

# Heritage Gazette

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY • SUMMER 2015

## Not Dead, But Arisen

### VICTORIAN SPIRITUALISTS AT CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

At a recent Tombs and Tones book club meeting, the group discussed Mary Roach's *Spook: Science Tackles the Afterlife*, an apropos selection for a cemetery book club. Roach is a well-known science writer who has delved into a variety of subjects, from dead bodies (*Stiff*) to the physiology of sex (*Bonk*), and everything in between. *Stiff* was the book club's very first read, and it was almost unanimously enjoyed by all readers. However, *Spook* was received differently. Roach's logic and scientific skepticism muddled rather than clarified the narrative, and it seemed that the author spent an inordinate amount of space ridiculing rather than exploring the possibilities. In one admittedly entertaining section of the book, Roach explained the Victorian-era origins of spiritualism, and proponents of the early movement happened to serve as easy targets (just Google ectoplasm to get a sense of the subject matter). But Tombs and Tones readers as a whole felt uneasy about Roach's conclusions, or lack thereof, especially when we discovered that we had a spiritual medium in our midst. Is science even equipped to handle this heady subject?

Far be it for a humble and necessarily short newsletter article to ponder the big questions. But it is possible to explore the breadth and depth of the rise of spiritualism through the example of a few HCC residents. Briefly described, spiritualism relies on the belief in communication with the beyond and the dead. The movement began in the 1840s and entrenched itself during the American Civil War. Spiritualism still exists today, and the origins and evolution of this movement can be explored at Congressional Cemetery.

Belief in an afterlife is naturally expressed on many a headstone, as you would expect in any cemetery. But if you're wandering around the Congressional Cemetery grounds, you might find a few that vary from the customary religious iconography and epitaphs. For instance, take the example of Emily Douglas Forrest, widow of Commodore French Forrest. She is buried next to her husband, whose headstone dutifully notes his birth and death dates in a traditional manner. However, Emily's is a bit different.

Emily Douglas Forrest's unusual headstone.

Continued on page 7

## Letter from the Chair

People are constantly amazed at how much time, effort, and activity it takes to run Congressional Cemetery on a daily basis. Lauren Maloy, HCC's Program Director, recently wrote a blog post about why we have so many events at the cemetery — some of which draw some criticism from our extended community. But the bottom line is that 35 acres of historic resting grounds require a lot of maintenance and money to keep it a safe, beautiful, and properly preserved place to visit. You may not realize that the mowing of the grass alone costs us over \$80,000 per year!



All this is to say that while we tend to get mired in the day-to-day activity, I want all of our supporters to know that our President Paul Williams and the Board are very committed to the long term solvency and financial stability of the cemetery. Every couple of years, starting with the very first Board, a strategic plan is written and adopted. In the true spirit of strategic planning, if an event or activity in the near term can't tie back clearly to a longer term strategic objective, then we shouldn't pursue it. By the end of 2015, we hope to have adopted a new strategic plan that will direct our fundraising, generate new revenue streams, engage existing and new stakeholders, and enhance our active burial efforts for the next 3 to 5 years and beyond. And, while we have some extraordinary visions of what we *could* do at the cemetery, we have to balance our stretch goals against reasonable and responsible budgeting.

I look forward to sharing more detail about the strategic plan with you in the coming months. We do believe we are close to getting out of the cycle of managing to break even year over year and into a period of growing our operating income, which will help fund some of that vision I mentioned. Nonetheless, we could not survive without the very generous support of all of our donors. Whether large or small, directed or general, we appreciate and feel the impact of every single donation. Thank you for your continued support of HCC.

—Kelly Crowe



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION  
OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

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The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are deductible to the extent permitted by federal tax laws. Funding for the preservation and maintenance of Historic Congressional Cemetery is provided in part by the Congressional Cemetery Endowment, which was created with matching funds provided by the U.S. Congress and administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

## From the President

Summer is here in the cemetery, and so are our sweltering 100-degree days. We've moved some of our events around the calendar this year to avoid the heat – Day of the Dog is now in the early spring to keep our pups safe and cool. The best was hearing news that multiple dogs were adopted that day!

Thanks to our faithful readers, a total of fifteen Victorian-style lamp posts have been sponsored and installed in the cemetery, adding a bit of lovely ambiance to the night time events and visits here. We expect additional sponsorships that will expand the roads and trails lined with lights. Thanks to a generous gift of \$10,000 from Board member

Edward S. Miller, we continued our ground penetrating radar project where we left off after our contractor suffered a broken leg last year. Bob Perry and his son can be seen on the grounds mapping our unmarked burial sites and confirming located of our utilities and infrastructure. It's a fascinating project that is used just as soon as it is completed.

Board member Rebecca Roberts hosted a tour coined "Uppity Women" featuring many of our women's suffragists and early pioneers in their field, such as Belva Lockwood. She was the first woman to run for President on a major party ticket in 1884 and actually received just under 5,000 votes, despite not being

able to vote herself, being a woman. She also is noted as being the first woman to argue a case in front of the Supreme Court.

Movie night, dubbed "Cinematernity" is another new activity Program Director Lauren Maloy has created, and we started off well, with over 400 people coming to watch Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* under a twilight sky. We'll continue the Hitchcock theme throughout the summer.

If you haven't been to the cemetery in a few years, I suggest you do—there have been lots of positive changes since your last visit.

—Paul K. Williams, President

### AN UPDATE ON SPONSORSHIPS

If you receive newsletters from nonprofits such as ours, you're likely familiar with the "asks" requesting your help, sponsorship, money for "fill-in-the-blank." In fact, if you're interested in ways to help



the cemetery, see pages 6 and 9 for more information on donations and sponsorships. Yes, we're shameless, but such is the plight of a nonprofit, eternally asking for help from the community. But all these requests for assistance are sincere and necessary, as Congressional Cemetery is thriving in large part due to support and attention from private donors like you.

Sponsorships help us give you something personal and concrete in return for your donation. Our ongoing lamp post sponsorship program (as Paul mentions in his letter above), has been quite successful, and we have recently begun to affix the memorial plaques to the lamp posts themselves. In the near future, we will be launching a bench sponsorship program, and our brick program is well underway (see page 9). With all of these programs, donors are fulfilling a practical need of the cemetery while hopefully receiving a little in return. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to ask, and we hope that one of these programs appeals to you.



## DAY OF THE DOG

Beautiful weather, happy pups, hilarious games and hundreds of visitors. What more could you ask for? Our third annual Day of the Dog was a great success. Our thanks go out to our sponsors, volunteers, and the always-adorable pups who contributed to the event. On to next year!



## COLUMBARIUM PROGRESS

The columbarium project is well on its way to completion. The structure is safely ensconced in a quiet corner of the cemetery at the end of the path that leads from the Chapel. All that remains to do is landscaping. Plants will be arriving within the next few weeks that will brighten the space and complete the columbarium project. We will need the assistance of volunteers to plant the area, so please do keep an eye out for an upcoming volunteer

planting day that will be announced via our social media channels.



## YOGA MORTIS

Come stretch with us! Yoga Mortis takes place every Monday from 6-7 pm in the Chapel. We have a bit of air conditioning and a lot of fans to help beat the DC heat, so now is the perfect time to come and experience a relaxing and enlightening yoga class. The suggested donation is \$10, and no RSVP is necessary.



Photo credit: Shawn Lo

## PRIDE 5K

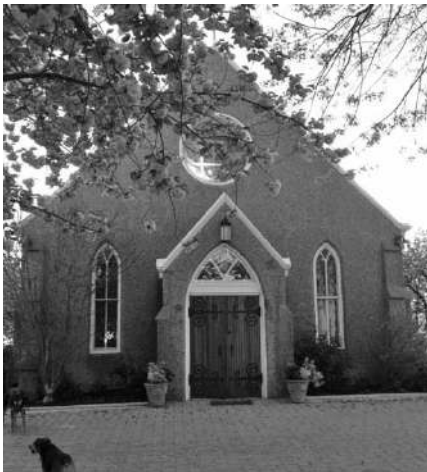
Over 1,000 eager runners toed the line on Friday, June 12th for DC Front Runners' third annual Pride 5k. As tradition dictates, the race started and finished near the grave of gay activist Leonard Matlovich. The race raised funds for Team DC Student-Athlete Scholarship and SMYAL, and a portion of the proceeds benefited historic preservation at Congressional Cemetery. We're proud to be an official partner of this event and look forward to hosting many more in the future.



## SAVE THE DATE! DEAD MAN'S RUN 2015

Speaking of fun 5k runs... Dead Man's Run returns for the fifth year on Saturday, October 3rd. This evening run promises to yet

again draw hundreds of costumed runners to the cemetery. The course winds through the cemetery and along the adjacent Anacostia Trail. All 5k participants receive a t-shirt and a beer as part of their registration fee. And if this isn't enough to draw you, we're not quite sure what will! Go to [www.congressional-cemetery.org](http://www.congressional-cemetery.org) for more information and to register.



## RENTALS

Did you know that both our Chapel and our Gatehouse are available to rent for event space? Our Chapel has been the location for business meetings, wedding ceremonies, baby showers and birthday parties. If you'd like more information about rates and availability, please contact Office Manager Crystal Pate at [cpate@congressionalcemetery.org](mailto:cpate@congressionalcemetery.org).

## COME ON IN

We are often asked in the Gatehouse if we allow cars to drive into the cemetery, so we wanted to clarify our unofficial policy here. Although we do discourage cars within the gates, if you are visiting an interred family member or friend please know that you are always welcome to drive



*Come on in...by foot, car, or carriage.*

in. Because we do operate an off-leash dog walking program, we ask that everyone be mindful of closing the gate and of roaming pups, but it is important to us that family members know they are always welcome to drive into the cemetery if they wish.

## CINEMATERY



Perhaps you've heard through the grapevine that Congressional Cemetery has started hosting movie nights in the cemetery. Our first one in May was a huge success with over 400 visitors, and we're anticipating even more folks for our July 18th showing of North by Northwest. Save the date for September 26th when we will finish out the 2015 season with a showing of Hitchcock's Psycho, and check out our website for further details and announcements about upcoming movies.

## THEY'RE COMING BACK!

We are delighted to announce that the goats are coming back to Congressional Cemetery! These voracious eaters will return in August to tackle an overgrown area adjacent to their previous digs in the east end. Once again, the herd will not be grazing amongst the headstones but will instead be located on the perimeter of the cemetery. The goats are set to arrive on August 6th and will be at the cemetery for around two weeks, depending on how quickly they can eat. Congressional Cemetery encourages the public to come out and view the herd during our open hours, dawn to dusk.

The goats, however, do not restrict themselves to daylight. They will graze 24 hours a day, eliminating vines, poison ivy, ground cover and even fallen debris all the while fertilizing the ground. The use of goats eliminates the need for harmful herbicides and prevents the invasive and often foreign species from killing large mature trees in the cemetery's wooded area, which can fall onto the grounds and damage invaluable historic headstones. Moreover, clearing the area of invasive species makes room for native species, which is helpful for pollinators, including HCC's very own honey bees. Good news all around!



## HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF DONATING STOCK?



A gift of stock to Historic Congressional Cemetery is a great way to avoid hefty taxes on stock you may have held for awhile. To donate, contact Andrew Didden at the National Capitol Bank at 202-546-8000. Our legal name is the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery and our brokerage account is DTC# 0443, Account # A3F-652-401.

We recently received the following comments about donating stock from an anonymous donor:

*“I recently contemplated how I could support the cemetery in a meaningful way while not putting a dent in my checking account. In looking at my stock portfolio, I realized that by donating stock I could create a win-win scenario for myself and the cemetery. I transferred shares of stock that fit into two buckets: in one case it was shares in a company in which I had a loss that I was loathe to take a hit on and in the other case it was in a mutual fund in which I had a very large profit that would have burdened me with a large capital gains tax bill. A quick call to my stockbroker with the account details for HCC and shares were transferred the next day to HCC. I win because I don't have to pay a capital gains tax on the winning stock, I don't have to keep looking at the loser in my portfolio on the losing stock, AND I get to book a charitable donation on my tax return. HCC wins because they immediately sell the shares (they are not in the business of managing an active portfolio) and they get to put the money to use right away. I encourage everyone to consider a review of their portfolios to see if this strategy makes sense for them as well.”*

### **INFORMATION FOR YOUR ESTATE PLANNING, BEQUEATH, STOCK GIFT, ENDOWMENT MATCH, OR DONATION:**

**Legal Name:** The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery

**Legal Address:** 1801 E Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003

**Telephone:** 202-539-0543

**Tax ID Number:** 52-1071828

**Please contact us for wire instruction or banking information**

**NOT DEAD, BUT ARISEN** continued from page 1

family had a different choice of words describing her ultimate demise, noting that she “translated” on April 9, 1880. Her headstone hints heavily at a belief in spiritualism, especially considering the juxtaposition with her husband’s more commonplace description.

Other headstones at the cemetery are even more explicit. John B. Wolff’s marker, which also happens to be a zinc monument, notes that he is “not dead, but arisen.” Wolff is credited with organizing the first association of spiritualists. A 1910 Washington Post article described him: “...a Washingtonian and an ardent worker for the cause of spiritualism, Mr. Wolff, who was for some years the president of the local association here, desired a national organization, and declared he

would work for the cause just as earnestly after his death as while he lived.” The national organization finally coalesced in 1893, after Wolff’s death, and it is certainly due to his enthusiasm and influence (during his lifetime, at least), that an organization formed.

Of course, not everyone posted their beliefs for all to see on their headstone. For instance, Mary C. Levy’s epitaph notes that she is “gone but not forgotten,” a common sentiment echoed on many memorials. But the Congressional Cemetery archives recognize Levy as a “well-known spiritual medium,” although her obituary also noted that she had “several grown children, none of whom share the faith of her parents.” Perhaps that explains the lack of explanation on her headstone.

In the case of Margaret Ann Laurie and her daughter Belle Youngs, likely the most famous spiritualists interred in the cemetery, no headstones exist at all. HCC’s Women of Arts and Letters walking tour describes Margaret and her daughter Belle: “...these dedicated spiritualists contacted the dead for messages and used ‘magnetic’ powers for healing. Laurie produced physical phenomena such as levitating pianos. Their house, a center of spiritualist séances, was visited by the Lincolns, and Laurie became a frequent visitor at the White House to conduct séances. The President’s aides warned her to keep these spiritual activities secret to protect Lincoln’s public image.” The Lauries and Youngs often appear in discussions of 19th century spiritualism because of their connection to Mrs. Lincoln, known to be an avid spiritualist.

A cemetery is an ideal place to explore what other people thought — and still think — the end is all about. As our book club discovered when reading *Spook*, it’s difficult to use scientific methods to assess the afterlife. But whatever you believe about the great beyond and spiritualists’ opinions, it is certain that the dead do and can communicate their stories through epitaphs, obituaries, newspaper articles and memoirs. It just takes a little researching to hear what they’re saying. ☞



*Headstone of  
John B. Wolff.*

# Stone Stories

BY MARGARET PUGLISI

Organized to unite gravestone enthusiasts in our area and to serve as local support for the national organization, the DC Metro Chapter of the Association for Gravestone Studies was formed in fall of 2013. The group has provided a venue for historians, conservators, genealogists, archaeologists, anthropologists, and cemetery managers to come together to share their love and knowledge of these historic cultural resources.

Past meetings have included a ground penetrating radar lecture and demonstration, a private tour at the Smithsonian to learn about forensic analysis, a two-day conservation workshop, and a tour of D.C. gravesites.

Our future meetings will definitely be worth attending. They include a tour of cemeteries in

the Richmond, Virginia, area, an intermediate-level conservation workshop, and a tour of local cemeteries associated with institutions and asylums. For more

information about upcoming events, contact Margaret Puglisi [mpuglisi@congressionalcemetery.org](mailto:mpuglisi@congressionalcemetery.org) or like the AGS DC Metro Chapter on Facebook.



*Attendees of Operation Conservation.*

If you like Victorian headstones.

Hanging out in a tomb.

If you're not into deterioration,

As the lichens set bloom.

If you like waking up at 6:00  
a.m.,

To explore solemn graves.

We're the group that you've  
looked for.

Write to me ([mpuglisi@congressionalcemetery.org](mailto:mpuglisi@congressionalcemetery.org)) &  
escape.

*(To the melody of If You Like  
Pina Coladas)*



*Howard Wellman demonstrates water misting to remove gypsum crust.*



*Attendees try out ground penetrating radar.*





1801 E Street, SE Washington, DC 20003 www.Congressionalcemetery.org



### Congressional Cemetery Engraved Brick Sponsorship

We are delighted that you are interested in sponsoring an engraved brick to be placed in a historic sidewalk at Congressional Cemetery. Each 4" x 8" brick can be customized and dedicated to individuals, pets, or businesses. Sponsorships are fully tax deductible to the full extent of the law, and the Association reserves the right to reject inappropriate engravings.

Please provide the following information and mail your check or credit card information to the address below or call (202) 543-0539 to process a credit card over the phone. Applications can also be mailed with check made payable to "HCC" or emailed to staff@congressionalcemetery.org

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card# \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration: \_\_\_\_\_

City & Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Brick for:  Pet  Individual  Other

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Bricks Sponsored: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$125 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Duplicate brick for you: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$55 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

Text for Brick - Up to 3 lines, limit 15 characters/spaces per line:


### Thank you for your sponsorship!

The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Duplicate bricks will be mailed to you after manufacture at no cost, which can take up to 3 months.

# Archives and Genealogy

To err is human, and it turns out there was a mistake in the Spring 2015 article “To Limbs Loved and Lost.” The article stated the following:

*In some instances, the owner of the buried body part was never interred alongside their amputated limb. The entry for Miss Anna Bell Lee reads “amputated leg only.” The records state that Anna was only nine years old when she lost her leg. Luckily, she survived the trauma and one can only hope that she went on to live a long and happy life. Wherever and however she lived, the rest of her remains are not at Congressional Cemetery.*

Then imagine our surprise when we received the following e-mail a few weeks after the spring newsletter was published:

*Was reading your Spring 2015 newsletter and the article on To Limbs Loved and Lost. Re: Anna Bell Lee. Anna Bell Lee (Sept. 1879 - Aug 13, 1909, R93/220E-2 was my second great aunt and I believe she is buried with her father Samuel E. Lee R93/220E, her mother Julia is buried R93/220E-1. Can you tell me where the leg is buried? Your article says she is not in Congressional, I believe she is. Unless her leg is buried with her Father. I did pull up a full obituary on her on find a grave. She did die young (30) and I have a lovely photo of her on her crutches*

*standing outside the family home. The story in the family was that she bumped her knee in a skating accident. Thank you, Alice*

When we delved back into the records, we discovered that Alice was right: Anna Bell is interred in the cemetery, in a plot directly adjacent to one containing her leg. The confusion? The records associated with the interment of her leg noted “Cause of Death: Amputation.” In addition, her leg was interred a full two years after her death (in 1911), and we have no records which point to where her leg resided between the amputation and interment at Congressional Cemetery. But what we do have is the captivating image of Miss Anna Bell herself. Although it is sad that she lived such a short life, it is happy



*Anna Bell Lee*

indeed that her descendants care enough to correct our errors and share this meaningful photo. Thank you Alice! 🍷

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## A Daughter's Tribute

BY ANN RUTH BARSÌ

Not all of the residents of Congressional Cemetery were rich, famous or have resided there for 200 years. My mom and dad, Geri and Charles Ruth moved in only ten years ago along the then newly-opened Memorial Grove. And while the symbolism of old monuments is well documented, I thought I'd share what went into the creation of their monument.

Dad was raised on Long Island, NY and spent as many waking moments on the water as possible. During WWII he was a Machinist in the Navy, repairing ships at sea. I spent most Saturdays with Dad on our little 14-ft. boat out in Hewlett Bay and Reynolds Channel fishing for flounder, snapper, and gathering clams, mussels and crabs when the tide was right. On special nights, we would go out 'eeling' with the Coleman lantern's light



*Geri's sampler.*

drawing the eels to the surface. So for Dad, there is a carved row of rope on the monument, symbolizing his love of boats and the water.

By day, my dad was a metal spinner. First he worked for Dorlyn Silversmith, where he transformed the designs of the famed Tommi Parzinger into beautiful silver and brass pieces. Later he was employed by Grumman Aircraft working on spacecraft. He made the footpads for the Lunar Landing Module; check them out the next time you are at the Air and Space Museum.

Mom had a different life. As a child, she was moved around every couple of years and boarded with strangers in various places in New York, Connecticut, and Florida. When she met Charles at a Boy Scout picnic on Long Island, she fell in love and was determined to stay put. She was the quintessential 1950's mom:

she taught purse-making for the post-war Ladies Home Bureau, she was a Cub Scout den leader, and President of the American Legion Auxiliary. She sang in the church choir and sewed most of our clothes. Dinner was on the table promptly at 5:15 when my dad walked through the door from work, and three freshly washed children were there to greet him.

We never had much money, but my mom was always a classy lady. Her hair was pretty, her outfits well-tailored, and her demeanor gracious. Mom loved flowers, especially the airy, almost-floating flowers of the Dogwood tree. And so a carved row of Dogwood blossoms keeps the carved rope company on Mom and Dad's monument.

The inscription at the base of the monument is perhaps the most sentimental, for each time Mom was yanked from one home to be shifted to another while she was a child, everything she had was left behind, except



for one small embroidery sampler stitched when she was 8 years old.



It says, "WARM FRIENDSHIP LIKE THE SETTING SUN SHEDS KINDLY LIGHT ON EVERYONE." As both of my parents spent their lives being dear, caring friends to everyone they encountered, it seemed the perfect sentiment to adapt to their monument. The monument faces west and lights up with the setting sun.

Maybe your parents are still alive and you can still chat with them in person or on the phone. I encourage you to do so. Maybe your parents are gone, but they're buried far away and you'd like a mom and dad to say 'Hi' to. Feel free to make friends with my mom and dad. If you turn left at the path just behind John Philip Sousa and head toward the Totem Pole, they're half-way up on the left. Perhaps your mom and dad have something in common with my parents. They might not have been rich or famous, and they haven't been gone 200 years, but they were your extra-special folks and they loved you a whole bunch. And that is what I think about when I see the rope and the Dogwood blossoms and the setting sun shining on my parents' monument. ☺



Association for the Preservation of  
Historic Congressional Cemetery

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**Yes!**

I want to help preserve and restore Congressional Cemetery with a tax deductible donation.

\$25  \$50  \$75  \$100  \$250  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Special donation for the Sousa Gate Project:

Anonymous  Yes  No

2015 Membership:  \$125 Individual  \$250 Family

Check enclosed, made payable to Congressional Cemetery

Please charge my credit card  Visa  Mastercard

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My employer makes matching contributions. Please send me the matching gift form.

**Thank you!**

Please mail with your donation to the return address on the mailing panel or use the envelope inside this newsletter.

*Calendar of Events*

- September 12** Day of Service  
Outdoor Yoga Mortis
- September 13** Notes from the Crypt  
Concert
- September 19** Civil War Tour
- September 22** Tombs and Tomes Book  
Club
- September 26** Cinematery
- October 3** Dead Man's Run
- October 11** Notes from the Crypt  
Concert
- October 16-17;  
23-24** Soul Stroll: Twilight Tours



18<sup>th</sup> and E Streets, SE.

**IT'S BEST TO KEEP AT LEAST SIX  
PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE WHO WILL  
ALWAYS HELP YOU MOVE.**



You don't have to be rich and famous to be buried in Congressional Cemetery. You just have to be dead.

Green Burial Options

Visit [CongressionalCemetery.org](http://CongressionalCemetery.org) for details  
(202) 543-0539