Ferncliff

Celebrating 160 Years of Service to our Community

160 YEARS
1863 - 2023

Summer **NEWSLETTER**
August - October 2026

Director's Insights

Terra Meadow: A New Natural Burial Preserve Coming to Ferncliff

Return to the Earth. Leave a Living Legacy.

Dear Friends of Ferncliff,

This summer, Ferncliff Cemetery & Arboretum began an exciting new chapter in its 163-year history with the groundbreaking of Terra Meadow, Ferncliff's Natural Burial Preserve. Construction began in July 2026, with the preserve expected to open in Fall 2026.

The development of Terra Meadow reflects Ferncliff's longstanding mission to serve the evolving needs of our community by offering meaningful choices for every family. As personal preferences, cultural traditions, and environmental values continue to shape end-of-life decisions, we believe families should have access to a full spectrum of burial and memorialization options in one place. Terra Meadow represents another important step in fulfilling that commitment.

As families increasingly seek end-of-life options that reflect their personal values, traditions, and connection to nature, natural burial has emerged as one of the fastest-growing trends in cemetery and funeral service. Terra Meadow will provide Springfield-area families with a beautiful and environmentally conscious choice while preserving the natural beauty that has long been a hallmark of Ferncliff.

What Is Natural Burial?
Natural burial, also referred to as green burial or eco-friendly burial, is a more natural option for a final resting place with minimal impact on the environment. Unlike conventional burial, natural burial does not involve embalming chemicals, metal caskets, or concrete burial vaults. Instead, biodegradable caskets, burial shrouds, or other natural containers are used to support the body's natural return to the earth.

The focus is on simplicity, sustainability, and preserving the natural landscape while creating a meaningful place of remembrance.

Why Are Families Choosing Natural Burial?
More families today are looking for burial options that align with their values of environmental stewardship, simplicity, and a desire to remain connected to nature.

Natural burial allows the body to return naturally to the earth through the natural process of decomposition, enriching the soil and supporting the ecosystem. For many, there is comfort in knowing that their final resting place will contribute to the preservation of open space, native plantings, and wildlife habitat.

Others are drawn to the simplicity of natural burial and the opportunity to be remembered within a landscape of trees, grasses, and wildflowers rather than a more traditional cemetery setting.

A Preserve Designed for Reflection and Remembrance
Terra Meadow is being thoughtfully designed as more than a burial ground. It will be a natural preserve that encourages reflection, remembrance, and connection with the environment.

The preserve will feature winding pathways, native meadow plantings, gathering spaces, and carefully preserved trees that blend harmoniously with the surrounding landscape. Visitors will be invited to stroll through the preserve, enjoy its beauty *cont.*

Our Mission: Ferncliff serves its community with supportive, affordable, and inclusive end of life services in a beautiful, historic environment in perpetuity.

501 W. McCreight Ave. Springfield, OH 45504 | Phone: 937.322.3491
Daily Summer Gate Hours: *McCreight Avenue: 7:30AM - 7:00PM | Plum Street: 7:30AM - 4:30PM*
Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:00AM - 4:30PM | ferncliffcemetery.org

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cont. - throughouot the seasons, and experience a setting that feels more like a nature sanctuary than a traditional cemetery.

A central feature of Terra Meadow will be a granite cenotaph seating wall, thoughtfully designed using natural stone and boulders that blend harmoniously with the landscape. The wall will provide a lasting place to memorialize the names of those buried within the preserve while offering visitors a peaceful setting to sit, reflect, and experience the beauty and tranquility of nature.

The name Terra Meadow reflects this vision. Terra, meaning earth, symbolizes a return to nature and the continuation of life's natural cycle. The preserve's guiding message, **"Return to the Earth. Leave a Living Legacy,"** captures the essence of natural burial and Ferncliff's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Expanding Choices for Families

For more than 163 years, Ferncliff has served the community by providing meaningful and compassionate options for honoring loved ones. Terra Meadow represents a natural extension of that mission, ensuring that every family can choose the form of memorialization that best reflects their beliefs, values, and wishes.

In addition to Terra Meadow, Ferncliff is also developing a new Wooded Trails, a peaceful woodland setting designed specifically for the interment of cremated remains. Meandering paths through Ferncliff's mature trees will offer families a serene place for remembrance, allowing loved ones to be memorialized among the beauty of the forest while preserving the natural character of the landscape. Together, Terra Meadow and the Wooded Trails expand Ferncliff's commitment to providing thoughtful, inclusive, and environmentally sensitive choices for the families we serve. With construction underway, we look forward to sharing updates



as Terra Meadow takes shape and to welcoming the community to this extraordinary new space when it opens this fall.



Warm regards,

Shelley J Baker
Executive Director

More Than a Memorial—A Living Legacy

A memorial tells us when someone was born and when they passed away. But a life is so much more than two dates etched in stone.

Every person leaves behind stories, traditions, accomplishments, laughter, and memories that deserve to be remembered for generations. Today, Ferncliff offers families a meaningful way to preserve those memories through QR Memorial Codes.

A small QR code, called Memory Links, can be added to many existing memorials or included on a new memorial. When scanned with a smartphone, it opens a personalized online tribute where family and friends can share photographs, videos, written memories, military service, family history, and other special moments that celebrate a life well lived.

Imagine a grandchild, years from now, standing at a loved one's memorial and hearing their voice, seeing treasured family photographs, or learning stories they may have never had the opportunity to hear. It's a powerful way to connect future generations with their family's history.

Whether your loved one's story spans a lifetime of service, a passion for family, or simply the everyday moments that made them special, a QR Memorial Code helps ensure those memories are never lost.

To learn more about adding a Memory Links QR Memorial Code to an existing memorial or incorporating one into a new memorial, contact Ferncliff's Family Services Office. We'd be honored to help you create a lasting legacy that future generations can discover, cherish, and share.

A Lasting Tribute, Designed with Care

At Ferncliff, our experts help you design a custom monument or marker of the highest quality. We offer beautifully crafted memorials at affordable prices, and we know how to create a tribute that will truly last. From design to lasting care, everything is handled in one place.



What Does Perpetual Care Mean?

A Promise That Lasts Beyond a Lifetime

When families choose Ferncliff, they are not simply purchasing a burial space. They are placing their trust in an organization that has been serving the Springfield community since 1863 and will continue to do so for generations to come.

One of the most common questions we hear is, "What does perpetual care actually mean?"

Perpetual care is the commitment to maintain and preserve the cemetery forever. It is the promise that long after a burial takes place, the cemetery will continue to provide dignified care for the grounds, roads, trees, landscaping, buildings, and memorial spaces entrusted to us.

Unlike many other properties, cemeteries do not have an endpoint. Families expect and deserve to know that the final resting places of their loved ones will remain beautiful, safe, and respected not just for years, but for decades and centuries.

How Perpetual Care Works

A portion of the purchase price of every grave, crypt, niche, memorial and certain cemetery services are placed into a legally protected perpetual care fund. The principal of these funds is preserved, while investment earnings help support the ongoing maintenance and operation of the cemetery.

This financial model helps ensure that future generations will benefit from the same level of care that families experience today.

At Ferncliff, perpetual care supports many important activities, including:

- Maintaining lawns, trees, gardens, and landscapes
- Preserving historic monuments, mausoleums, and structures
- Repairing and maintaining roads, drainage systems, and infrastructure
- Enhancing safety and accessibility throughout the grounds
- Protecting the natural beauty and historic character of the cemetery
- Providing a peaceful environment for remembrance and reflection

More Than Maintenance

Perpetual care is more than mowing grass or trimming trees. It is about stewardship.

As caretakers of a place that holds the stories of generations, we have a responsibility to preserve Ferncliff's beauty, history, and mission for those who will visit long after we are gone. It means planning thoughtfully, investing wisely, and making decisions today that will benefit families tomorrow.

A Legacy of Trust

For more than 160 years, Ferncliff has been entrusted with the care of Springfield's history and the memories of those who came before us. Perpetual care is the foundation of that trust.

It is a promise that every family who chooses Ferncliff can have confidence that their loved one's resting place will continue to be cared for with dignity, respect, and compassion, not only today, but forever.

Because remembrance should never have an expiration date.

Support the Future of Ferncliff Foundation

The Ferncliff Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to preserving the beauty, history, and legacy of Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum while enhancing its service to the community for generations to come.

Throughout the year, the Foundation raises funds to help preserve, develop, maintain, and enhance the aesthetic, historic, educational, and natural features throughout Ferncliff. Gifts to the Foundation support ongoing beautification efforts, historic preservation, educational programming, community events, and special projects that ensure Ferncliff remains a place of peace, reflection, learning, and connection.

Join the Legacy Circle

The Legacy Circle honors individuals and families who have chosen to make a lasting investment in Ferncliff's future through planned giving.

By including the Ferncliff Foundation in your will, trust, or other estate plans, you become part of a tradition of stewardship that will help protect and preserve this sacred and historic place for future generations.

Your legacy gift helps fulfill the Foundation's mission by:

- Preserving and caring for the final resting places of loved ones
- Maintaining beautiful and welcoming grounds for the community
- Supporting arboretum preservation and enhancement
- Providing educational tours, workshops, and community programs
- Expanding opportunities for reflection, remembrance, and community engagement

Whether large or small, every planned gift helps ensure that Ferncliff continues to flourish as a vibrant arboretum, historic landmark, and community gathering place for years to come. We invite you to join this special circle of generous supporters whose compassion and vision will leave a meaningful and lasting impact.

Ways to Leave a Legacy Gift

Planned gifts may include:

- A gift through your will or living trust
- Naming the Ferncliff Foundation as a beneficiary of retirement accounts, life insurance policies, or other assets
- Charitable remainder trusts or other life-income arrangements
- A retained life estate or remaining interest in your home
- Other planned giving opportunities tailored to your wishes and goals

Annual Giving Opportunities

Annual memberships and gifts at every level provide essential support for the Foundation's ongoing mission and projects. Your generosity helps sustain the beauty, history, and community impact of Ferncliff today, while planned giving helps protect it for tomorrow.

To learn more about supporting the Ferncliff Foundation or becoming a member of the Legacy Circle, please contact us at **937.322.3491**

Whispering Memories Pet Haven *Coloring Contest*

Coloring contestants will be divided into 3 age groups:
⇨ 3-6 years old ⇨ 7-11 years old ⇨ 12-14 years old

Winners will be determined by Ferncliff staff.

There will be a 1st Place, 2nd Place, and 3rd Place for each age group.

1st Place: $25 Amazon Gift Card
2nd Place: $15 Grandpa Joe's Candy Shop Gift Card
3rd Place: $10 Grandpa Joe's Candy Shop Gift Card

You can pick up the coloring page at Ferncliff Cemetery office. Coloring pages are to be returned to Ferncliff Cemetery office to be entered in the 2026 Summer Coloring Contest. Please make sure the name, age, and contact number is completed at the bottom of the coloring page.

The deadline for the contest will be October 9, 2026.

Winners will be picked and announced on October 28, 2026.



Historical Series with Dr. Schanher

Dr. Paul W. "Ski" Schanher III has been a devoted member of the Springfield Cemetery Association and serves as the President of the Board of Trustees. "Ski" is a retired, local dentist and is an active and respected member of the historical community in Springfield and Clark County.

The article below is next in the series written by Dr. Schanher.

Growing Pains

Springfield's development from an early slow-growing frontier village gradually transitioned into a fast-growing community that would eventually become an industrial giant. Let us investigate the next steps that began the interesting journey.

In 1820, Springfield's first census registered 510 citizens, 285 men and 225 women. The census revealed that there were eight general stores, a cotton and a woolen mill along with a flouring mill. A few schools, a printing office, and a post office were also noted. Several attorneys and physicians called Springfield home. The only public building at this point was a courthouse.

Springfield became the Clark County seat in 1818, yet they did not have a courthouse. Not surprisingly, a local tavern on Main Street housed regular court sessions. Because of the "friendly" rivalry between "Old Virginia" to the west and "Sleepy Hollow" to the east, the commissioners of the county seat met in March 1819, heard arguments from both sides, but, initially, could not decide where to build the courthouse. Finally, they approved the motion to build it on the public square. Now, where to place the jail? A log cabin built on the "east side of Fisher Street nearly halfway between Main and Columbia Streets served as a temporary jail. Eventually, on December 6, 1824, the brick jail was completed on the public square.

As a result of an article written on September 25, 1825, in the local newspaper, the Western Pioneer, the community leaders met to discuss the question of lighting the streets. They suggested that "large glass lamps with double reflectors" costing $25 each be placed on posts at "suitable points along the streets." So that the proposed lamps could be properly funded, the leaders established a "contingent fund of 12 1/2 cents be raised from each house to pay for the oil and wick." In addition, they recommended that the lamps be lit and cared for, free of charge, by businesses or homeowners who most benefitted by the placement of the lamps

On January 23, 1827, Springfield became incorporated as a town. Because of its steady growth, it became evident that Springfield would become a place of prominence and prosperity. Local citizen initiatives paved the way for commercial trade. For instance, wheat deposited at the mill was converted to flour before being sent to Cincinnati to be exchanged for merchandise loaded on wagons traveling to Springfield. The growing community had no railroads yet, instead it relied upon teams of six to eight horses pulling wagons to bring traded goods to local markets.

The job market significantly increased in August 1827 with the advent of a large paper mill built on the Mill Run where it intersected Center Street near North Street. The highly successful mill began operating June 1828. Production of high-quality printing paper opened the door to add a first-class bindery to the paper mill that continued for the next twenty years.

Join us in the next issue as Springfield continues to transition from a village to a town.

We will continue "Springfield' Saga" in the next quarterly issue.

Did You Know? You Don't Actually Own the Cemetery Lot

It may come as a surprise, but when you purchase a grave space at a cemetery, you are not buying a piece of real estate. Ferncliff retains ownership of the land. What you are purchasing is a **right of interment**, the right for one person to be buried in that grave space. One grave space includes one burial right.

Today, as more families choose cremation, many are looking for meaningful ways to keep loved ones together. If a grave space has already been used for a traditional burial, it may still be possible to bury the cremated remains of another family member in that same space by purchasing a **Second Right of Interment**.

With a Second Right of Interment, the cremated remains are respectfully placed in an urn above the existing burial vault. The original burial is never disturbed. This allows spouses, parents, children, or other loved ones to rest together in the same family grave while preserving the dignity and integrity of the original interment.

Choosing a Second Right of Interment offers several benefits:

- Keeps family members together in one place.
- Honors existing family burial traditions.
- Eliminates the need to purchase an additional grave space.
- Often provides significant cost savings compared to purchasing a new burial space.

If you or someone you know is considering cremation, we encourage you to contact our Family Services team before making final arrangements. In many cases, a Second Right of Interment may be available, allowing cremated remains to be buried alongside a loved one in an existing family grave.

Our staff is always happy to answer questions and help families explore the options available to them. A simple conversation today may provide a meaningful solution for generations to come.

Getting to Know our Board Members:
Steve Schumaker: Trustee

Few people have dedicated as much of their professional life to public service as Steve Schumaker. A lifelong Clark County resident, Steve was born and raised in the Sunnyland neighborhood of Springfield Township, just outside the Springfield city limits on South Yellow Springs Street

Steve graduated from Shawnee High School in 1971 before continuing his education at Wittenberg University, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, graduating summa cum laude in 1975. He then attended The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, earning his Juris Doctor with honors in 1978.

His legal career spans nearly five decades and reflects a deep commitment to the citizens of Clark County and the State of Ohio. While attending law school, Steve served as an intern and clerk with the Clark County Prosecutor's Office and the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Ohio. After graduation, he joined the Clark County Prosecutor's Office as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, serving from 1978 to 1984. He was then elected Clark County Prosecuting Attorney, a position he held for 26 years from 1985 to 2010. From 2011 to 2018, Steve served as Deputy Attorney General for Law Enforcement in the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Since 2018, he has served as Judge of the Municipal Court of Clark County.

In addition to his distinguished legal career, Steve has been active in numerous professional and community organizations. He served as President and Board Member of the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association and as President and Board Member of the Association of Government Attorneys in Capital Litigation. He was also a member of Kiwanis for many years.

One of Steve's most unique passions is exploring the underwater world. He has been a member of the Dive Crew for the Wave Foundation at Newport Aquarium since 2009 and holds certifications as both a Divemaster and Instructor through the National Association of Underwater Instructors.

Family remains at the center of Steve's life. He and his beautiful wife, Robyn, will celebrate 48 years of marriage this October. Together they have three accomplished children: Alex, a Principal Scientist with the Turbine Division of the Propulsion Directorate at the United States Air Force Research Laboratory; Ryan, an ICU nurse with the Atrium Health System in North Carolina; and Laura, an Ear, Nose, Throat and Facial Plastic Surgeon in the Cincinnati region. They are also proud grandparents to eight wonderful grandchildren.

Steve's family has a strong connection to military service and aviation. His father, a Pittsburgh native, flew more than 200 combat missions as a P-47 Thunderbolt pilot during World War II in the China-Burma-India Theater before returning to Clark County and continuing his career at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Although he is one of Ferncliff's newer Trustees, having joined the Board in 2025, Steve's connection to Ferncliff stretches back much further. Both his and Robyn's parents are interred at Ferncliff, making the cemetery a place filled with personal meaning and memories.

When asked what Ferncliff means to him, Steve shared: "I have always valued Ferncliff as an incredibly peaceful place to honor those who came before us and where the history of the Clark County region is documented in a very unique way. A walk through the grounds always brings back many memories and stories of the generations that built the area, state, and country. I am proud to play a very small role in continuing the Ferncliff legacy."



We are grateful for Steve's service, leadership, and commitment to preserving Ferncliff's mission and heritage for future generations.

The Governing Body of Ferncliff Cemetery

Ferncliff Cemetery is governed by The Springfield Cemetery Association, a non-profit, volunteer organization established in 1863. The membership is comprised of 23-27 Association Members and nine Trustees. (* indicates Trustees)

Currently, these members include:

- Pamela Bennett
- Bill Brougher*, Secretary
- Jim Campbell
- Darnell Carter
- John Detrick*
- Sharon Evans*
- Wendy Ford
- Harold Goodrich
- Mark Grimes
- Daniel Harkins
- Dale Henry
- Sheila Henry*
- Deborah Hill*
- Darrell Kitchen*, Vice President
- John Landess
- Ed Leventhal
- Maureen Sheehan Massaro
- Julie McGregor
- Dan McGregor
- Dale Miller
- Peter Noonan
- John Ritter
- Reed Robertson
- Eric Samuelson
- Dr. Paul "Ski" Schanher*, President
- Steve Schumaker*
- Laurel Shouvlin
- Jon Sterling
- Dr. Richard Umbaugh*, Treasurer
- Chester Walthall
- Patty Young



Mausoleum Crawl Returns for the 9th year.

Join us Monday, October 26th or Thursday, October 29th to experience the history, grandeur, and mystery of some of Ferncliff's large family mausoleums. This walking tour, led by historian Kevin Rose, of the Turner Foundation, accesses parts of Springfield's history seldom seen, by lantern light. As you experience Ferncliff in twilight, you'll also get a chance to learn about unique family histories that helped shape our city. This experience is both educational and memorable.

Note that these are strenuous walking tours including hills. Please dress for the October weather. Registration starts at 5:00 p.m. and the Crawl starts promptly at 6:00 p.m. Suggested donation of $10 per person. Call now for reservations (937-322-3491) as spots are limited.

Fall Back: Gate Hours Changing

As the sun starts to set earlier in the evenings, we are reminded that it is time to change our gate hours. Beginning **Sunday, Nov. 1**, *Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum will observe winter hours:*

McCreight Avenue Gate: Open daily from **7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**
Plum Street Gates: Open daily from **7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

Thank you for your cooperation as we transition to our Fall/Winter hours. We appreciate your help in keeping Ferncliff safe, peaceful, and welcoming place for all who visit.



Are you thinking about purchasing space at Ferncliff?
Perhaps near a loved one?
Call about availability of property throughout our grounds.

Ferncliff
501 W. McCreight Ave.
Springfield, OH 45504