



# FRIENDS OF OCONEE HILL CEMETERY

*Spring 2021*



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(founded 1999)

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Don Smith and Charlotte Marshall*

## President's Column

First, we welcome Helen Hudson Mills as the new chair of the Oconee Hill Cemetery Board of Trustees. We thank Tom Wilfong for his leadership as chair for the past two years.

Winter's arrival ended our open-air FOHC board meetings in the Wingfield Chapel. During late fall and winter much work has been done to establish grass on the hillside and plan a power connection, as well as an access road to the chapel. Below the chapel at the foot of the bridge, preparations are underway for extension of the Greenway through the cemetery. A January meeting of OHC Trustees and Athens-Clarke officials responsible for the Greenway clarified the path, the bank preparation and the nature of fencing along the path.

By March construction should have begun. It may be necessary to close the bridge to excavate the hillside below for the path's construction. During that time the Carr St. gate will be open to visitors wishing to access sections B, C, D, E, F, G, H and I. Carr Street is off Oak Street/Lexington Rd., just east of the Dairy Queen.

Although we must further defer the membership meeting planned for this spring, we hope that COVID-19 vaccinations will make conditions safe for a fall celebration of renewed friendship and improvements: a smoother East Campus Rd. entrance over the railroad tracks; resurfaced roads; corrected drainage and erosion problems; and the 1900/transriparian "new" part of the cemetery.

This issue of the newsletter is being sent as a greeting to everyone who purchased a lot in 2020. We invite you to join the Friends and hope you will join us in keeping Oconee Hill Cemetery a beautiful sanctuary. Please read the Friends membership list in this issue and notify us if you are aware of others who should be members.

*Charlotte Thomas Marshall*

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Friends of Oconee Hill Cemetery is a nonprofit organization in Athens, Georgia, that is dedicated to building a partnership between the cemetery and the community by focusing attention on the cemetery's beauty, historic legacy, facilities and needs, particularly for the restoration and support of the cemetery through membership dues and other funding.

## GREENWAY PLANS AT OHC

Athens-Clarke County officials met with OHC Trustees and staff on a cold January day to explain the specifics of the Greenway's involvement in the cemetery. (L-R) ACC staff including Mark Johnston, Derek Doster (SPLOST project administrator), Erik Hammarlund and Oliver Weston field questions.



## The Beauty of the Wingfield Chapel



**The Wingfield Chapel is becoming a focal point for the cemetery and is indeed one of its most significant areas.**



As COVID-19 took over our daily lives the Wingfield Chapel has become a haven . . . a place for meetings, family gatherings, memorial services and small funerals. Several times heavy rains have made a graveside service with social distancing impossible. The chapel has provided the perfect solution.

The stone structure, named in honor of Terry Wingfield and his family, was completed in 2014. This FOHC project, funded by the Frances Wood Wilson Foundation, continues to improve because of donors who see the value in an open air chapel.

The Alice and Noah N. Langdale Foundation provided funds for crushed slate around the chapel, removal of 20-plus diseased or endangered trees, mulch for beds and landscape design plans for long-range utilization of the area. Recently under the direction of Carl Grimes, the landscape consultant for OHC, grading, removal of roots and debris, and the addition of amended soil and seeding of grass have created a gracious lawn. This highlights the chapel and illustrates the potential of the grassy knoll in the center of the cemetery. Donations and efforts from volunteers with local garden clubs have added Lenten rose beds and mulch. Slowly the additional planting of an understory of flowering trees will add color to this area. A specimen Yoshima cherry planted in memory of Meg Gunn Dure was a gift from her friends and members of the Athens High School Class of 1965. The Friends hope that others will choose to remember loved ones in a way that adds beauty to the area.

The Wingfield Chapel is becoming a focal point for the cemetery and is indeed one of its most significant areas. Few realized when this project began that it would become so important. The Friends will continue to enhance the area and make it more accessible. A drive, electricity and other improvements will enable more to use it and make the Easter sunrise service and other events safer and more convenient.

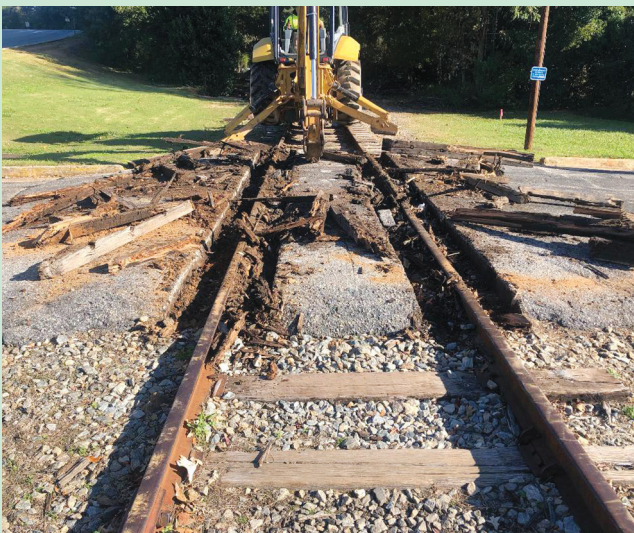
Currently use of the chapel is free to all members of the Friends. However reservations are necessary to prevent confusion. Until a drive is created visitors are asked to park on the road surrounding the chapel to protect the new grass. The Friends and Trustees of OHC are proud of the chapel and hope that all appreciate and enjoy this place of peace and beauty within our grounds. For chapel reservations, please call Don Smith, OHC General Manager, 706-543-6262.

*Helen McPherson Costantino*

**The committed support of the members of the Friends of OHC and the generosity of our contributors make all things possible at Oconee Hill Cemetery. This historic cemetery continues to be significant to the Athens community over 165 years since its inception because of you.**



Don Smith reports work completed after fielding complaints from visitors about the railroad crossing at the entrance to OHC. He quickly identified areas in the crossing missing vital wood components. The Trustees approved \$3,000 to solve the problem and added a protective buildup of asphalt for future smooth crossings.



## **Contributions**

Received October 16, 2020 through February 14, 2021

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(Anonymous) Athens, Georgia, loved Irene!

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Designated for continued enhancement of mapping, refining grave locations/availability, and promotion/marketing to encourage visibility, visitation and community awareness.



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## ***MEG'S TREE***

Friends and Athens High School classmates of Meg Gunn Dure donated the newest addition to the landscape at the Wingfield Chapel.

Donations to the long-range landscaping plan for OHC are a meaningful way to honor loved ones and friends and preserve one of our city's most beautiful urban environments. For more information, please call Don Smith at 706.543.6262 to direct your call.

(L-R) Richard and Fran Lane, Janie Bush and Helen Costantino.

