



**JAN. – FEB. 2022**

# Orange County Cemetery District

## TRUSTEES

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

## El Toro Memorial Park and Santa Ana Cemetery Honor Veterans with Wreaths Across America

In 1992, Maine based Worcester Wreath Company began donating excess wreaths to an older section of Arlington National Cemetery. This went on quietly for a number of years. Then in 2005, a photo of the Arlington wreaths, bright against the snow-covered gravestones, went viral.



Requests came pouring in from around the nation wanting to emulate what was happening in Arlington and Wreaths Across America was born. Their mission is **“Remember, Honor, Teach”**. Remember all Veterans. Honor their service. Teach upcoming generations to love our great nation, to respect our Veterans, and to recognize the cost these Veterans and their families have paid to protect our liberty. In 2020, Wreaths Across America provided over 1.7 million wreaths to 2,557 locations nationwide.

### El Toro Memorial Park

American Heritage Girls Troop 356 first brought Wreaths Across America to El Toro Memorial Park in 2017. The tradition has gained momentum every year since. On Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. approximately 250 people attended the wreath ceremony. Army Veteran Tenisha Campanile with the Mission Viejo Saddleback Valley Elks Lodge



**(Above) Lake Forest Mayor Scott Voigts with members of American Heritage Troop 356  
(Left) Boy Scouts Post the Colors at Santa Ana Cemetery**

#2444 and Lake Forest Mayor Scott Voigts both gave addresses to honor and thank our Veterans for their service. After the program was over, the Sons of the American Revolution South Coast Chapter Color Guard, who had stood at attention throughout the program, led a procession with the American Heritage Girls, and carried the ceremonial wreaths to the front of the park where the Veterans Monument is located. Volunteers spread out across the park and placed 1,215 wreaths covering every known Veteran’s grave.

### Santa Ana Cemetery

Despite the pandemic, Wreaths Across America, first came to Santa Ana Cemetery in 2020 through the sole efforts of Santa Ana Elks Lodge #794. That first year approximately 100 wreaths were placed at Santa Ana Cemetery and the wreath ceremony was held off-site virtually. This year the first in-person ceremony was held by the Santa Ana Elks Lodge at the Soldier’s Monument and the Lodge was able to secure 352 wreath sponsorships.

Our sincere thanks to all the volunteers who made these wreath ceremonies possible, and our deepest thanks to all the Veterans who have served and preserved the values and freedoms we enjoy today.

## Angel of Hope Remembers Children with Candlelight Service

At 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> approximately 150 people gathered around El Toro Memorial Park's Angel of Hope statue for the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Candlelight Memorial Service. Drawn together in a community of grief, the service is a time for those who have lost a child of any age to remember and honor their loved one and to encourage and support one another in a shared experience of loss.

The program included inspirational readings by Pam Ching and Greg Kontra, special music performed by David and Jenny Lockwood, and

Sande Herron gave the invocation and benediction. Patricia Kolstad (pictured right) delivered a moving and eloquent message about her journey following the death of her adult daughter only 17 months ago. As always, the program concluded with a time for every attendee to come forward, speak their loved one's name, and place a white flower at the Angel of Hope monument – a tangible expression that these precious lives will never be forgotten. For more information on the Angel of Hope please visit: [www.careandkindness.org/angelofhope](http://www.careandkindness.org/angelofhope).



## The Board of Trustees Selects 2022 Chair and Vice Chair

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

In 2022, Trustee William E. Nelson will serve as the Board Chair. Chair Nelson has served on the Board since 2003. This will mark his fifth term 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.

Trustee Kelly Rivers was elected to serve as the Vice Chair for 2022. Trustee Rivers has served on the Board since 2016 and completed her first term as Board Chair in 2018. She also chairs the District's Personnel Committee and serves on the Communications and Public Relations Committee. Vice Chair Rivers is a dedicated community volunteer working with cemeteries, historical sites, and planning and organizing special



**William E. Nelson**  
2022 Board Chair



**Kelly Rivers**  
2022 Board Vice Chair

community events. As the President of the Huntington Beach Historical Society, she manages two of the largest living history events in California, attracting thousands of visitors annually. The District is fortunate to have such qualified and capable Trustees leading and directing the Board.

## A Look Back at our 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Veterans Day Observance

Our many thanks to keynote speaker, Sheriff Don Barnes and all those who helped make our Veterans Day Program possible! We look forward to Memorial Day on May 30, 2022!!



## 2022 Cemetery Flower Clean-Up Calendar Now Available

In an effort to simplify how the schedule for full park clean-ups at the District cemeteries is communicated, we have created a 2022 cemetery clean-up calendar. The calendar lists every Wednesday in 2022.

Full Park Clean-ups are marked in red. During a Full Park Clean-up, everything on the gravesite will be discarded. Light

Clean-ups are marked in green. During a Light Clean-up only obviously wilted items will be removed. This calendar is available at: [www.occemeterydistrict.com](http://www.occemeterydistrict.com).

The District is also placing new red and green signs out on the grounds to help eliminate any confusion. The signs will indicate if the upcoming week is a Full Park Clean-up or a Light Clean-up.



## District Staff Recertified in First Aid, CPR, and AED

On Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> the District provided half-day trainings at Santa Ana Cemetery and El Toro Memorial Park to ensure that each staff person is certified in First Aid, CPR and the use of and Automated External Defibrillator (AED). The trainings were split between two days to provide coverage at all cemeteries while the trainings were taking place.

Several years ago, the District invested in AED's for each location and training is provided for staff every two years. Thankfully, the District has yet to experience an emergency where the use of CPR or an AED is needed, and hopefully we never will. But should an emergency occur, these trainings will allow staff to be as prepared as possible.



## Jesus Lopez, District Mechanic, Retires after 37 years!



**Jesus Lopez has good reason to smile!**

On December 1, 2021 staff said goodbye to long-time employee Jesus (Jesse) Lopez, who has retired to a life of leisure after serving the District for 37 years!

Jesus started his career with the District on November 13, 1984 as a groundskeeper. He came to the District with a background in landscaping and construction. By the mid 1990's he was demonstrating a knowledge of equipment repair and began to assist with the maintenance of the District vehicles and power tools. The District also provided training such as Small Engine Teardown and Diesel

Troubleshooting. By 1998, Jesse was a Senior Groundskeeper and the following year was promoted to District Mechanic. As the District Mechanic Jesse was responsible for maintaining all the District vehicles and tools and divided his time among all three cemeteries.

On Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, staff held a retirement party at Santa Ana Cemetery catered by his favorite restaurant. General Manager Deutsch presented him with his own tool kit and staff enjoyed the afternoon celebrating with Jesse. Congratulations Jesse! We wish you all the best in your retirement!

## Dia de los Muertos to Go – Much Appreciated by All!

In honor of Dia de los Muertos the District passed out free flower bouquets, pan de Muertos, and kids craft kits at all three District cemeteries on November 2<sup>nd</sup> starting at 3:30 until supplies ran out. In all, the District passed out about 300 bouquets of marigolds, 500 bags of pan de muerto, and 500 craft kits. We are hoping to resume full programs with mariachi and balletfolklorico for 2022!



**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](http://www.occemeterydistrict.com). In January and February, meetings will be held as follows:

- **Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**
- **Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup> 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 is greatly appreciated.



In honor of Chinese New Year and Valentine’s Day, flowers may be placed at all District Cemeteries on Thursday, January 20th and must be removed by Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The 2022 Cemetery Grounds Wednesday Clean-up Calendar is available on our website at [www.occemeterydistrict.com](http://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, Dec. 31, 2021;**
- Martin Luther King Day – Monday, Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>**
- Presidents’ Day – Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup>**

**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  
will resume when Daylight Saving Time  
begins on March 13, 2022.**

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

