



MARCH – APRIL 2024

Orange County Cemetery District

TRUSTEES

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

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

Tim Deutsch, General Manager

El Toro Memorial Park Restores Front Entry Wrought Iron Gate

Ever since the original construction of El Toro Memorial Park's entrance was completed in 1988, the archway has had climbing rose vines covering the wrought iron arch. After all this time, the vines were finally succumbing to dry rot and termites and the decision was made to remove the vines and provide some much-needed maintenance to the gates and the entire fence line running along Trabuco Road.

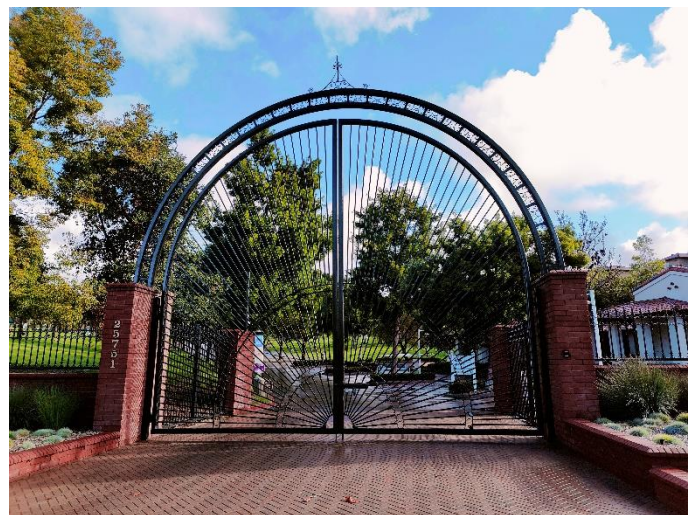
Orange County Welding, based out of Santa Ana began work in mid-January and will be wrapping up this phase of the project near the end of February. After removing all the vines, we were thrilled to discover the beautiful details on the archway that had been hidden for over three decades. The entire gate system and fencing was pressure washed, prepared for repainting, and then given a coat of gleaming black paint, which provides a lovely contrast to the surrounding classic brick structure.

The cost for this phase of work totaled \$26,220. The District hopes to include three additional phases in the future. The second phase will include restoration of all the wrought iron fencing surrounding the flag pole area in Los Alisos and extending across the back of the upper Los Alisos lawn toward the gazebo. The third phase will include restoring all the fence work behind the Angel of Hope Statue just above the Niche Garden. The final phase, will be the refurbishing of the back gate and the wrought iron fencing extending from that gate towards the Centennial Lawn.

During work on the front gate, access to El Toro Memorial Park was only available through the rear gate. We apologize for any inconvenience or confusion that that



The El Toro Memorial Park Front Gate Before and After



these closures may have caused and we greatly appreciate your patience during this maintenance project. We hope you are pleased with the results as we strive to maintain our public cemeteries for the benefit of all Orange County residents.

Anaheim Cemetery Manager, Bill Stelter to Retire After 36 Years!

Anaheim Cemetery Manager, Bill Stelter, will retire from the District on March 21, 2024 with a career spanning more than 51 years!

Mr. Stelter was hired as a Cemetery Manager on June 26, 1987, but he actually began his career in the deathcare industry in 1972 working at his family-owned business, Stelter Memorial Park Enterprises in Redding, CA. The business operated a 40-acre memorial park and mortuary facility. In 1974, Bill graduated from the San Francisco College of Mortuary Science and became a licensed embalmer and funeral director.

In 1990, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Orange County Funeral Directors Association, serving

a three-year term and remains a member to this day.

Upon joining the District, Mr. Stelter began as a Cemetery Manager at Santa Ana Cemetery. Since then, he has supervised at all three of the District cemeteries at one time or another, but has spent the last 21 years at Anaheim Cemetery.

In addition to his regular duties, Mr. Stelter also serves as the District's Safety Manager, a position he has held since 2013. Bill has received annual trainings from the Special District Risk Management Authority as a Supervisor Safety Specialist. He ensures all Cal/OSHA requirements are upheld and orders all needed safety equipment and supplies.



Congratulations to Cemetery Manager, Bill Stelter on a career of dedicated service!

Mr. Stelter's commitment, experience, and knowledge will be greatly missed. We wish Bill all the best as he embarks on a well-deserved retirement!

Staff Celebrates Milestone Awards

On Wednesday, January 24th, staff enjoyed an annual luncheon to hear updates from the General Manager on upcoming projects, retirement and staffing issues, and progress on the upcoming 2024-25 budget. It was also an opportunity to recognize all those employees who reached milestone years of service in 2023. The luncheon represents one of the few times, staff from all three cemeteries can gather together in person and see one another and discuss common concerns.

Congratulations to four employees for reaching the following service milestones:

Julio Amarillas celebrated 25 years with the District. Julio started as a groundskeeper at Anaheim Cemetery in January 1998. He was promoted to Leadworker in January 2000 and assigned to Santa Ana Cemetery. In March 2006, he was promoted again to Cemetery Manager for Santa Ana Cemetery.

Juan Lopez Bautista celebrated 20 years of service. Juan was hired as an extra-help employee in April 2003 at Anaheim Cemetery. He was promoted to Groundskeeper in 2004 and later assigned to El Toro Memorial Park. In August 2011, Juan was promoted to Leadworker for El Toro Memorial Park.



Julio Amarillas, Andrew Trejo, and Juan Lopez Bautista receive milestone awards.

Andrew Trejo celebrated 15 years with the District. Andrew was hired in February 2008 as a groundskeeper and assigned to El Toro Memorial Park. He was promoted to Leadworker in March 2017 and was transferred to Anaheim Cemetery.

Brenda Manriquez reached her 10-year mark with the District. Brenda was first hired in March 2013 as a part-time accountant. In March 2019, she was promoted to the full-time position of Finance and Accounting Manager. **Congratulations everyone!!**

Shadetree Partnership Rescues Over 150 Living Christmas Trees

Shadetree Partnership is a non-profit volunteer-based organization that promotes more livable communities through the planting and stewardship of shade trees and other nursery stock. They operate a 5 ½ acre nursery located on the campus of UC Irvine where over 4,000 trees and shrubs are currently growing. Since its formation in 1990, Shadetree has planted more than 36,500 trees and groundcover at various sites within our communities including schools, colleges, community groups, and non-profit businesses.

The Orange County Cemetery District is proud to be a source for some of those trees. During the first full-park clean up in January, staff at

El Toro Memorial Park carefully set aside any living Christmas trees that were rooted in a pot. In all, between 150 to 200 trees were saved and picked up by Shadetree.

For a period of time, these trees will be carefully nurtured by volunteers at their nursery until they grow strong enough for transplanting and are sure to be free of any disease or insects.

For those families who had placed a living tree at your loved one's gravesite, we hope it brings you satisfaction and comfort to know that your tree will continue to thrive for the benefit of our community.

If you have a love of plants and a desire to be a part of this wonderful



Here are just a few of the trees adopted by Shadetree Partnership from El Toro Memorial Park.

program, or to learn more about Shadetree Partnership, please visit <https://www.shadetreepartnership.org/>.

Thank you Shadetree Partnership for giving these trees new life!

Lake Forest City Council Donates \$1,000 in Wreath Sponsorships for El Toro Memorial Park's 2024 Wreaths Across America Ceremony

Every December at cemeteries across the nation, volunteers gather to attend wreath ceremonies and to place fresh wreaths on the graves of Veterans through a non-profit organization called Wreaths Across America.

The goal is to ensure that every Veteran's grave receives a wreath, but that can't happen without the generosity of wreath sponsorship. Thanks to the Lake Forest City

Council, El Toro Memorial Park has a good start on meeting that goal. The City Council donated \$1,000 toward the sponsorship of wreaths for El Toro's 2024 program. Each wreath costs \$17 to sponsor, which would have provided 58 wreaths. However, the Council's donation was made during the January Wreaths Across America matching program. Because of the match, the \$1,000 sponsored by the city, actually purchased 116 wreaths!

Thank you Lake Forest City Councilmembers for this important donation!

To sponsor a wreath for El Toro Memorial Park please click here: www.wreathseltoromemorialpark.org

To sponsor a wreath for Santa Ana Cemetery, please click here: www.wreathscrossamerica.org/casacc

Thank you for honoring our Veterans!

Extended Visitation Hours at El Toro Memorial Park Begin March 10th



On Saturday, March 9th don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour before heading to bed. It is the beginning of Daylight Saving Time and also the start of extended visiting hours at El Toro Memorial Park. Beginning on Sunday, March

10th, El Toro's gates will close at 7 p.m. Santa Ana Cemetery and Anaheim Cemetery will still close at 5 p.m. Please plan your visits accordingly so that the gates can be locked in a timely manner. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT

March/April 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. Meetings are now being held in person and are open to the public. Members of the public may also attend Board Meetings remotely. Instructions to join remotely are posted on the agendas.

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

- **Tuesday, March 5th at 10:00 a.m.**
- **Tuesday, April 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 Thursday morning. 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 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 Persian New Year and Easter, flowers may be placed on Thursday, March 7th and must be removed by Tuesday, April 9th. During this time, light clean-ups 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 2024 Cemetery Grounds Wednesday Clean-up Calendar is available on our website at www.occemeterydistrict.com. Click on the tab for Flowers, Markers and Rules for more information.

CEMETERY VISITATION HOURS

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

**are open for visitation, seven days a week,
from 8 am to 5 pm.**

**Starting on Sunday, March. 10th, El Toro
Memorial Park will begin extended visitation
hours with the park closing at 7:00 p.m.**

**Cemetery Offices are open M-F - 8 am to 5 pm
All offices are closed on the
weekends and on holidays.**

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

