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First Support Organization:

Ladies Association's Distinction in Hollywood's Long History

Many visitors to the cemetery are curious about the Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, whose name appears on markers near the large pyramid. In the early years of the organization, its members accomplished many extraordinary deeds.

"This group was instrumental in the burial of the Confederate dead in what is now called the Soldier's Section of Hollywood. During that time in history, the city was overwhelmed with the number of dead soldiers," says David Gilliam, the cemetery's General Manager. "Hollywood was never intended to be a cemetery for the war casualties, but circumstances made this a very important part of our history."

In the Beginning

Following the Civil War, Congress allocated funds for the recovery and burial of Union soldiers but nothing for those who had fought and died for the Confederacy. Richmonders were outraged. The *Richmond Examiner* on April 13, 1866, encouraged local church women to organize a society to assure a proper burial and care of the graves of these fallen heroes.

Hollywood Cemetery President Thomas Ellis invited all interested parties to attend a meeting to discuss this plan on May 3, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Local church women responded to his invitation "in great force and beauty," according to the *Richmond Examiner*. The Hollywood Memorial Association of Richmond, as it was then known, began.

It was one of many southern ladies' memorial associations. The first officers included President Nancy Beirne Macfarland and six vice-presidents, who represented each of the city's major religious denominations.



Nancy B. Macfarland First President Section: Mount, Plot: 22

The members immediately got to work, planning a Memorial Day event at the cemetery. The date was set for May 31, just a few weeks away. Eight hundred men volunteered to help weed the grounds, and remound and mark graves. Additionally, they exhumed the remains of 120 Confederate soldiers buried in Section A of the cemetery and moved them to the Soldiers' Section.

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Ladies	The Original Greenhouse	Adele	Robley D.	Donors
Association		Williams	Bates, IV	(through April 27)
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Ladies Association's Distinction (continued)

In an appeal posted in the Richmond Daily Dispatch of May 29, 1866, and titled "To the Women of the South," the ladies invited the community to the event, requested donations of evergreens to make memorial wreaths, and explained their cause: "Our designation is 'Hollywood Memorial Association of Richmond'—pledged to apply the means which may be provided the permanent protection and adornment of the graves of the Confederate dead interred in Hollywood Cemetery."

"Thousands of eyes were moistened with tears"

In Richmond, all shops and businesses were closed on May 31st for Memorial Day. Locals carried floral arrangements made from their own gardens or by the association. School children wearing flowers around their necks sang hymns as they marched to Hollywood Cemetery. The procession began at 9 a.m. and included 23 military companies and a regiment of former Confederate soldiers. When Richmonders saw the soldiers dressed in their old uniforms, some with missing limbs, "thousands of eyes were moistened with tears," wrote the *Richmond Examiner*.

Over 20,000 visited the cemetery that day. Many walked silently through the Soldiers' Section, placing their flowers and wreaths upon the graves. The bust of General J.E.B. Stuart by Edward Valentine was unveiled. James B. Smith's regimental band performed patriotic music at the event.

In Hollywood Cemetery: The History of a Southern Shrine, Mary Mitchell writes, "the efforts of Hollywood's Memorial Association were critical to the cemetery company's survival in the first few years following the war. Although the Hollywood company teetered on the brink of bankruptcy at the war's end, lot sales increased dramatically after Memorial Day 1866." Decorating graves for Memorial Day became a beloved tradition.

Reaching for the skies

In the summer of 1866, the ladies oversaw the reinterment of hundreds of soldiers who had been buried in battlefields nearby. After completing that mission, they turned their attention to raising funds to build a monument to the war dead. The flurry of activities that

followed included a lecture series, raffles, and six benefit productions.

"The group's largest moneymaking venture by far was a gala bazaar held in the spring of 1867. Robert F. Morris opened three floors of his warehouse on the southeast corner of Main and 15th Streets to the association for the event," says Mitchell. The two-week event raised more than \$18,000.

With sufficient funds for the memorial, the association selected a design by engineer Charles H. Dimmock for a 90-foot pyramid made of James River granite. The cornerstone was laid on December 3, 1868.

The pyramid took almost a year to build. Thomas Stanley, a convict from Lynchburg who was working with the construction crew, took on the treacherous task of setting the capstone on November 6, 1869.



An early 1890's Memorial Day celebration at the Confederate Soldier's Monument. Photograph: Cook Collection, The Valentine, Richmond, VA.

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Ladies Association's Distinction (continued)

According to Mitchell, he was cheered for his heroics. "For years afterward on Memorial Day, young men would emulate Stanley by scaling the monument to hang a wreath from the top."

Bringing the men home

The association published the Register of the *Confederate Dead* in 1869, which contained the names of those buried in the Soldiers' Section. The members then turned their attention to bringing home the Gettysburg dead. Many had been buried in mass graves near the Pennsylvania battlefield by federal burial teams, once the fighting ended.

A local man, Samuel Weaver, was put in charge of the Union exhumations, which were funded by the federal government. Although not asked to, he also tracked the burial sites of the Confederate soldiers. Since Weaver had passed away, the association requested the help of his son, Dr. Rufus Weaver, who was familiar with the gravesites. He was reluctant to take on the project, but the association persevered. Dr. Weaver began his Confederate exhumations on April 19, 1872, often working 18- to 20-hour days.

In Richmond, "The Powhatan Steamship Company delivered the first shipment of Gettysburg dead to the wharf at Rocketts at two-thirty on the afternoon of 15 June 1872," says Mitchell. There were 708 bodies on board.

More shipments arrived—six in total--with the final remains shipped on October 11, 1873. Weaver exhumed a total of 2,935 Confederates from the battlefields surrounding Gettysburg for the Hollywood Memorial Association.

Sadly, for all his work, the association never paid the entirety of his bill. Often scrambling financially, the organization fell upon dire straits in 1873 with the failure of a bank in which it had invested its funds. The association paid Weaver just \$2,800 for his work, leaving an outstanding balance of \$6,499. It was not until 1892, nearly 20 years later, that he received partial payments from the association and the General Assembly.

Final chapter

Once the association had achieved its goals, and the soldiers were buried, the members' interest waned. "For several years thereafter, a few remaining members of the association gathered on Memorial Day to decorate the graves in Hollywood, but the group held no further meetings and for a time it virtually ceased to exist," says Mitchell.

After a resurgence in the 1880s, the association formed the Confederate Memorial Literary Society in 1890. This group collected Confederate books and memorabilia, saved the White House of the Confederacy from demolition, and opened the structure as a museum in 1896.

As the years passed, though, membership dwindled. The Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association had just three active members by 1980. Then, sometime in the early 1990s, David Gilliam received a visitor who presented him with the deed to the Soldiers' Section.

"Everyone assumed that Hollywood owned the land. We were unaware that the deed had actually been held by the association until the young man showed up in our office, informed us that the last member of the Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association had passed, and handed me the deed," says Gilliam.

"We were very surprised."

In addition to Mary Mitchell's book, Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery by John O. Peters was a helpful source for this article.

The Hollywood Greenhouse Love Story

Little has been written about a commercial greenhouse that once operated at Hollywood Cemetery, which grew into one of the area's first and most prominent nurseries. But the story is an extraordinary one of Gilbert and Margaret Miles, "two really lovely people who started the greenhouse and put their whole lives into it," says Peter Toms, Friends of Hollywood Cemetery Board Member. "It's one of the great small business success stories of Richmond, really."

Born in Binghamton, New York, Gilbert Miles grew up in the Great Depression and joined the U.S. Navy after graduating two months early from high school. While stationed at Camp Peary, near Williamsburg, he met Margaret Hattorf, of Richmond. They were married in 1946.

After the Navy, he enrolled in pre-veterinary studies at Syracuse University, but his mind wandered to another occupation, one that aptitude tests had suggested would be an ideal match for him: farming. Gilbert left college, and the young couple spent a year living and working on a dairy farm. He went back to college and attained a degree in horticulture from Michigan State University in 1951. The pair spent some time in Chicago, then Lancaster, Pennsylvania, but missed Richmond, and soon returned home.

In the early days

During their first years in Richmond, Gilbert worked in a variety of occupations. While holding a day job at the Richmond Piece Dye Works factory, he sold vacuum cleaners at night and worked at Mosmiller Florist on the weekends. He later worked with Durham Life, as a landscape superintendent for the Capitol grounds, then as vice-president of Diggs and Beadles Service, a seed catalog company.

But during this time, he dreamed of opening his own nursery. That day finally arrived in 1958, when a friend from Mosmiller's told him about an opportunity to rent the greenhouses on the grounds of Hollywood Cemetery. Gilbert jumped at the chance.

The greenhouses were located near the Victorian superintendent's house, by the front gates. In September 1874, they were leased by the florist J. Thompson Brown. They were later run by the Hollywood Cemetery Company. "I believe they sold flowers and plants to lot owners for placement at their



The Greenhouse complex (ca. 1960) at Hollywood operated by Gilbert and Margaret Miles and their family

family plots. The cemetery also made long-term arrangements to place flowers on family lots at certain times of the year or special occasions," says David Gilliam, General Manager of Hollywood Cemetery.

He adds, "eventually, the cemetery realized how difficult this would be for the cemetery to keep up with, and that the funds they received to do this annual arrangement would not be enough to carry out the task in perpetuity, so the practice was stopped."

Gilbert had to rebuild the greenhouses, which were all made of glass. "When my dad first saw the place, a lot of the glass was in bad shape," their son, George, recalls.

The complex was terraced on the hillside, which sloped down toward the utility area and barn. There were three greenhouses at the top of the hill, and two further down. "We had a potting shed, and a little storeroom, and an old cash register," remembers George. At the back, the family had a cooler that they kept bulbs in, and beds where they grew ivy and other plants. A basement held coal boilers that fueled the steam heat. "We spent a lot of nights down there on cots, when it got real cold, to make sure the boilers worked," he recalls.

They kept Easter lilies and other plants in a cool, sheltered area across the street.

George was six and his brother Gilbert Jr. was eleven when his parents opened the greenhouse. He enjoyed being at the

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Greenhouse (continued)

cemetery, helping his parents and playing in the area.

"The Fosters were there in the house as you went in the gate on the right. W.A. Foster was the Grounds Superintendent at the time. I used to run with a bunch of kids in the neighborhood," says George. "I learned to drive a pick-up truck when I was fourteen years old in that cemetery, delivering things. People would hire us to put wreaths on the graves every Christmas, and plant pansies around the grave sites."

While the Miles family continued to sell graveside items, they also sold annuals, perennials, and other plants for their customers' homes and gardens. The friendly couple soon developed a following for their business, where they worked together every day. "They were inseparable," says George.

"The most beautiful flowers in town"

Peter Toms remembered his mother buying her summer flowers at the Hollywood greenhouse. She also stored her tropical oleander plants there over the winter. "They produced the most beautiful flowers in town," says Toms.

One of their devotees was noted landscape architect, Charles F. Gillette, who created some of the loveliest gardens in Virginia, including those at Agecroft Hall and the Virginia House.

"Mother used to tell me that Charles Gillette encouraged Gilbert to start his business, because there was a real niche for a first-rate nursery business in Richmond," says Toms, whose parents had two gardens designed by Gillette. At the time, there weren't many other greenhouses in the area.

The Hollywood Greenhouse thrived. In fact, business grew so robust that customer traffic began to interfere with the day-to-day cemetery traffic and funerals.

According to George, the cemetery offered the family another space farther back, near the pyramid memorial, to set up shop. "But the space was kind of small. So, at that point we moved out to Mountain Road in Glen Allen."

The Greenhouse and Greenhouse II

In 1969, Gilbert and Margaret opened The Greenhouse

at 2500 Mountain Road in Glen Allen. "My wife and I started from scratch," said Gilbert, in a Richmond News Leader article dated June 3, 1974. "We dug holes for the foundations. That was in July, and it was so hot, she must have thought we were in the Sahara Desert."

Eventually, the family developed 13 greenhouses on the 8-acre property. Their loyal clientele followed them to the new location.

"Our customers were wonderful, and still are. They're the greatest people alive," says George.

They later opened a satellite location, Greenhouse II, at the site of an old service station at 5615 Patterson Avenue. The family, along with an employee and her carpenter husband, did all the work.



Team Gilbert and Margaret Miles smile for the camera.

Photo: the Richmond News Leader

"The iron fence at the Greenhouse II we got from an old estate in Church Hill, and it kind of keeps the mood of our original location at Hollywood Cemetery before we moved to Mountain Road," remembered Gilbert Miles Jr. in a Richmond Times-Dispatch article of October 7, 1975.

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Adele Williams (1868-1952):

An Artist in Hollywood Cemetery

Well known as an artist throughout the United States and Europe, Adele Williams now lies in a modest, unadorned grave in Hollywood. Only her name, birth and death dates are engraved on its small oblong stone marker. It lies at the western end of a plot on Midvale Avenue bought by her brother E. Victor Williams in 1913, the year their father, John Henry Williams, died in San Francisco. Victor brought his body home to be buried in Hollywood.

In early 1880, their father, once a prosperous and prominent commissions merchant in Richmond, left his wife and four of their children in the city to board an "iron steamer" in New York harbor and sail away to San Francisco where he hoped to recoup the fortune he had lost in the post-Civil War depression of the late 1870's. He had made his first fortune there in the commission merchant line just after the Gold Rush of 1849, and he thought he might be able to do it again, especially since he was taking his promising eldest son Coleman along with him.



Adele Williams

Two Promising Daughters

By April 6, 1880, when he took pen in hand to write a long letter to his two young daughters, he and Coleman had arrived safely in San Francisco. The letter was an account of their journey from New York to Aspinwall, Columbia, where they had disembarked and taken a train for the 48 mile trip across the Isthmus of Panama to Panama City since no canal had yet been built. From Panama City the Williams pair had taken another steamer, a side-wheeler named the "China," to San Francisco with stops along the way at such exotic places as Acapulco, Mexico.

The letter began, "Dear Babies," despite the fact that his two daughters were 12 and 14 years old. They were Adele and Louise, called "Loulie," whose lives were disrupted by their father's departure, their comfortable childhood and private education thrown aside when their father's financial problems forced him to sell his house. The girls were bright and talented. Loulie was very musical and Adele artistic. They were also very resilient. They would enter public school, and three years after their father's departure 15 year old Adele would graduate at the head of her class. By 1887 The RICHMOND STATE would note that her first known portrait commission---a portrait of Bolling Haxall, would be on display in the window of Manly Ramos' music store---a place where many of Richmond's finest works of art were commonly displayed. The newspaper headline announced it was "a handsome Portrait of a Truly Good Man."

Cooper Union and Beyond

The following year Adele left Richmond for New York City to study art at Cooper Union, but not before leaving an entry for the Art Hall at the Virginia Exposition of 1888 called "Music A Study." She would win two medals at Cooper Union and earn first class certificates at the Art Students league. One of her works was accepted for an exhibition at the National Academy of Design that first year and a second one in 1889. Having works accepted there meant that Adele had "arrived," that she was accepted by the reigning art establishment in the United States. In addition she would have works accepted by the American Water Color Society, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the New York Water Color Club, the Women's Art Club of New York. Even before her graduation from Cooper Union in 1891 her career was launched.

It was a natural step for her to follow her instructors to summer art colonies like the one at Gloucester, Massachusetts where she painted "Fishing Boats at Gloucester" which was exhibited at the New York Water Color Club in 1890 and the American Water Color Club in 1891.

The fall after Adele' graduation, it was Loulie's turn to train to be a professional, and she entered the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston while Adele continued to paint and exhibited at the Boston Art Club. The following spring the sisters and their mother left for Europe and a painting holiday through Italy and France that included a lengthy stay at the Hotel Baudy in Giverny, just down the road from Monet's home. He was still painting there and welcoming other artists.

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Artist in Hollywood Cemetery (continued)

European Study and Work

Shortly after that, they settled in Paris. Adele began her studies at the Academie Julian, and Loulie began to study with Mme Sumanofski---a protégé of the composer Paderewski. Adele did not study at the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts because it was not open to women. Luckily for her, the faculty for the Academie Julian was drawn from the Ecole, so her training was top notch. While pursuing her studies Adele would send back some of her Giverny work to the Boston Art Club, including "Lengthening Shadows, Giverny," and the American Water Color Society exhibitions and more of her work would appear at the National Academy of Design.

The summer after her first year at the Academie Julian, Adele and her friend Julia Sully from Petersburg, also a student at the Academie, would become members of an art colony in Risjoord, Holland and take a glorious painting holiday that included boat rides on the canal with artists' umbrellas acting as sails on windy days.

The Prix Concours

The Academie Julian would bestow its highest prize, the Prix Concours on Adele a year later in 1894, and another portrait was accepted for the Paris salon. Having work accepted at the Salon meant that Adele had now "arrived" in the international art establishment and acquired the highest credentials available to aspiring professionals on either side of the Atlantic. She had achieved international greatness by the time she returned to Richmond to give the first of many lectures she would give in the coming years---a reminiscence about her student days in Europe---at The Woman's Club. She shared the stage with local artist William Ludwell Shepherd. Her name would appear in the 1895 Richmond City Directory professional listings under the category "Artist," and she continued to exhibit both oils and watercolors in such places as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, Atlanta and Norfolk.

Recognition and Influence

Although her exhibited works always carried price tags and often sold in cities far and wide, she found it necessary to supplement that income. Her still life paintings were always popular and so were her portraits. In time both provided regular income, especially her portrait commissions. They fell into several categories---society portraits of lovely young women in bare arms and long ruffled dresses; posthumous portraits such the one commissioned by the Richmond Bar association in 1901 of Judge William Reily which hung in



Adele Williams in her studio

the Virginia Supreme Court; official portraits for businesses, colleges and universities, and cities such as the one of Richmond's Mayor H. K. Ellyson; the State of Virginia, such as the 1895 commission of the portrait of the Secretary of the Commonwealth Joseph Lawless, and a very lucrative category--children's portraits. In 1897 she accepted the Westmoreland Club's request for a portrait of a statue. Not just any statue, the Houdon statue pf George Washington that stands in the rotunda of the Capitol in Richmond. The result was a wonderful, larger than life, full color portrait of George Washington, looking as if he were alive that still hangs beside the receptionist's desk in Richmond's Commonwealth Club.

Throughout her career, despite the financial support of her brother Victor who provided the money for both his sisters' educations up north and in Europe and even bought a house for them on West Avenue, Adele faced her economic pressures squarely and resolutely and successfully struggled for independence. Along the way she also used her wide ranging connections to make contributions to the cultural scene in Richmond and brought works by many of America's prominent contemporary artists to exhibitions that she organized. She helped found a number of art organizations in the city such the Art Club which held its first exhibition in 1896. Originally its purpose was to provide studio space for professional artists, but it gradually developed into a school for talented aspiring artists and children. In its early days Adele taught there. For several years she also taught art at Miss Jennie's School (now called St. Catherine's) and led tours of Europe for girls who had graduated. One of her most famous students at Miss Jennie's was Nancy Langhorne, later Lady Astor, who became a lifelong friend. In a 1943 letter to Adele, she wrote "Remember when you tried to make an artist of me?"

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Artist in Hollywood Cemetery (continued)

Impressionism and Woodrow Wilson

In the summer of 1903 with the encouragement of her old friend Childe Hassam, Adele went to paint in the art colony at Old Lyme, Connecticut. That summer is now considered important in American art history as the date and place impressionism began on this side of the Atlantic. The weather that summer was often unpleasantly damp. As Hassam put it later, "We are all doing moonlights. The weather has been so bad that we have been forced to it." Adele's "Moonlight" was exhibited at the 9th exhibition of the Richmond Art Club and at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1914 and the Society of Washington Artists in 1916.

Adele left Old Lyme that fall to go to Princeton where she began to work on a portraits she had been commissioned to do several years before, but had postponed. The first was to be of Woodrow Wilson, newly elected president of Princeton, the other of his wife Ellen who like Adele was a painter who had studied in New York. The Wilsons and their daughters would become friends. Their friendship extended beyond Ellen's death and Wilson's election as President of the United States.

Her Full and Final Years

Adele would continue to travel and paint, especially landscapes of places she visited. Maritime paintings of sailboats in port, docks, and workers appeared in her work at summer art colonies. Two visits to Bermuda produced a series of landscapes which proved popular as did others of particularly striking places in France before and after the First World War. She also helped found another fine arts organization in Richmond in the early 1930's variously called the Richmond Academy of Fine Arts or the Richmond Academy of Arts and Science. In addition to serving as a trustee on its Board she also served as a judge on juries for its exhibitions. In 1935 and 1939 it featured her work in one-woman exhibitions as did its successor, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in 1940. She continued to paint portraits, especially of children, into her late 70's. Adele Williams died in 1952, at age 84, a prolific painter who, after winning the Prix de Concours at the Academie Julian in 1894, exhibited her work for almost 60 years. Her work still appears in exhibits in the 21st century.

Contributed by
Mary Lynn Bayliss, Ph.D.
Board Member, Friends of Hollywood Cemetery





Examples of Adele Williams' paintings from her early years in Europe

Robley Bates Joins Friends of Hollywood Board

We are pleased to welcome Robley Bates, a native of Richmond, to the Friends of Hollywood Board. The appointment marks another step in a lifetime devoted to service.

Bates attended University of Virginia and graduated with a BA in History and French. After graduation, he served in the Marine Corps for eight years, attaining the rank of Captain. A Platoon Commander with the First Marine Division, he says, "I was in the initial invasion into Iraq--that was my third deployment to the Middle East." He was later a tactics instructor at Quantico. *Semper Fi!*

Following the service, Bates attended UVA's Darden School of Business, and then for a few years worked long hours as an investment banker in Charlotte. One of his clients was Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers, a franchise based in Birmingham, Alabama. "We were working on a project for them that had me flying down to Birmingham once a month for almost a year, and this was 2008-2009. This was the heart of the recession, and this automotive franchise was just flourishing," he says.

He liked the business so much that he decided to open his own franchise, the first in Virginia. But before he did, Bates spent the next six month in Birmingham learning "the business from the grease pit up," he says. He spent another year and half learning more about automotive mechanics and running a shop. He opened his first Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers in Midlothian in 2013, and now owns four.

Bates and his wife, Lauren, have two children, Molly, 7, and Robley, 5. In his spare time, he likes helping his parents with their family farm, hunting, camping, and skiing with his family. He is also very active in the Midlothian Rotary Club, raising money for their charities and taking part in drives.

As a board member, he looks forward to raising funds to support the cemetery's many needs. "There's more to Hollywood than a cemetery. It's one of Richmond's gems of history. Then there's the arboretum. It's just amazing."



Robley D. Bates, IV

Greenhouse (continued from page 5)

In addition to selling plants, the Miles family also operated a thriving party business, setting up pots of flowers, orange trees, lighted ficus trees, and other plants at venues throughout town. "We were at the Commonwealth Club and the Country Club of Virginia every weekend," recalls George..

Sixty-hour weeks were routine for Gilbert and Margaret. For a while, they could only take their vacations during the week because their weekends were too busy. They visited their cottage in Sandbridge, where they kept a boat, and finally traveled, when the boys got older and could run the show while they were away.

George and his wife, Cathy, took over the business after Gilbert died on April 18, 2000, at the age of 75. They sold the Greenhouse in 2021 and still operate Greenhouse II.

Margaret passed away at the age of 93 on February 24, 2018, and is buried with Gilbert at Forest Lawn Cemetery. "They loved, lived and worked together for 54 years until his sudden death in April of 2000," said her obituary.

"I was mighty fond of both of them," says Toms, a second-generation customer of the business. "Margaret always had a wonderful smile, even during the busiest greenhouse crunch times."

2023 Contributors to Friends of Hollywood Cemetery

We are indeed grateful to the following donors for their generous support of Friends through April 27, 2023. You have enabled us to raise awareness of Hollywood and to continue vital monument and fence restoration. Thank you for helping us to preserve Hollywood Cemetery for generations to come.

> Edward M. Farley, IV Chair, Friends of Hollywood Cemetery

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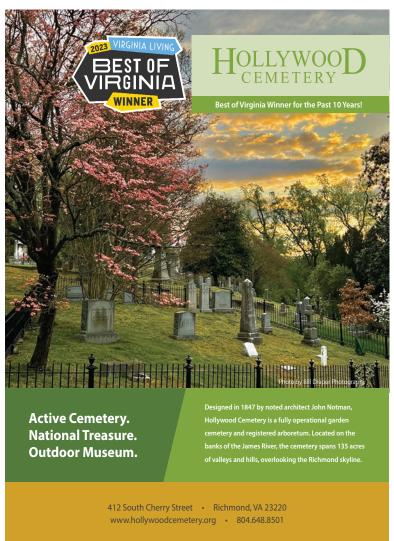
We invite you to join the 1847 Society and continue the ongoing restoration and preservation of Hollywood Cemetery.

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The blooms of a specimen Saucer Magnolia welcome spring in Hollywood Courtesy of Bill Draper Photography



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A Virginia great horned mother owl and her fledgling keeping watch over Hollywood's residents. The fledgling's ear tufts have just begun to emerge