

Entrusting a legacy of memories and life lessons to the next generation.

A Case For Support

Crown Hill Cemetery is one of Indiana's foremost landmarks. It is known around the world for its historic treasures, its record of the lives of Indianapolis, and the beauty of its grounds.

Serving family and community lies at the heart of Crown Hill's corporate and civic mission. Bart Peterson, Mayor of the City of Indianapolis described it as follows in his letter of support for The Campaign For Crown Hill in 2003:

Crown Hill Cemetery is a treasured icon of Indianapolis history. It has served this community for 140 years as a place of peace and remembrance for the families, friends and descendants of those who have made its beautiful landscape their final resting place. It also is a well-visited landmark for students of history, for residents of Central Indiana, and for out-of-town visitors. At Crown Hill one finds the founders of our city, a U.S. President, three U.S. Vice Presidents, creative geniuses from many eras, and countless other civic, cultural, and social leaders.

Yet Crown Hill always has stayed true to its roots as a cemetery for the people. Veterans of nearly every conflict in which our country has fought are buried side by side. Public safety officers who have served our community for generations are honored with a special section surrounding The Heroes of Public Safety Memorial. And Crown Hill, despite its many accolades and honors, continues to view its mission as one of service to the City of Indianapolis and the State of Indiana.

Crown Hill's philanthropic heritage is embedded in the cemetery's Articles Of Association formulated in 1863 establishing the cemetery as a non-profit institution. According to the founding principles of Crown Hill Cemetery, all profits from the sale of plots, and the interest generated on those proceeds, are devoted to the purchase and improvement of the grounds and their perpetual care once the cemetery ceases to generate revenue from sales activity; no part of such funds shall benefit as dividend or profit any individual. The articles of association declare Crown Hill to be non-sectarian and non-denominational and to be governed by a volunteer Board of Corporators, Managers, and Officers.

Crown Hill was founded when the city of Indianapolis was experiencing the impact of the Civil War, industrialization, and expansion into the western territories. Greenlawn, the original City Cemetery, could no longer meet the burial needs of a growing population and accommodate the large number of military casualties. The founders of Greenlawn Cemetery

proposed the establishment of a Rural Cemetery for Indianapolis and the City's civic leaders concurred.

The rural cemetery movement had its origins in the United States in the mid nineteenth century. Rural cemeteries exalted nature, trees, and the natural landscape. Rural cemeteries served their communities as parks before there was a state or national park system. Residents used the cemetery as an escape and respite from the fast pace and noise of urbanization. Citizens gathered for strolls to admire the natural landscape. Families came together for picnics and holiday celebrations at the cemetery.

The site selected for Crown Hill was a farm, part of which was a tree nursery. The elevation that gives the name "Crown Hill" to the cemetery was then known as "Strawberry Hill" and was the favorite spot for picnickers in the area. The Crown was the highest point of land about Indianapolis at the time. From the top of the Crown, visitors could look to the valley below, see a ribbon of road that would some day be called Michigan Road and spot a farm here and there as their eyes looked to the horizon where on a clear day they could see the dome of the State Capitol and the beginnings of a skyline growing round the "mile square."

When Indianapolis was young, it was known as the "city in the valley," and Crown Hill as the "city on the hill." Indianapolis and Crown Hill have grown together over time, and in many ways, Crown Hill is Indianapolis: its people, its growth, its life story.

The original Crown Hill Corporators engaged the services of a landscape architect to plat the cemetery and develop plans for annual improvements to beautify and distinguish the grounds. The Gothic Chapel, Waiting Station and Gothic Gate, Historic Barns and Service Yard, Brick and Wrought Iron Fence, and 38th Street Bridge and Underpass were constructed over the years as part of the plan to accommodate families in their time of need and to welcome visitors to Crown Hill.

Today Crown Hill is the largest remaining green space inside the I-465 beltway and makes up a major portion of the City's urban forest. The cemetery was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and currently supports an infrastructure as vast as that of a small town. Architects and engineers are engaged to assist cemetery managers with the preparation of the required contemporary site and historic structure preservation plans.

More than 195,000 men, women, and children are buried at Crown Hill Cemetery. Each life is honored here. Each life is a chapter in the story of Crown Hill and the history of Indianapolis.

The Crown Hill Heritage Foundation was incorporated in 1984 as a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. The Foundation was organized to raise the necessary funds to preserve the historic structures on the grounds of Crown Hill Cemetery; to educate and inform the public by providing historical tours and facilities for historical and genealogical research; and to preserve the cultural and natural heritage of Crown Hill Cemetery.

The Crown Hill Heritage Foundation conducts an Annual Appeal to fund on-going guided tours, educational programs, and special events for families, schools, cultural tourists, and visitors to the cemetery. The Foundation cultivates Major Gifts for special projects and donor memorial opportunities. Projects include the Heroes of Public Safety Memorial, the Field of Valor Eternal Flame and Eagle Plaza, the Shepherd's Way Memorial commemorating infants

and children, and the Pioneer Cemetery Wrought Iron Gate and Fence commemorating the pioneering spirit of the founders of Indianapolis.

The Crown Hill Heritage Foundation raises capital dollars to fund the restoration and preservation of the historic structures located on the grounds of the cemetery. Most recently, the Foundation has successfully raised \$2,000,000 through the Campaign For Crown Hill for the restoration of the Gothic Chapel built in 1875. The restoration included roof repairs, new electrical, heating, and air conditioning systems, a new sound system, and new seating. A donor pledged \$100,000 for a new pipe organ and another donor committed \$500,000 for the construction of a vestibule attached to the front of the chapel.

Street lamps were installed along the road in the cemetery leading from the Gothic Gate at 34th and Boulevard Place to the Gothic Chapel. The historic chapel now provides a unique venue for services, tours, concerts, and public gatherings.

The Planned Giving Program of the Crown Hill Heritage Foundation is an opportunity for donors to help preserve the natural heritage, the architectural heritage, and the cultural heritage entrusted to the care of Crown Hill Cemetery. The Crown Hill Planned Giving Program presents an opportunity to participate in a unique, intergenerational transfer of wealth and values – the values of serving family and community.

Consider giving a legacy of memories and life lessons to a new generation of families and community leaders. Share with them the wonder of the lives entrusted to Crown Hill since 1863. Make it possible for the children of tomorrow to visit Crown Hill on a school field trip, gather leaves from some of the more than 4,100 trees on the grounds, and learn about civic, state, and national history and traditions through Crown Hill's monuments to famous figures. Help pass on the timeless peace and beauty of Crown Hill and the value of quiet repose. Help assure that Crown Hill's tributes to Indianapolis and to humanity remain viable into the future.

Remember Crown Hill in Your Will and Estate Plans

Let us know by joining The Crown Society so we can thank you.

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