

The Heritage Fund

2024 Annual Drive



**AMERICA'S FIRST PET BURIAL GROUNDS
LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HISTORIC PLACES
A NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION HABITAT**



Dear Friends,

Since its inception Hartsdale Pet Cemetery has enjoyed a charmed life, thanks to its beautiful location and generations of engaged plot-holders. But I'd be remiss if I didn't note one other factor in the cemetery's success—its directors. Decade after decade each of them has adhered to the highest ideals of integrity and service to ensure that our little burial ground not only survived but thrived, even through times of war and economic uncertainty. And of them all, none have embodied these core values more than Ed Martin, Jr., who as of this year will have been at Hartsdale's helm for half a century.

His family's association with the cemetery goes back to his great uncle who oversaw the creation of the War Dog Memorial in 1919, followed by his father, a master stone mason who created beautiful grave markers for animals buried throughout the grounds. Even his mother joined the fold, working in the cottage for twenty years receiving the calls of grieving pet parents with understanding and sensitivity.

It's not surprising that Ed's memories of Hartsdale date from childhood: "One day when I was about ten I had the unsettling sense that my mother was upset about something. When my father walked through the door she erupted in tears, telling him, 'Don't ever leave this around the house again. I've been crying all day.' In her hands she held the tracing paper used to engrave a headstone reading, 'To my best little boy; 1938-1947.' Father smiled and said, 'Honey, this a monument for a dog.' Much as mother was surprised, she was no less heartbroken."

Fast forward to 1973, as Ed pursued a career in public accounting and attended graduate school at night, Hartsdale's previous owner began contemplating retirement. Because she was determined to pass the torch to someone who could uphold the cemetery's tradition of professionalism, she reached out to him. As Ed explains, "she trusted me to fully commit to this place," and with the help of a childhood friend he became Hartsdale's fourth owner the following year.

"What began as a business venture soon became a passion inspired by all the wonderful people who entrusted me with their pets," he says. For in fact, the cemetery was really a "community born of kinship with others coming from the shared experience of losing a beloved companion."

This year we extend our heartfelt appreciation to Ed for his dedicated tenure. Thanks to him—and now his sons—we can take comfort that Hartsdale's present and future remains in the best of hands.

In other news, the cemetery's been honored with another historic designation, we were the focus of an incredibly moving press story that's gone global, and we received a generous gift of some remarkable photos dating from the property's earliest days as a burial site. Also, there's a new memorial tribute here with an uplifting message from "across the pond" about animals in the Great Beyond that I encourage you to check out on your next visit.

As always, we are so grateful for your support of the work to keep Hartsdale beautiful and well cared for. I'll see you around the grounds.



Mary Thurston, Historian



We are pleased to announce that Hartsdale has been added to the New York State Historic Business Preservation Registry, which recognizes businesses that have been in operation at least fifty years and made positive contributions to their communities. A ceremony was held in October where Assembly Member Amy Paulin, who sponsored our application, presented us with an official proclamation.

To learn more about the Registry visit <https://parks.ny.gov/historic-preservation/business-registry>



"Hartsdale Pet Cemetery was established by plot-holders for plot-holders as an act of compassion, kindness and love to help alleviate the heavy grief we feel when we lose a beloved family member, whether they are animal or human. The primary responsibility of the person who manages these beautiful, historic and sacred grounds has been, and will always be, to protect the interests of the plot-holders by leading with the same compassion, kindness and love as the founders."

--Ed Martin, Jr.



Ed Jr. and mother Bertha working in the cottage, 1982.



Ed and childhood pal Pat Grosso, partners in the cemetery, celebrating our 1996 centennial.



Ed and dignitaries commemorate Hartsdale's addition to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.



Ed Jr. and son Ed III pay their respects to Dr. Samuel Johnson at Woodlawn Cemetery.



Meet The Green Wicket

While American pet lovers are familiar with the parable of the Rainbow Bridge, our friends in Britain cherish a different hope for an after-life that embraces animals. Referring to a rustic, unassuming entrance to pasturage, "The Green Wicket" speaks of a heavenly entrance for all manner of creatures--personally attended by no less than God

About the Cover

Taken 120 years ago on a soft autumn day, an exquisitely dressed woman came to Hartsdale to tend to her dog's grave. Despite its age the image, which was produced from an original glass negative, provides us with exacting detail just as if it were snapped yesterday, from her lacy face veil to the blades of grass at her feet. Negatives like these usually don't stand the test of time, so we were astounded to learn that this one, plus a second taken at another pet's plot, had



turned up for auction in pristine condition. Our heartfelt appreciation to art historian and author Paul Koudounaris for purchasing and gifting both negatives to the cemetery's archive of historic images.

himself. Now this beautiful and heartwarming ode has come to Hartsdale, courtesy of Ed Martin, Jr., who personally sponsored this specially inscribed four-foot granite marker.

In The Times

"Who Was the Mysterious Lady Buried Alone at the Pet Cemetery?," a touching story of how the ashes of an American ex-pat from Mexico found their way to Hartsdale for interment, made the front of the Sunday New York Times on January 7. The story, which recounts how a twist of fate--and the determined diligence of Ed Martin III--revealed the astonishing truth behind one woman's final wish to be delivered to the Peaceable Kingdom. Read it in full at www.nytimes.com/2024/01/07/nyregion/human-burial-pet-cemetery.html



Many thanks to plot-holders Lisa Wernick and Sam Waltzer for bringing Wreaths Across America back to Hartsdale this past December to once again decorate the War Dog Memorial in honor of all who serve and sacrifice!



Please Help Us Preserve and Improve Our Irreplaceable Treasure



WAR DOG MEMORIAL PINS *Only for a Limited Time!*

The U.S. Department of the Interior added Hartsdale Pet Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places, making it the first and only animal burial ground to receive such distinction as a place of profound cultural significance. With this recognition comes a new level of responsibility to care for the cemetery's many historic features and assets. Hartsdale's general maintenance fund is not sufficient to cover these costs and unlike human cemeteries we are not tax exempt from federal and state taxes, nor do we receive any federal or state funding. We therefore depend entirely on supporters like you to help us protect this legacy of animal history. As a valued member of our family, we ask you to please help us protect this precious national asset.

YES, I want to help the Hartsdale Pet Cemetery Heritage Fund!

No matter what size, every gift counts. Thank you!

\$100* \$500 \$1,000 Other _____ ** Eligible for limited edition commemorative coin*

Name _____

To give online, visit www.petcem.com

Plot Number _____

Visa Master Card Discover AmEx

E-mail _____

Card # _____

Address _____

Exp. Date _____

City _____

Enclosed is my check payable to:
Hartsdale Pet Cemetery

State _____ Zip _____

Please note: Hartsdale Pet Cemetery is not a 501(c)(3) corporation. Your contribution is not tax-deductible.