



**JAN. – FEB. 2023**

# Orange County Cemetery District

## TRUSTEES

Kelly Rivers, Chair  
Cynthia Ward, Vice Chair  
Vladimir Anderson  
Noel Hatch  
Maribel Marroquin-Waldram

25751 Trabuco Road  
Lake Forest, CA 92630  
(949) 951-9102 – Phone  
(949) 951-0236 - Fax  
[www.occemeterydistrict.com](http://www.occemeterydistrict.com)

Tim Deutsch, General Manager

## Old Glory Unfurled at Gypsum Canyon Cemetery Site

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, Orange County Supervisor Donald Wagner hosted an inspiring flag raising ceremony in Gypsum Canyon where the County hopes to establish a State Veterans Cemetery. It is also the site where the Orange County Cemetery District will develop a much-needed fourth Public Cemetery.

It was a joyful day for the many Veterans in attendance who have been laboring for years to ensure that Orange County has a final resting place for our deserving Veterans. Most appropriately, the program participants included a host of Veterans. Elaine Brattain, Chaplain of the American Gold Star Mothers led the invocation. The U.S. Army Southern California Recruiting Battalion presented the colors. U.S. Army Veteran, Steve Spriggs and U.S. Navy Veteran, Bobby McDonald led the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem was sung by Jennifer Sundell.

After Supervisor Wagner addressed the audience, Nick Berardino, President of the

Veterans Alliance of Orange County and Bill Cook, Chairman of the Orange County Veterans Memorial Park Foundation spoke. These two U.S. Marine Corps Veterans have been instrumental in leading the charge for the Veterans Cemetery and their inspiring remarks brought a spirit of unity and purpose to all in attendance.

The final speaker was Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva, who has been a fierce advocate for the creation of a Veterans Cemetery in Orange County and has been invaluable in bringing forth the needed legislation to move this project forward.

After Assemblywoman Quirk-Silva concluded her remarks, a select group of dignitaries, elected officials and Veterans were transported to the flagpole's base for the flag raising ceremony. The 30'x60' flag is the original flag that had been unfurled almost a year ago at the site in a ceremonial ground-breaking event attended by representatives from every city in Orange County.



**Pictured left to right - Our District Trustees: Vice Chair Cynthia Ward, Chair Kelly Rivers, Trustee Vladimir Anderson and Trustee Noel Hatch attend the flag raising ceremony.**

The next phase for the Veterans Cemetery will fall to CalVet as they begin the process of site investigations and feasibility studies. As that gets underway, the Orange County Cemetery District is continuing with the development application process with the City of Anaheim for the County's fourth public cemetery. We look forward to engaging with the community in this process as we enter 2023!

## El Toro Memorial Park Holds 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Veterans Day Program

“Self-Sacrifice is a trait that every Veteran has,” stated Lake Forest Mayor, Robert Pequeño, who was the keynote speaker at El Toro Memorial Park’s 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Veterans Day program. Mayor Pequeño served in the U.S. Marine Corps for over 21 years and knows, first-hand, about the sacrifices our Veterans make, noting that it is the Veteran’s entire family who serves and sacrifices.

About 150 people attended the program including many Veterans. Among them, the District was delighted to welcome back Captain Leland Spencer who served during World War II as a B-24 Heavy Bomber Pilot.

The District would like to thank: vocalist, John Huntington; bugler, Alfred Lang; bagpiper, Richard Cook; and guitarist and vocalist Gene Smith for providing the beautiful music for the day’s event.

Aliso Viejo Mayor, Ross Chun, Laguna Hills Mayor, Dave Wheeler and Lake Forest Mayor, Robert Pequeño also presented stunning floral tributes during the wreath laying ceremony. We are very grateful for the faithful participation by our elected officials in our community who make the wreath laying ceremony possible.

We would also like to thank VFW Post 6024 for providing the Honor Guard firing salute that punctuates the closing of the program.

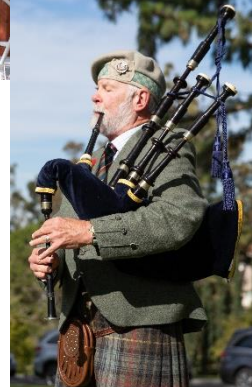
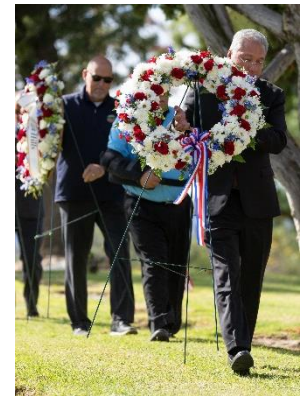
Prior to the event, Boy Scouts of America Troop 727 placed a U.S. Flag on every military marker. Volunteers from Mission Viejo NSDAR placed flags on the graves of Veterans who do not have a military marker. On the following week the Boy Scouts came back and removed all the flags. Their hard work is greatly appreciated!

The Veterans Day and Memorial Day programs are coordinated by members of the Mission Viejo Chapter, NSDAR and by Frank Cook with American Legion Post 862. Mr. Cook graciously provides the World War I historical display and is always on-hand at our programs to answer questions from the public. Special thanks to Penny Sander, Regent with the Mission Viejo NSDAR for serving as this year’s Mistress of Ceremonies.

Please mark your calendars for our Memorial Day Programs which will take place at all three District cemeteries on Monday, May 29, 2023. Santa Ana Cemetery’s program begins at 10:00 a.m. Anaheim Cemetery and El Toro Memorial Park Programs begin at 11:00 a.m. We hope to see you there!



**Members of the California Society, Sons of the American Revolution; South Coast Chapter – Mullan’s Marines; Orange County Chapter – Lee’s Legion; and the Mission Viejo Chapter, NSDAR formed a combined color guard for the program.**





## Families Gather at the Angel of Hope for Candlelight Memorial Service

Every year, on December 6th at 7:00 p.m., families gather at the Angel of Hope statue at El Toro Memorial Park for a candlelight ceremony honoring the memory of the children they have lost.

Despite the chill in the air, over 100 people gathered to lay white flowers at the Angel's feet and, most importantly, speak their child's name. For many, this is the most profound moment of the evening.

This year's ceremony also included special music by the vocal quartet, Anthem4 and inspirational poetic readings by Rick and Karen Hacker and Megan Heddlesten. Pastor Tim McCalmont led the opening and closing prayers.

The evening's guest speaker was Sharon Marshall Lockett who eloquently shared about her painful journey after the loss of her son.



For more information on the Angel of Hope please visit their website at: [www.careandkindness.org/angelofhope/](http://www.careandkindness.org/angelofhope/)

## Veterans Remembered and Honored with a Wreath for the Holidays



Wreaths Across America (WAA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to honoring Veterans by placing wreaths on Veterans graves during the holiday season.

El Toro Memorial Park's hard-working fundraising groups had 1,446 wreath sponsorships! The surplus of 246 wreath sponsorships is recorded by WAA and can be used if future years are short. Santa Ana Cemetery had 579 wreath sponsorships.

On December 17<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m., wreath ceremonies were led by American Heritage Girls Troop 356 at El Toro Memorial Park and the Santa Ana Elks Lodge at Santa Ana Cemetery.

Afterwards, volunteers placed the wreaths at Veterans graves throughout the two cemeteries. Our thanks to both groups for organizing and leading these beautiful ceremonies and to all the volunteers who came out to lay a wreath. Special thanks to all those who sponsored a wreath! Without you these wonderful events would not be possible!!



## Board Re-elects Chair Rivers and Vice Chair Ward to Serve in 2023

The Orange County Cemetery District is governed by a Board of five Trustees who have been appointed to serve by the County of Orange Board of Supervisors.

Every December the Board elects a Chair and Vice Chair to lead the Board during the next calendar year. At this election, traditionally, the Vice Chair moves in to the Chair's seat and a new Vice Chair is selected.

However, in early 2022 the Board Chair, William Nelson, passed away unexpectedly. Vice Chair Kelly Rivers was elected by the Board to complete Trustee Nelson's remaining term. Trustee Cynthia Ward was selected to serve as the new 2022 Vice Chair.

Since neither Trustee was able to complete a full term in 2022, the Board has decided to keep these offices the same for 2023. This will

be Chair Rivers' third term as Board Chair and it will be Vice Chair Ward's fourth term as Vice Chair.

Congratulations as well to Trustee Noel Hatch and Trustee Maribel Marroquin-Waldram. Both Trustees reached five years of service to the District in 2022. The District would like to thank all of our Trustees for their dedication in guiding District policies and for their thoughtful stewardship of District resources.

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**
- **Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</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.

**CEMETERY VISITATION HOURS**

**Anaheim Cemetery,  
Santa Ana Cemetery and  
El Toro Memorial Park**  
are for visitation, seven days a week,  
from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Starting on Sunday, March 12th,  
El Toro Memorial Park will offer extended  
visitation with gates closing daily at 7:00 p.m.

Offices are open M-F - 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
All offices are closed on the weekends and on  
Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> (New Year's), Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> (MLK Day),  
Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> (Lincoln's Birthday) and  
Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> (Presidents' Day).

*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

**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 full park 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 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Chinese New Year, flowers may be placed on Thursday, Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> and must be removed by Tuesday, Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>. In honor of Valentine's Day, flowers may be placed on Thursday, Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> and must be removed by Tuesday, Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>. During these periods, light clean-up will still occur each Wednesday and only flowers that are obviously wilted will be removed.

Please be advised, during full park clean-ups everything on gravesites are discarded. Please be sure to remove items you do not want discarded before the cemetery closes on Tuesdays.

The 2023 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.

