

THE

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BEECHWOOD WAY

MAGAZINE

*The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation
20 years of honouring Canadians*

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THE BEECHWOOD CEMETERY FOUNDATION

20 Years of Honouring Canadians

PEOPLE ARE OFTEN SURPRISED to learn that Beechwood is not publicly funded. In fact, Beechwood is owned by The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation and operates on a not-for-profit basis.

What is the Foundation?

- The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation was incorporated December 13, 2000.
- It is a registered charity.
- It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

The Foundation will:

- Be a place for the living, a peaceful and serene place where all people can embrace life while honouring the lives of those who have come before us;
- Grow in stature as a national place of tribute, and a means of preserving and promoting Ottawa's and Canada's rich and diverse heritage;
- Reflect sustainability in preserving its beautiful natural landscape and architectural splendour, in keeping with its status as The National Cemetery of Canada and its designation as a National Historic Site;
- Continue to be a symbol of Canada's diversity;
- Promote educational, historical and religious activities beneficial to the National Capital Region.

The creation of the Foundation was to ensure that the maintenance and the beauty of this National Historic Site are preserved, while working towards a greater charitable role within the community.



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Visit us online to learn more about Beechwood, the National Cemetery of Canada and read back issues of *The Beechwood Way* at: www.beechwoodottawa.ca

We want your feedback on how we are doing! Contact: Erika Wagner at foundation@beechwoodottawa.ca

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The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation - Board of Directors: BGen (ret'd) Gerry Peddle, Chair; Clare Beckton, Vice-Chair; Chamika Ailapperuma; Gen (ret'd) Maurice Baril; Stephen Bleeker; Louise Boyer-Guindon; Cajo Brando; Col (ret'd) Dr. Ronald A. Davidson; Stephen Gallagher; Ian Guthrie; RCMP D/Commr. (ret'd) Tim Killam; Louise L. Léger; Rebecca Murray, Maureen O'Brien; Richard Wagner; Grete Hale (Chair emeritus); Robert White (Director emeritus).

Thanks to all the donors that have kindly donated to the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation throughout the years. You have impacted a very special place and left a mark on building a legacy.

What are some of the things the Foundation does?

Events

Beechwood maintains an annual Calendar of Events:

- Monthly and private tours to the community and school groups
- Annual Historical Tour – the theme changes yearly
- Musical Performances
- Remembrance Day service
- Memorial services
- Candlelight service
- Annual community events
- Many more!

Plaques

- *Great Canadian Profile Plaque Program* – highlighting famous Canadians buried throughout the Beechwood grounds
- *Reconciling History Program* – acknowledging the painful history of the indigenous community

Publications

- *Historical Portraits* Book – identifying and recording interesting people buried at Beechwood
- *The Beechwood Way* Magazine

Without the generous support of our donors, none of our programs would be possible. It is with these funds that we can not only offer the community and our Beechwood families the above programming, but also create special projects.

Here are a few special projects we have created:

- Tree carving program – which turns dying trees into art
- Biotic pollination program – Beechwood has bees on the roof helping to keep our grounds beautiful
- Community sections – RCMP, OPS, CSIS
- Replanting fallen or ageing trees



Would you like to continue the wonderful work the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation does?

Should you wish to donate, please visit our website:
beechwoodottawa.ca

BEECHWOOD CEMETERY FOUNDATION: 20 YEARS LATER

by Andrew Roy

President and Executive Director

OVER THE COURSE OF 20 YEARS, we can certainly be proud of our Beechwood Cemetery Foundation. We have seen the Foundation grow its dual mandate of safeguarding the cemetery's future and increasing public awareness of the cemetery and the important events of Canadian history associated with persons buried within it.

Since 2000, Beechwood has grown as a place of national significance; these milestones have provided us with a unique opportunity to serve all Canadians. Becoming the home of the National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Forces was an important first step and helped establish us as a place of honour for those who serve our country. It was then followed by the amalgamation of the four military sections to form, in 2007, the National Military Cemetery.

In 2001, Beechwood was designated a National Historic Site for several different reasons. Firstly, Beechwood is an exceptional example of 19th-century rural cemetery design, characterized by a naturalistic, pastoral and picturesque landscape of many perspectives.

We were also recognized as a very good example of landscape expressing distinctive cultural traditions such as:

“the Chinese Cemetery of Ottawa designed according to Chinese religious principles, and a highly visible military cemetery; a concentration of mausolea, monuments, and markers of architectural and of historical interest that illustrate many aspects of the history of Canada, the Province of Ontario and Ottawa.”

**Directory of Federal Heritage Designations –
Designations of National Historic Significance**

www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=1942

These distinct community and cultural sections, monuments and history are why Beechwood is so unique and special. This diversity ultimately led to Beechwood becoming the National Cemetery of Canada, by the Bill C-17, an Act of Parliament that did receive all-party support in the House of Commons in 2009.

In 2004, the RCMP National Memorial Cemetery was officially dedicated, which came from a partnership between the Ottawa Division of the RCMP Veterans' Association and the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation. The Ottawa Police Service Memorial Cemetery was established in 2011, followed by the official opening of the CSIS National Memorial Cemetery in 2017.

One of the crowning moments of the last 20 years was the building of the Beechwood National Memorial Centre, which included the Hall of Colours and the Sacred Space. The Sacred Space is the most impressive room in the Centre. It was conceived from extensive consultations with local faith leaders and the Ontario Multi-Faith Council. A skylight dome is poised at the centre of the soaring rooftop canopy; Beechwood's nine-sided multi-functional facility serves the commemorative needs of diverse backgrounds of all Canadians.



Apart from the continuing development of the Beechwood Cemetery and the building of the Beechwood National Memorial Centre, the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation has the mandate to increase the public awareness of the cemetery and the important events of Canadian history associated with persons buried within it.

The Foundation works hard to fulfill this part of its mandate. We have several social media platforms that deliver daily information about the history, the people, the grounds and the monuments at Beechwood. We celebrate the history and share these articles in national newspapers and magazines and our own *Beechwood Way*, published quarterly.

Beechwood's *Great Canadian Profile Plaque Program* continues to share the lives and times of Canadians, of diverse backgrounds, and how they have influenced the city of Ottawa, the province or the country. Every year, we are discovering new stories and sharing them with the public by adding new plaques and welcoming guests and the public to their unveiling. The *Great Canadian Profile Plaque Program* is an important tool in our historical and educational programs and provides visitors with incredible insight into people's contributions.

The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation has continued to host its yearly events such as our Annual Historical Walking Tour, Annual Memorial Service, Christmas Candlelight Service and monthly historical walking tours. We have increased our events and activities, including themed historical tours, new events such as No Stone Left Alone or the Canadian Tulip Festival's Veteran's Day at Beechwood and other cultural and community activities. The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation is looking forward to reengaging in these events in the post COVID-19 period.

We are always looking toward the future and the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation continues to share history and the stories of the people of Beechwood. We also are looking forward to new improvements and developments on the cemetery grounds like the finishing of the Ottawa Police Service Memorial Cemetery and the CSIS National Memorial Cemetery, to opening up new sections to better serve our communities and continuing our green and horticultural programs.

I cannot express our gratitude and thankfulness to all those who choose Beechwood as their final resting place and to those who support the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation. The next 20 years of the Foundation will be bright and we look forward to engaging with you for the future.



RECONCILING HISTORY

Learning from the Past at Beechwood

by Dr. Cindy Blackstock

MONUMENTS TO slave owners and colonists are being taken down across North America as protests against systemic discrimination gain momentum. Some say removing the statues are the only way to avoid the exaltation of racism. Others suggest that they should either remain untouched or remain with information plaques telling the whole story. Beechwood's *Reconciling History Program* is a promising example of the latter. It places historically accurate plaques at the burial places of persons who were active in residential schools, as opportunities for education and lessons for reconciliation.

In 1907, newspaper headlines across Canada documented the alarm of Peter Henderson Bryce, Chief Medical Health Officer for the Indian Affairs Department that children in residential schools were dying at a rate of 25% per year owing to negligent health services and school health practices. He pleaded with politicians and senior federal officials, like Duncan Campbell Scott, to save children's lives. The Canadian government refused, retaliated against Dr. Bryce for speaking up, and eventually pushed him out of the public service and into historical obscurity. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission estimated that 4,000 to 6,000 children died at the schools. In 2008, I thought that Dr. Bryce deserved to be remembered for his morally courageous advocacy. In 2015, Dr. Bryce's descendants joined with residential school survivors and community members to erect the first plaque as part of the *Reconciling History Program*.

Bryce isn't the only residential school figure at Beechwood. The man who refused Bryce's reforms, Duncan Campbell Scott, is also buried there. Scott had a plaque acknowledging his role as a Confederate poet and silencing his role in residential schools. After a thorough historical review, the Reconciling History Program replaced this plaque with one that deals with his role in cultural genocide against Aboriginal people.

The *Reconciling History Program* inspired a new children's book, "Spirit Bear: Echoes of the Past" about learning from the past featuring Beechwood's Echo the Fox!



A UNIQUE AND GROWING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BEECHWOOD AND BFO OTTAWA

by Elaine Dean

BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO – Ottawa Region (BFO Ottawa) is a volunteer-led, local charity that inspires hope and healing for people who are grieving. Our unique and growing partnership with Beechwood started nine years ago, when Beechwood volunteered to host our very first Butterfly Memorial Event.

The event is now an annual one. It begins inside Beechwood's Sacred Space, where attendees listen to live music and guest speakers while the names of their loved ones are displayed on screen. After the ceremony, we move outside to Beechwood's Botanical Gardens, where we release butterflies in memory of our loved ones.

BFO Ottawa's Board of Directors is supported by more than 40 trained volunteers and by three part-time dedicated staff. Each one of us has experienced our own losses and has decided to share our courage and knowledge with others.

We believe in the importance of bringing the Ottawa community together, and know how important it is to create space in our society for people who are grieving. In 2019, together we dedicated some 2,700 volunteer hours to running 210 support groups, holding two memorial events and supporting more than 2,100 people.

This year, our ninth annual Butterfly Memorial Event has taken place in July, broadcast for the first time by video from Beechwood.

While people were not able to physically gather in large groups this time, many people were there with us virtually, and not just from Ottawa. Our friends and family across the country could join too. Our guest speakers Scott and Anne Oake joined by video from Winnipeg. After the ceremony, we released 100 live butterflies in Beechwood's Botanical Gardens, all at the same time.

Three years ago, Beechwood offered to host our annual Tree of Life Memorial Event too. That event takes place in early December before the holidays begin, when people tend to feel their grief more acutely. We are not sure yet if we will be able to offer the event in person or by video. We do know, however, that it will be at Beechwood and that, just like previous memorial events, it will be very meaningful for attendees.

We'd like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Beechwood family, especially to Erika Wagner and Nicolas McCarthy, for providing us with access to your facilities and your staff, and for your continued partnership with us. It is because of the support you've provided to BFO Ottawa, as Canada's National Cemetery, that more people are aware of our programs and that we are able to help more people.



The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation

A place for the living

Support the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation

We need your support to fund the diverse community projects and programs that assist in maintaining Beechwood as a National Historic Site and the National Cemetery of Canada, ensuring that this historic property will be maintained in the highest order for centuries to come.



Make a donation to the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation today at:

www.beechwoodottawa.ca/en/donation

As a registered Canadian charity, Beechwood issues an income tax receipt for donations of \$20 or more.

Our charitable registration number is **88811 2018 RR0001**.

