



**MARCH – APRIL 2019**

# Orange County Cemetery District

## TRUSTEES

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Tim Deutsch, General Manager

## “Spring Ahead” Means Extended Hours for El Toro Memorial Park

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour, as March 10<sup>th</sup> marks the beginning of Daylight Saving Time. For El Toro Memorial Park that means the beginning of extended visitation hours. Starting on Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, the grounds at El Toro Memorial Park will be open for visitation at 8 a.m. with the gates closing promptly at 7:00 p.m. Extended hours continue until Daylight Saving Time ends on Nov. 3, 2019.

Visitation hours at Santa Ana Cemetery and Anaheim Cemetery are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. year-round. All three cemetery offices including the District Office are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Offices are closed on the weekends.

### PLEASE RESPECT CLOSING TIMES AND PLAN VISITS ACCORDINGLY

District staff and our gatekeepers respectfully ask that you please consider closing times when you visit the grounds. If you wish to stay for any length of time, please don't enter the park five minutes before the gates are to close and expect to be allowed to stay. All visitors to the parks should plan to exit the grounds at or before closing time so the cemeteries can be cleared and the premises locked in an efficient and timely manner.

We greatly appreciate your cooperation in this regard.

## Veterans Encouraged by Orange County Land Conveyance

The Orange County Cemetery District Board of Trustees was pleasantly surprised by the unexpected visit of three veterans who came to the Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting to speak during Public Comments. The veterans included U.S. Army Veteran Mr. Ron Bengochea, and two U.S. Marine Corps Veterans, Mr. Nick Berardino and Mr. Bill Cook. Mr. Cook is the Chairman of the Orange County Veterans Memorial Park Foundation. Mr. Berardino is the President of the Veterans Alliance of Orange County and President of Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation. All three gentlemen expressed their exuberant gratitude to the Board as well as to General Manager, Tim Deutsch for their support and encouragement in the development of a veterans cemetery in Orange County.

At the Dec. 4, 2018 County of Orange Board of Supervisors Meeting, 283.3 acres of land near the junction of the 241 Toll Road and CA State Route 91 were conveyed to the District, with the stipulation that half of the developable land be set aside for a veterans cemetery. Tim Deutsch, in turn, thanked the veterans stating that had it not been for their efforts in raising awareness about the need for an Orange County Veterans Cemetery, the District might not have been considered for the land, which will also be used by the District



**(From Left to Right) Ron Bengochea, Nick Berardino, Board Chair Cynthia Ward, Bill Cook and General Manager Tim Deutsch at the Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.**

to develop a much needed fourth Orange County public cemetery. The District looks forward with great anticipation to working with the veterans and various departments within the County to ensure the best use of the land for all Orange County residents.

## Groundskeeper Sergio Ayala and Administrative Mgr. Dianna Torrence Retire in March After Years of Dedicated Service to the District

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, the District is saying goodbye to two long-time, dedicated and very experienced employees: Groundskeeper, Sergio Ayala who is retiring after working 30 years for the District; and Administrative Manager, Dianna Torrence who has worked for the District since 1991.

When Sergio Ayala came to the District in 1989, he already had eleven years of cemetery groundskeeping experience with a career that started at Ascension Cemetery. During his thirty years with the Orange County Cemetery District he has worked at all three cemeteries, but spent most of his time at Anaheim and Santa Ana Cemeteries.

Dianna Torrence began with the District as a part-time secretary and was promoted to Office Manager in 2000. As an Administrative Manager, she has seen the District through the transitions from manual paper receipts and typewriters, to DOS computers with WordPerfect, to a fully automated office with windows, internet, websites and emails. Virtually all of the organizational systems and procedures that keep the District running have either been developed or refined through Dianna's efforts. When the General Manager is not available, Dianna Torrence is next in command.



**Sergio Ayala retires after 30 years serving as a groundskeeper for the District.**



**Dianna Torrence (pictured left) will retire after 28 years with the District. Brenda Manriquez (pictured right) was just honored for 5 years of service.**

Between the two of them, Sergio and Dianna have helped literally thousands of families through some of the toughest moments of their lives. Sergio has served faithfully out on the grounds conducting interments, helping people find gravesites, and keeping the parks maintained. Dianna has been the anchor of our office, answering questions and calls from both staff and the public, ensuring the integrity of our invoicing and financial transactions, managing human resources, and overall office management. We celebrate with Dianna and Sergio at this important time in their lives, and we wish them all the best as they embark on new adventures. We will greatly miss them and the knowledge, experience and commitment they shared.

## Staff Honored for Years of Service at Annual Awards Luncheon

Every year the District arranges a special lunch out for the cemetery managers, leadworkers, and groundskeepers. With staff spread out at three different locations, it is a great opportunity for everyone to gather together, become reacquainted, and recognize those who have reached milestones in their careers. General Manager, Tim Deutsch also uses the time to give a "State of the District" presentation, so staff can hear first hand about important news, plans for the future, and changes in the District.

This year, four staff members were honored for their length of service. Andrew Trejo, the Leadworker at Anaheim Cemetery received an award for completing 10 years of service. Juan Lopez-Bautista, the Leadworker at El Toro Memorial Park was recognized for completing 15 years of service. Santa Ana Cemetery Manager, Julio Amarillas was honored for reaching his 20-year milestone. Finally,



**From left to right: Staff members Juan Lopez-Bautista, Julio Amarillas, Rigoberto Ramirez, and Andrew Trejo.**

Rigoberto Ramirez, groundskeeper at Santa Ana Cemetery was honored for completing thirty years of service to the District! Our heartfelt congratulations to these wonderful staff members! All of your hard work is greatly appreciated and does not go unnoticed.



## Construction Update: Santa Ana Cemetery and El Toro Memorial Park



### Santa Ana Cemetery Restroom Remodel

Work is progressing quickly for Santa Ana Cemetery's restroom renovation (pictured left). The new sewage tank is in place and the roadway in front of the main office will be repaved within days. Tile work is completed in the newly remodeled restroom. Lighting and fixtures will be installed next. We expect the restroom to be open to the public within the next 30 days. Having access to an indoor restroom, even when the office is closed, will be a welcome improvement for visitors to the park.

### El Toro Memorial Park Restroom and Niche Project

After some unexpected delays, construction is ramping up again on the new public restroom and niche project at El Toro Memorial Park. Additional rebar was required for the block wall, which has now passed inspection, roofing and stucco work are commencing on the new restroom facility, and all of the concrete niche castings have finally arrived. Once we receive doors and windows, the interior work on the restroom can be completed. After the niche castings are installed, construction can begin on the covered committal service structure and the placement of pavers will take place. We hope to see completion of this project sometime in May.

## Recent Downpours Create Concerns for Visitors and Staff

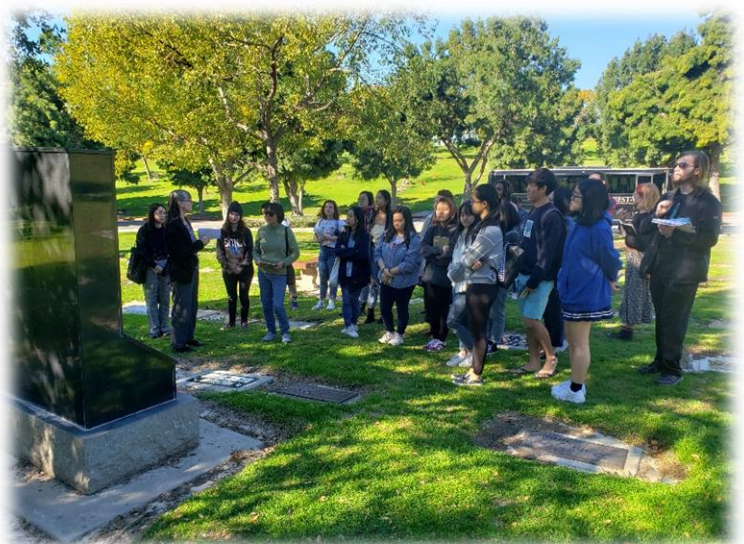
While all the rain this winter has been a welcome relief for drought-weary Southern California, an unfortunate and often alarming consequence is the sinking of gravesites and markers. Sometimes the damage can be quite significant and the District is aware of how upsetting this can be for families visiting the grounds. When severe weather like this occurs, staff does their very best to make a complete survey of the grounds and complete repairs as quickly as possible.

We appreciate your help in notifying the office when you observe such issues with your loved one's gravesite or marker. We also ask that you please be patient while we work to correct these problems, as staff must also be attentive to interment service needs and some repairs cannot be done until the ground dries out. After heavy rainfall, visitors are advised to please use caution as the lawns can be slippery and tripping hazards are increased.

## El Toro Memorial Park Hosts Cemetery Tour for SOKA Students

On January 23<sup>rd</sup> a group of twenty-four students and two professors from SOKA University were given a tour of the grounds at El Toro Memorial Park by Communications Manager, Mary Funk and Cemetery Manager, Bud Bales. Professor Xiaoxing Liu, who has a PhD in Chinese Language and Culture, organized the group of students who came to learn about different traditions and cultural beliefs concerning death and the operations of the cemetery.

The tour lasted about an hour and a half with information provided on the three public cemeteries operated by the District; the difference between a public and private cemetery, how burials are conducted, and staff's personal experience dealing with grief and death. If you have a group that is interested in having an educational or historical tour, please contact the District office at (949) 951-9102.



**Communications Manager, Mary Funk leads a group of students from SOKA University on a tour of the grounds at El Toro Memorial Park.**

**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. The public is welcome to attend.

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 March and April, meetings will be held as follows:

- **Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**
- **Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</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**

All District cemeteries are open for visitation seven days a week, year-round.

**Anaheim & Santa Ana Cemeteries** are open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**El Toro Memorial Park in Lake Forest** is open during the Fall and Winter months from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily.

**El Toro Memorial Park – Extended Hours**

When Daylight Saving Time begins on March 10<sup>th</sup> El Toro Memorial Park will remain open until 7:00 p.m.

When Daylight Saving Time ends on Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> the park will close at 5:00 p.m.

**Offices are closed on the weekends.**

**Our Mission Statement and Core Values**

*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 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.

The District permits the allowed two items of flowers and/or decorations to be left on gravesites during holidays or for special occasions, such as anniversaries, birthdays and for new interments. Please come to the cemetery office and let us know that you have a special occasion and request that the flowers and decorations be left on the space. 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 in this regard is greatly appreciated.

**In honor of Persian New Year, flowers At El Toro Memorial Park may be placed on Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup> until Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. In honor of Easter, flowers at all three District cemeteries may be placed on gravesites on Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> and should be removed by Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>.**



A complete listing of the District's extended holiday flower schedule for 2019 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.

