

Donor recognition wall unveiled at Holyoke municipal cemetery

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

A small crowd gathered at the Holyoke municipal cemetery Sunday, May 4, as the Holyoke Cemetery Board held a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the unveiling of the donor recognition wall.

Located at the northwest entrance of the cemetery, the donor recognition wall recognizes and pays tribute to those who have donated time, energy and money to help make the cemetery what it is today. Bronze plaques on the wall display donors' names.

"Today we gather to pay tribute to the individuals who have so graciously given not only their time to the cemetery, but to those who have shared a gift of a different kind," president of the cemetery board and Holyoke Mayor Orville Tonsing said prior to the unveiling.



Pictured from left around the new donor recognition wall at the Holyoke municipal cemetery are Holyoke Cemetery Board members J.C. Peckham, Orville Tonsing, Judy Beavers, Tillie Fisbeck and Dale O'Neal, City Clerk/Treasurer Kathy Olofson, cemetery board member Chris Lehman and City Superintendent Mark Brown. □ □

—Enterprise photo

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“Their gifts, whether in labor, equipment or monetary, are what make our cemetery especially unique from others. The Holyoke Cemetery is beautiful, and for those of us who have family buried here, and veterans who served our country buried here, we are very proud to honor them in such a special place.”

A number of donors were recognized at the event. The Heginbotham Trust has been very gracious with donations in the past for assistance with a number of projects and equipment. Most recently, an \$11,000 donation was gifted for a new Walker mower.

The Frances White Estate donated \$70,579 in 1984. Those funds provided the cemetery directory, gazebo and several other projects.

A donation of \$216,647 was gifted to the cemetery from the Richard Mayo LeBlanc Estate in 1996. These funds provided maintenance to the sprinkler system, a new booster pump and well building, Walker mower and new entrance pillars, among other items.

In 2005, the Dorothy Leeper Estate gave the cemetery \$10,000 to be used as needed. In 2009, Marie Millage and her family installed 21 American flags and poles along the front of the cemetery.

The Millage family provided the labor and materials for the project and continues to donate time for setting up the displays on special occasions.

“Today, we pay tribute to each of these donors,” Tonsing said. “Without their kindness, thoughtfulness and forethought to giving, our cemetery would not be the beautiful resting place that it is.”

Dale O’Neal was also recognized for his commitment to the cemetery board. Tonsing thanked O’Neal for his 48 years of service to the board, noting that his dedication proves that he believes in making a difference in the community and truly cares about the cemetery.

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