



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

One of the challenges facing historic cemeteries is the care of forgotten lots, those gravesites where there has been no contact from the families in many generations. But in this age of computerization it is easier to find long lost relatives, making it possible for The Woodlawn Cemetery to reconnect with the descendants of our lot owners. The Internet also makes it easier for people researching their family history and notable individuals to discover Woodlawn, resulting in an increase in visitation and events honoring those in our care.

This year, we have seen busloads of Japanese visitors arrive at The Woodlawn Cemetery to pay tribute to Dr. Hideyo Noguchi. He was a renowned scientist who succumbed to Yellow Fever on Africa's Gold Coast in 1921 while trying to find a cure for the disease. This fall, the Japanese Government is releasing a new 1000 Yen note honoring Noguchi; his portrait is featured on the front of the bill. This year, the people of Japan are remembering the scientist and many are coming all the way from his hometown to place flowers on his grave.



In April, a group of students from the Fieldston School came to Woodlawn to honor Duke Ellington on his birthday. The students took turns reading biographical information acknowledging the great composer's accomplishments; then they each placed a rose on his grave. The middle school group concluded their tribute by singing the Ellington classic, "You Ain't Got a Thing If You Ain't Got That Swing." After visiting the Ellington burial site the students visited the graves of jazz greats Miles Davis and Lionel Hampton.



On July 16th, the family and friends of Celia Cruz, "The Queen of Salsa," gathered together to commemorate the first anniversary of her passing. Her mausoleum, located on the Walnut Plot, close to the Knollwood Mausoleum was beautifully decorated in her favorite colors of purple and white. After a private mass was conducted, visitors to the gravesite were

allowed into the mausoleum to view the newly installed stained glass window, a gift from the talk show host Christina. The window depicts Our Lady of Charity El Cobre, the Patron Saint of Cuba. Throughout the day, fans of the beloved singer came to the cemetery to leave flowers and cards.



People are not coming just to honor the celebrated individuals in our care. Residents from the Osborn Retirement Community came to remember their benefactor, Miriam Osborn, and students from the Webb Institute of Naval Architecture to honor their founder, shipbuilder William Webb. Veterans from the local American Legion Post pay tribute to their namesake, Charles Bajart, and Civil War reenactors visit annually to recognize the sacrifice of Oliver Tilden, the first Bronx native lost in battle. On Memorial Day weekend, volunteers came to the cemetery to place flags on the graves of our Veterans, after hundreds of lot owners called us to let us know their loved one served our country.

Although Mr. Goodman's book reminds us that many people are forgotten, his book has also inspired people to remember. We've had hundreds of people come to the cemetery to visit Mayor LaGuardia, Francis Garvan, Herman Melville and Austin Corbin since The Secret City was published. Every day more and more people are discovering The Woodlawn Cemetery and families are returning to reconnect with their ancestors and to take the time to honor those in our care.

-- John P. Toale, Jr.