPC in 2014. He was also the Mayor

of Villa Park in 2017, and chairs the District's Finance and Investment Committee. The District is fortunate to have such qualified and capable Trustees serving on the Board.

El Toro Memorial Park Welcomes Robert Hernandez as the Cemetery's New Secretary/Receptionist



El Toro Memorial Park is so happy to welcome Robert Hernandez as our new Receptionist/Secretary.

Mr. Hernandez will officially start at the District on January 4th and he brings with him over 20 years of experience in the death care industry. For the last 13 years he has served as a Funeral Service Arranger for several mortuaries including Halverson, Stone & Myers Mortuary in Torrance, Hilgenfeld Mortuary in

Anaheim, Family Mortuary, and Fairhaven Memorial Park & Mortuary both in Santa Ana. Prior to that, he worked at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Cypress for seven years as a Mortuary Representative and in Casket Warehouse Control.

With many families being referred to El Toro from Anaheim and Santa Ana Cemeteries, Mr. Hernandez's knowledge and experience will be a wonderful asset to our office team. Welcome aboard Robert!

Garden of Innocence Remembers Reece, Kaitlyn & Justice

Nestled in the Infant Section of El Toro Memorial Park is the Garden of Innocence, a place dedicated to the respectful interment of abandoned or unidentified remains of children from Orange County.

The Garden was established in January 2016 by the non-profit organization, Garden of Innocence National. Its founder, Elissa Davey, started the non-profit in 1999 in San Diego after reading about a baby found deceased in a trash can. She couldn't bear the thought that this child would be forgotten in an unmarked grave, so she arranged for the infant's respectful interment. Garden of Innocence National now works to help communities establish their own gardens which are managed by local volunteers.

Since 2016, the Garden of Innocence at El Toro Memorial Park has placed the remains of 16 children from Orange County in the Garden. Volunteers hold beautiful memorial services to lovingly say goodbye to these little lives. Most recently, volunteers remembered the lives of Reece, Kaitlyn and Justice, who were all interred on November 14th. Rather than anonymous burials, the Garden of Innocence renames each child and a marker bearing that name is placed on the child's grave. The service included a guest speaker, special music, poetic readings and a white dove release.



Adhering to COVID guidelines, members of the community including the Knights of Columbus pay tribute to infants Reece, Kaitlyn and Justice in the Garden of Innocence on November 14th.

Typically Garden of Innocence services also include a "chain of love" where each urn is passed from person to person giving each attendee a moment to say goodbye. Due to the COVID pandemic this part of the memorial service was not conducted.

The next Garden of Innocence Service is scheduled for January 23rd at 10:00 a.m. We will be honoring Faith, Grace, and Wyatt. If you attend please honor social distancing and wear a protective face covering.

El Toro Slope Beautification and Other Improvements

El Toro Memorial Park's asphalt paving and cement curb project is now complete. Staff is currently working on regrading and backfilling against some of the newly installed cement curbs. Once all the sprinkler heads near the curbs have been readjusted the grass will be reseeded. In addition, small metal lot indicator pins have been installed on the tops of the curbs to help visitors locate gravesites more easily. Now that the final slurry seal is complete, white lot indicators will also be painted on the roads where the metal lot indicators have already been installed.

Staff is also working on backfilling and grading the recent road closure between Old Section and Southeast Section. Our Irrigation Specialist will be rerouting the sprinkler system and then staff will plant a new lawn where the road once stood. This will generate approximately 244 new casket spaces, which we hope will be available for sale in late 2021.

Watch for more information in our next newsletter on landscape improvements to the front slope bordering Trabuco Road which should begin in the spring of 2021.



We hope visitors will enjoy the new redesigned flag display area at the end of the main road. When landscaping is complete, the flags will stand amid a bed of 90 white rose bushes. Families having a military burial may request that the center flag feature the military flag of their loved one.

We appreciate your patience during construction!

ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT

January/February Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees for the Orange County Cemetery District holds regular meetings the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at the District Office located at 25751 Trabuco Road, Lake Forest, CA 92630. **Until further notice these meetings are being video conferenced, but the public may also attend electronically. Please call the District office for the meeting link.**

Agendas are available at least 72 hours prior to each meeting and are also posted on our website at www.occemeterydistrict.com. In January and February, meetings will be held as follows:

- **Tuesday, January 5th at 10:00 a.m.**
- **Tuesday, February 2nd at 10:00 a.m.**

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact the District Secretary, Mary Funk at (949) 951-9102 ext. 110.

Flower Removal and Holiday Schedule

Every Wednesday, groundskeepers remove and discard flowers and decorations throughout all three cemeteries. Families are encouraged to remove their flowers and/or decorations on Tuesday night. You can then place the flowers back on the space on Wednesday afternoon. Please remember that the District policy only allows for two items to be placed on gravesites. This includes the in-ground flower vase and one other item. If gravesites exceed the number of allowed items, staff may remove and discard the excess items. Please do not leave items of great monetary or sentimental value on gravesites as the District cannot prevent theft.

Throughout the year, various holidays are recognized with extended periods between flower clean-ups. During these times, we do ask that you empty the vase and place fresh water in the container every four to five days to eliminate mosquito breeding sources, which can cause serious health issues. Your cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.

In honor of Valentine’s Day and Chinese New Year, flowers may be placed at all District Cemeteries on Thursday, February 4th and must be removed by Tuesday, February 23rd.

A complete listing of the District’s extended holiday flower schedule for 2021 is available on our website at www.occemeterydistrict.com. Click on the tab for Flowers, Markers and Rules for more information.

All Cemetery Offices will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day – Friday, Jan. 1st;**
- Martin Luther King Day – Monday, Jan. 18th**
- Lincoln’s Birthday – Friday, February 12th**
- Presidents’ Day – Monday, February 15th**

CEMETERY VISITATION HOURS

**Anaheim Cemetery,
Santa Ana Cemetery, and
El Toro Memorial Park**

**are open year-round for visitation, seven days
a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Extended hours at El Toro Memorial Park end
on Nov. 1, 2020 when Standard Time begins.
When Daylight Saving Time begins on March
14, 2021 the park will resume Extended Hours.**

Offices are open M-F - 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
All offices are closed on the weekends
and on holidays.

Our Mission Statement & Values

The Orange County Cemetery District manages and maintains Orange County’s public cemeteries in a manner that preserves their beauty, dignity, historical and cultural values, and offers affordable interment service for County residents.

The Trustees and staff of the Orange County Cemetery District are committed to the following values:

- Integrity ■ Respect ■ Accountability
- Responsiveness ■ Empathy ■ Transparency
- Appreciation for Diverse Needs

